



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2011

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Mr Speaker (Hon. John Mickel, Logan) read prayers and took the chair.

For the sitting week, Mr Speaker acknowledged the traditional owners of the land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.



### ASSENT TO BILL

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from Her Excellency the Governor a letter in respect of assent to a certain bill, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

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

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of Her Majesty The Queen on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 21 February 2011

"A Bill for An Act to establish the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and provide for other measures to assist with the rebuilding and recovery of Queensland communities affected by disaster events, and to amend this Act, the Building Act 1975, the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Integrity Act 2009, the Land Valuation Act 2010, the Public Service Act 2008 and the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 for particular purposes"

This Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

21 February 2011

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 21 February 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a bill [3987].

### PRIVILEGE

#### **Alleged Deliberate Misleading of an Estimates Committee by a Minister, Referral to Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee**



**Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algera—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (9.32 am): I rise to make a personal explanation regarding the matters raised last sitting concerning comments made by me during the 2010 estimates hearings about the Women's Infolink service.

As members are aware, the member for Burdekin and former shadow minister for women wrote to the Speaker claiming I had misled the House during the 2010 estimates hearing and that I be referred to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. This matter has now been referred to that committee for consideration.

Mr Speaker, I wish to make it clear that at no time did I deliberately mislead the House. In response to a question from the member, I stated that the 77,000 requests for information were provided by Women's Infolink telephone service. The correct answer was that 72,000 requests for information and referral advice were responded to by the Office for Women and 5,000 by the Women's Infolink telephone service. I take this opportunity to correct the record and unreservedly apologise to the member for Burdekin and to all members for inadvertently misleading the House in this regard.

I would like to further put on the record that Women's Infolink is open for business, and I would like to take this opportunity on International Women's Day, the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, to table a booklet developed by the Office for Women to provide information about the activities of the Office for Women including the Women's Infolink service.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Communities brochure titled 'Advancing Queensland Women' [3988].

**Mr SPEAKER:** I thank the honourable the minister.



## SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

### Natural Disaster Resolutions, Northern Territory and Western Australia

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that I have received correspondence from both the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia advising of resolutions passed in their respective Houses in relation to the natural disasters experienced this summer in Queensland. On behalf of the Queensland parliament, I extend our gratitude for the thoughts expressed by our fellow parliamentarians across Australia. I seek leave to have the text of the abovementioned resolutions incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

#### NATURAL DISASTER RESOLUTIONS: NORTHERN TERRITORY AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The Northern Territory Assembly resolved on 15 February 2011:

That the Assembly:

- (a) acknowledges with great sadness the devastation that occasioned this summer by two of the worst natural disasters Queensland has ever experienced including unprecedented floods and Tropical Cyclone Yasi;
- (b) extends its deepest sympathies to the families of those who have lost loved ones; and to affected communities and acknowledges the enormous efforts of the Australian Defence Forces, emergency workers, and many volunteers in responding to these disasters; and
- (c) pledges the full support of this Parliament and Northern Territory community to assist affected areas to recover and rebuild.

The Legislative Assembly of Western Australia resolved on Tuesday 15 February 2011:

That this House records its sincere regret at the lives and properties lost and the number of communities affected as a result of the significant flooding in many areas of Queensland, as well as the disproportionately high level of natural disasters in Western Australia during the period December 2010 to February 2011.

### Speaker's Travel

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in the last week there have been a number of serious allegations about me in the media, the substance of which is that I travelled overseas without the requisite approvals in place. I table correspondence between myself and the Clerk of the Parliament, the accountable officer for the parliament, and myself and the Queensland Integrity Commissioner.

*Tabled paper:* Correspondence between Hon. John Mickel MP, Speaker, the Clerk of the Parliament and the Integrity Commissioner regarding overseas travel guidelines and approval processes [3989].

The Integrity Commissioner makes it clear that the appropriate officer to respond to this matter is the Clerk. The Clerk's correspondence indicates very clearly that I had the necessary approvals to travel to Canada and had not commenced travel to Japan for which I required further approval from the Premier. When that approval was not given, I returned to Brisbane. I have always accepted that the Premier had the right to make the decision to not approve the travel to Japan.

However, the key point is that I did not, as has been alleged and reported, leave the country without the necessary approvals. Any such comments are made in ignorance of the facts and, in some cases, with mischievous intent. I leave it to members to draw their own conclusions as to how and why this matter became such a public issue with such misinformation attached.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Changes in Ministry; Deputy Government Whip

**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.35 am): I lay upon the table of the House the *Extraordinary Queensland Government Gazettes* of 21 February 2011 and 3 March 2011 which outline recent changes to ministerial and parliamentary secretary appointments. I also wish to inform the House that the member for Pine Rivers, Ms Carolyn Male, has been appointed Deputy Government Whip.

*Tabled paper:* Extraordinary Government Gazette, dated Monday, 21 February 2011, advising of ministerial appointments [3990].

*Tabled paper:* Extraordinary Government Gazette, dated Thursday, 3 March 2011, advising of parliamentary secretary appointments [3991].

## PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

### Feral Deer Management Strategy 2010-2015

**Mrs Pratt**, from 12 petitioners, requesting the House to reconsider the current Feral Deer Management Strategy 2010-2015 consultation draft, issued by Biosecurity Queensland and ask that deer be retained in their historical areas and recognised for their cultural and economic value to Queensland [\[3992\]](#).

### Animal Cruelty, Sentencing

**Ms Darling**, from 3,888 petitioners, requesting the House to have much stricter laws governing the sentencing of culprits and stronger sentencing required when found guilty of cruelty to animals [\[3993\]](#).

### Bribie Island Bridge

**Mrs Sullivan**, from 15 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently investigate, consult with the community, and consider fast tracking the design and planning of a duplicate Bribie Island Bridge, including an appropriate pedestrian/cycle way [\[3994\]](#).

### Bribie Island Bridge

**Mrs Sullivan**, from 121 petitioners, requesting the House to allocate adequate funding in the 2011-12 budget for an appropriate design and construction of a cycle track and walkway on the Bribie Island Bridge [\[3995\]](#).

### Nambour-Caboolture, Rail Service

**Mr Powell**, from 976 petitioners, requesting the House to not implement the new train timetable proposed for the Nambour and Caboolture train services and to preserve the current services [\[3996\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

25 February 2011—

[3980](#) Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 1 for 2011—Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community—Performance Management Systems audit

[3981](#) Social Development Committee: Report No. 10—Inquiry into addressing cannabis-related harm in Queensland: Government Response

[3982](#) Public Accounts and Public Works Committee: Report No. 6—Brisbane Supreme Court and District Court Complex: Government Response

28 February 2011—

[3983](#) Law, Justice and Safety Committee: Report No. 78—A new Local Government Electoral Act: Review of the local government electoral system (excluding BCC): Government Response

4 March 2011—

[3984](#) Letter, dated 2 March 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing copies of correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding proposed international treaty actions tabled in both houses of the Federal Parliament on 28 October 2010, 24 and 25 November 2010, and 9 and 10 February 2011, and the Treaties and National Interest Analyses for the proposed treaty actions listed in the letter

7 March 2011—

[3985](#) Copy of correspondence, dated 4 March 2011, from the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining to the Chair, Scrutiny of Legislation Committee regarding the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010

[3986](#) Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010: Erratum to Explanatory Notes

### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[3997](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 8

[3998](#) Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 8, Explanatory Notes

Disaster Management Act 2003—

[3999](#) Disaster Management (Extension of Disaster Situation-Innisfail) Regulation 2011, No. 11

[4000](#) Disaster Management (Extension of Disaster Situation-Innisfail) Regulation 2011, No. 11, Explanatory Notes

Bail Act 1980—

[4001](#) Bail (Prescribed Programs) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 12

[4002](#) Bail (Prescribed Programs) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 12, Explanatory Notes

Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008—

[4003](#) Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Regulation 2011, No. 13

[4004](#) Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Regulation 2011, No. 13, Explanatory Notes

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Christchurch Earthquake, Motion to Take Note



**Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.37 am): During the last sitting week, I and others in the House addressed the parliament on what has become known as our summer of sorrow. Queensland had been hit hard by the worst floods in our history and one of the worst cyclones in living memory. But since the last sitting of the parliament we have all watched the terrible events unfold in Christchurch, and we know that the sorrow that many of our communities are experiencing has now been matched across the Tasman.

The horror that has befallen one of our closest neighbours and oldest friends is truly shocking. At 12.51 pm on Friday, 22 February an earthquake tore through Christchurch shattering large sections of the city's CBD and taking with it hundreds of lives. It followed nearly six months after the 7.1 magnitude 2010 Canterbury earthquake that caused significant damage to the region but no direct fatalities. This time the earthquake was of a 6.3 magnitude but was faster and more intense and it struck at lunchtime when the city centre was full of people going about their daily business.

New Zealand authorities believe that approximately 240 people may have lost their lives in this event. Hundreds more have been injured and thousands have had their homes damaged or simply obliterated. Two Australians are among the confirmed dead and there may be more as the bodies of many of the estimated 240 casualties have yet to be recovered from the wreckage.

In Queensland we know how it feels when Mother Nature suddenly becomes a deadly enemy. The disasters that we have endured and the lives that we have lost this summer will, for many, stay in our hearts and minds for the rest of our lives. In Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley the terror seemed to come from nowhere. But here in Brisbane, on the Downs, in Central Queensland and in the Far North we at least had some time to prepare for nature's fury.

In Christchurch the quake issued no warning. It struck suddenly and with a violence that no-one could have predicted. In a split second people went from going about their normal business to living in a nightmare as their city crumbled around them. The images of the historic and beautiful Christchurch Cathedral crumbling seemed more suited to a disaster movie. But this was a terrible reality and the stricken cathedral remains a haunting symbol of what fate has inflicted on this beautiful old city.

It has been estimated by the New Zealand earthquake recovery minister, Gerry Brownlee, that up to 100,000 houses may need repairs and 10,000 houses will have to be rebuilt. Almost 3,000 buildings in the Christchurch CBD have been assessed by engineers. A staggering 755 buildings have been severely damaged, with 500 or more of them potentially having to be demolished. A further 909 buildings have been less severely damaged. It is difficult for us to imagine what a city in that circumstance might feel like.

As we face the huge task of reconstruction after the disasters that have been inflicted on our own state, our hearts go out to our New Zealand friends. There is a long tradition between Australia and New Zealand of friendly rivalry and joking disparagement from time to time. But it is times like this when we realise how deep the Anzac ties run across the Tasman. There are many close ties between New Zealand and Australia, particularly here in Queensland. New Zealand is our largest tourism market meaning that many of our Kiwi friends have visited here, have had family holidays here, have been here for their honeymoons and have many special memories of Queensland.

Similarly, Queensland is home to many people who were born in New Zealand. This is nowhere more true than on the Gold Coast where it is estimated that one in 10 people now living on the Gold Coast were born in New Zealand. This means that many of our fellow Queenslanders will have experienced suffering as they have watched their friends and relatives go through the Christchurch earthquake.

I want to let the people of Christchurch and all of our New Zealand cousins, whether they are in New Zealand or here in Queensland and Australia, know how deeply we feel for them at this terrible time. When Queensland was first feeling the effects of floods and cyclones, New Zealand responded magnificently. It was among the first to offer help. Its workers were among the first to arrive. It sent disaster experts to help us and provide material assistance.

So soon after our own disasters, we knew how urgently help would be needed in Christchurch to deal with the earthquake. On the day the earthquake struck we assembled an urban search and rescue team of more than 70 people who flew to Christchurch the following day. We have only just welcomed these brave men and women home and deployed a second team of Queensland firefighters and paramedics.

Four Queensland Police Service disaster victim identification specialists are also now in Christchurch. Their task is to assist in the heartbreaking process of examination and formal identification of deceased persons recovered from various sites. In addition to this, a one-off Australian Defence Force flight carrying 60 Australian citizens rescued from earthquake devastated Christchurch arrived in Brisbane on Wednesday, 23 February where they were met by Queensland Health staff.

We have also deployed a Queensland Ambulance Service's tactical medical centre comprising three tents as well as six paramedics. A 24-member Australian medical assistance team was deployed from Queensland comprising emergency doctors, surgeons, anaesthetists, registered nurses and support staff. Queenslanders are in that city now helping in many capacities—as doctors and medical support staff, in identification, in recovery and in the clean-up. What is clear is that for the people of Christchurch the journey ahead is a very long and slow one.

New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, has said that the total recovery could take up to 15 years at a cost of up to NZ\$15 billion. But both Prime Minister, John Key, and the city's mayor, Bob Parker, have shown resolution and resilience in their determination to rebuild Christchurch, including the iconic Christchurch Cathedral.

On behalf of this parliament, I offer the people of Christchurch our unconditional sympathy for those great losses. Our cousins across the Tasman are showing the same strength Queenslanders have shown in the face of great natural calamities. We know that they have the courage and the will to rebuild as we are doing. They will have the support and encouragement of all Queenslanders as they undertake an immense, but not insurmountable, task. I move—

That the House take note of the statement.



**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.44 am): On behalf of the opposition I rise to support the Premier in speaking about the Christchurch earthquake. As the Premier has already mentioned, as of yesterday more than 166 people have been confirmed dead after the earthquake and there are many more still missing. It is expected the final death toll will be up to 200.

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake hit the region on 22 February, only five months after the city was hit by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. This one was far more shallow in terms of its depth and caused far more damage. It happened at a time when the city was far busier than it was on the previous occasion.

I note that the Prime Minister of New Zealand, John Key, said that there could be up to 10,000 homes that will have to be rebuilt. Some areas of Christchurch will have to be abandoned. The New Zealand Treasury estimates that the cost to the New Zealand economy could be NZ\$15 billion. It has cut economic growth by 1.5 per cent. The centre of the city had to be evacuated. There were massive power cuts. At one stage 80 per cent of the city had no power. Buildings have been left in ruins and roads buckled. We have all seen the very graphic demonstration of liquefaction—water and sand spewing out of cracks, cars trapped in the liquefaction as it solidified. The city ran out of ambulances. It was a very dramatic situation.

New Zealanders have shown the same strength and resoluteness of character that the Premier spoke about we in Queensland and Australia priding ourselves on. I know that we often joke—as the Premier has mentioned already—about the fact that there are many New Zealanders who live on the Gold Coast and the number of New Zealanders who come to Australia. But there is no doubt that in times of difficulty, Australians and New Zealanders know about our shared traditions. That is the case with the people of South Africa as well. When it comes to sporting events, it is us against the mother country, the UK. I know that when I worked in the UK for three years it was us and the Kiwis and the South Africans against the Poms. When it comes to real difficulties—as we have seen over the last couple of weeks in New Zealand—it has been great to see, as the Premier just mentioned, our emergency service workers and police going over and helping.

I think it is important to mention too that New Zealand is a very small country in terms of population. It has the same or very similar population to Queensland. Prime Minister John Key has done a very good job keeping the country together and making sure that they are still focusing on the future and not just dwelling on the past. The Mayor of Christchurch, Bob Parker, has been working very hard on behalf of his community.

I know that we do not want to make everything a sporting analogy, but at least the Canterbury Crusaders came out on Friday and, most importantly, beat New South Wales in the rugby. That showed that New Zealand will still be a force to be reckoned with in the months to come, including in the World Cup. They are determined to regroup and restructure. There is no talk about it cancelling these events. It is a proud nation.

Many of the people are friends and contacts of many of us. Many of us have New Zealand relations. I note that the Premier has spoken about journalists who have many connections. The former chief reporter at the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Mike Bruce, who I think is now at the *Sunday Mail*, wrote a very poignant piece in the *Sunday Mail* a couple of weeks ago. He has elderly parents. He went back to Christchurch—a place that he remembers fondly because he grew up there. He was devastated to see the effect on both his family and friends he had grown up with and the effect on the city where he had grown up.

I note with concern yesterday's report that of a population of 390,000 in Christchurch up to 65,000 people have left the area, considering that it is too difficult to rebuild; it is too difficult to return. I am sure that as time goes on and people see that the city and the county is being rebuilt they will come back. There is no doubt that New Zealand, Christchurch and Canterbury are facing some real challenges.

I join with the Premier in assuring the people of New Zealand that we are there with them. We will provide whatever assistance we can. In this case we are unable to provide financial assistance, but we have certainly been there with the recovery efforts. We will be there in spirit. We will continue to be there. We know that New Zealand can come through this as we are determined to after the summer we have had with floods and cyclones. As the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the opposition, I want to pass on our support to the people Canterbury, the people of Christchurch and the people of New Zealand.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would ask honourable members to stand and join us in a minute's silence for the people of Christchurch.

*Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.*

**Ms BLIGH:** Mr Speaker, I would ask that you make appropriate arrangements for our sentiments to be conveyed to the parliament of New Zealand.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.49 am): I want to provide the House with an update on the emergency assistance payments from the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal, which now stands at over \$233 million. On Friday, 25 February I announced new measures to assist in fast-tracking payments from the appeal. To date, approximately 22,000 applications for assistance for both the floods and Cyclone Yasi have been received and applications are still being received. The closing dates are still to come. As at 7 March 2011, 16,414 applications had been processed. Of that figure, 14,550 claims have been paid, with over \$34 million from the appeal going to those in need. Of the applications processed, a further 1,864 have received a preliminary assessment of being ineligible for assistance for a variety of reasons. These applicants are contacted and given the opportunity to discuss their claim and, where possible, provide additional information to support their claim for payment. I believe that these figures show that we are making good progress on getting these applications processed and getting these emergency payments to members of the public as quickly as possible.

I am pleased today to announce a second round of funding from the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal. This round of funding will help those people whose homes have been destroyed as a result of the Queensland floods and Tropical Cyclone Yasi. It will specifically address owner-occupied homes which are uninhabitable, and that means it will go directly to some of those who have been hardest hit by these natural disasters. Further funding rounds for other households affected by flooding and Yasi will be progressively announced in coming weeks and months. But this next round will provide some certainty for those whose homes have been utterly destroyed and who are literally rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of these events. Under this funding round, assistance will be made available where an applicant's home was totally destroyed, is unable to be repaired or must be demolished; the damaged

residence was owned by the applicant and was their principal place of residence at the time of the flooding or Tropical Cyclone Yasi; and the applicant would not be able to rebuild or re-establish a new home without significant financial assistance.

A generous income test will be applied to determine eligibility for assistance and the amount of assistance that the applicant may be eligible to receive. Owner-occupied households with a combined income of up to \$150,000 per annum for the owner and/or spouse will be eligible for payments from the fund. Those who are eligible will receive an initial payment of \$10,000 towards their rehousing or rebuilding needs and further assistance of \$90,000 up to a total of \$100,000 may be available subject to assessment by the applicant's insurer or another certified assessor. Insurance payments and any assistance provided under the structural assistance grants available under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements will be taken into account when deciding the actual level of assistance. This means that applicants with a combined household income of up to \$100,000 who meet all the eligibility requirements could receive total assistance of up to \$100,000 towards rebuilding their homes. It also means that those with a combined income between \$100,000 and \$150,000 per annum, if eligible, could receive total assistance of between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

The Department of Communities will be accepting and assessing all applications on behalf of the government for the second round and every effort will be made to process those claims as quickly as possible. Full details of the funding round and the application forms will be available from next Monday, 14 March, and applications will close on 15 April. Applicants, however, can be paid throughout that period, and we expect that to happen. I also anticipate making further announcements on additional funding allocations before the closure of this next round of applications for this phase of reconstruction grants on 15 April.

I think it is important to give some context of the devastating natural disasters that have struck Queensland and the work that the committee overseeing the distribution of these funds is faced with. These are the biggest natural disasters in our state's history. In terms of the scale of the events and the number of communities affected, they are the largest in Australia's history. We are not dealing with one disaster. The cumulative impacts of the flood events and Cyclone Yasi are significantly greater than either Cyclone Larry or the Victorian bushfires, two recent events that have required this sort of distribution of relief funds. The number of houses destroyed in the Victorian bushfires was 2,133 properties destroyed and 1,400 damaged. The number of residential properties affected by flood and Yasi now stands at 56,400. It is a task of a completely different order. The number of non-livable residential properties in that figure stands at more than 3,000 and the number of residential properties which need to be vacated for repair is more than 1,600. What these figures show is that the challenges facing the distribution committee to disburse this fund equitably across the disaster affected area cannot be underestimated.

There have already been 14,550 emergency payments made to applicants in round 1. This compares to the 1,328 payments made in the first funding round of the Cyclone Larry appeal and the 4,273 payments from the initial home dislocation round of the Victorian bushfires. I thank all those organisations and individuals who have donated to the appeal to help Queenslanders in their time of need. It is important for the community to have confidence that the money donated to the appeal is getting to the people who need it, and getting to the people who need it most. The general public and business community have responded passionately to the needs of others and, as I said, the balance currently stands at over \$233 million. But I also thank those people who are serving on the distribution committee. This is a very difficult task. They are making decisions that obviously will affect the lives of people who have experienced a great deal of suffering and trauma. I know that the decisions that they are making are not easy and I thank them for the work they are doing. I know that they are applying themselves not only diligently but also with a great deal of compassion.

### Natural Disasters

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.56 am): As I have said on a number of occasions, 2011 is the year of reconstruction in Queensland. I am pleased to report that the massive rebuilding effort is underway but we are very conscious of how much more there is to do. Last month an unprecedented 94 per cent of Queensland was under disaster declaration following recent natural disasters. According to the Insurance Council of Australia's latest data, the level of claims for flooding and Cyclone Yasi is currently a combined \$2.75 billion from 97,000 claims. This is made up of 46,300 claims for flooding and 50,500 claims from Yasi. To put that in perspective, it is more than 2½ times the size of claims for that of the Victorian bushfires and five times that of Cyclone Larry.

Looking around the state today we see that roads are reopening. Over 86 per cent of the road network is now open, but some 9,200 kilometres remains damaged. Almost 80 per cent of our rail network that was damaged has now reopened. All of our ports are now operating, even though some are operating on a reduced output. Of the state's 54 coalmines, 22 per cent are fully operational and 72 per cent are partly operational, with only three not in any production. Around 470,000 homes and

businesses have had their power restored. This is nothing short of a mighty effort by our power workers and those who came from other states to help. All schools have reopened. In Brisbane Milpera and Rocklea continue to operate from alternative locations, but Milton State School is now fully operational in its original site. In Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley, Central Queensland and the Sunshine Coast, all schools are operational. All schools that had been closed as a result of Cyclone Yasi are now reopened.

When it comes to our community facilities, they are also making steps towards recovery. We had more than 500 organisations directly affected, and many clubs are getting back on their feet through the work of volunteers and through accessing our Sports Flood Fight Back Plan. We have seen 46 applications for replacement of equipment and a further 32 applications in funding to rebuild or repair infrastructure.

We know that when you talk about reconstructing a community, it is not just rebuilding homes. To be a real community, you need those community facilities to be operating. They are the glue that binds those families, neighbourhoods and suburbs and they are just as important in the effort as major economic infrastructure like roads, ports and railways.

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority, which formally came into being at our last sitting just two weeks ago, is working to help Queenslanders get back on their feet. The QRA has moved from post disaster recovery operations to reconstruction. It has now asked all councils affected by floods and cyclones to provide assessments of infrastructure damage by mid March. We know that this will be quite a complex task for some councils and the QRA is assisting in that effort.

The QRA website is up and running, providing an online record of the devastation through aerial images and actual flood line maps and also linking generous corporate and private donors with devastated sporting clubs, community groups and other not-for-profit groups. I commend that part of the website to all members. There are a number of major Australian corporations offering both funds and building assistance to clubs and sporting organisations. What the QRA website is doing is matching those clubs that want help to the corporations that are standing ready to provide that help. So I say to all members who have an affected club or sporting facility in their area to go to that part of the website to see if we cannot match them up with an organisation wanting to help.

The QRA board met for the third time yesterday in Rockhampton, after meeting last week in Cairns and prior to that in Brisbane. In the last fortnight I and a number of my ministers have revisited some of the areas hardest hit, talking to Queenslanders about their needs and providing a range of measures to assist. Progress in the past fortnight includes a joint state and federal \$83 million Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package to support businesses retain the apprentices and trainees who will form their workforces of tomorrow and give those Queenslanders who are currently unemployed a fresh start in some of the reconstruction projects. We have seen a joint state and federal \$315 million package of financial assistance to local councils to repair water and sewerage utilities, to rebuild other infrastructure that sits outside the NDRRA guidelines, such as Brisbane's ferry terminals, and to help pay councils' day labour costs.

Many of these issues were a matter of contention in the last sitting of the parliament. I indicated then that we were in discussions with the Commonwealth. Those discussions have born fruit and a very generous package is now available. An extension of NDRRA assistance has been made to primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations across the state. This is in addition to the category D activations that are already in place from areas impacted by Cyclone Yasi. This means concessional loans of up to \$650,000, including a grant component of up to \$50,000 for a range of businesses and primary producers. We have seen a joint federal and state tourism recovery package allocated for \$12 million, with details of the final arrangements now being worked through. We have seen the short-listing of three companies, including one with an office in Cairns, for an expression of interest for the first Main Roads contract for cyclone related repair work around Cairns. This is the first of several contracts of varying sizes that will be called for the Cairns region for around \$600 million worth of projects that will generate an estimated 6½ thousand road repair jobs over the next two to three years. All of QBuild's FNQ reconstruction jobs—

**Mr Schwarten:** Mighty QBuild.

**Ms BLIGH:** The mighty QBuild. I take that interjection from the member for Rockhampton—they are so far going to local contractors and local suppliers.

All of this will take time and patience, but we are working on it and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority has been very quick out of the blocks. Most importantly, the spirit of Queenslanders is very much alive and well. There is no better demonstration of this than the announcement that Townsville will host the biggest disaster fundraising concert in the state.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms BLIGH:** The Deputy Premier will be pleased to know that it will be headlined by Jimmy Barnes and that he will be joined by *Australian Idol* stars Shannon Noll, Ricki-Lee Coulter and Stan Walker. Aria Hall of Fame inductees Dragon, fronted by Mark Williams, will open the show and local band the Godfathers of Funk will also be performing. The concert will be held on 9 April. I certainly encourage anybody who is in North Queensland at the time to get along. It will be another opportunity to help those whose lives have been devastated by these events.

### North Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.04 am): Speaking of Far North Queensland, I was very pleased to spend some time recently governing Queensland from Cairns. It was an opportunity for me to be on the ground and to talk to locals to monitor how the recovery and the impending rebuild is progressing. It also enabled me to get out to as many of those cyclone ravaged communities as possible and it enabled me to get the message out to the nation that Far North Queensland, despite the devastation, is very much open for business.

Running the state from outside our capital city is a commitment that I announced last year and I kick-started it with a week in Townsville in October. After the devastation of Yasi, it made sense for Cairns to be my next stop in this initiative. For me, governing the state from the far north meant returning to those towns devastated by Yasi to not only monitor the clean-up and recovery but to meet with the folks of Tully, Tully Heads and Cardwell as well as the mayor and local councillors to talk about how they are coping. We all remain shocked by the scenes of utter devastation in these towns, but by actually being on the ground and talking to those people who experienced it you get an idea of the sheer terror that Yasi wrought. I remain thankful that there was not a greater loss of life and I am still thankful that early warnings allowed people to get to safety. As Minister for Reconstruction, together with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, I am determined that we get on with the job of rebuilding and recovering.

Another vital element to our recovery will be to get those industries that were devastated by Yasi back on their feet and nowhere is that more important than in the far north and in the lifeblood industry of our tourism sector. This is an industry that was brought to its knees by the global financial crisis while struggling with a high Australian dollar and then further crippled by devastating cyclone. I was pleased in Cairns to announce a new campaign to focus on Far North Queensland to lure those vital tourists from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, particularly for the Easter holidays. We need to turn around the perception that our important tourism areas of Cairns, Port Douglas, the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsundays are broken beyond repair, and this campaign will take a big stride in that direction. It will then be built on by the \$12 million broader campaign that is being finalised.

I was also pleased to announce seed funding for new tourism ventures that may ultimately offer interstate and international tourists new attractions, including a World Heritage Gateway Centre in Cairns, a revamp of the historic Barron Gorge tramway, a visitor centre and restaurant in Mareeba, a swimming lagoon at Port Douglas and the future development the Family Isles, including Dunk and Bedarra.

Governing from Cairns also gave me firsthand the opportunity to meet with tourism leaders—for example, walking through the streets of Kuranda with the member for Barron River, Steve Wettenhall, talking to operators face to face and other important groups like the building industry, business leaders and the chambers of commerce in Cairns and Port Douglas, along with local MPs Desley Boyle, Jason O'Brien and Minister Curtis Pitt. It gave me the chance to speak to people in Cairns about what matters to them—issues like the Cairns Base Hospital and future health services. Governing Queensland from outside the capital city is something I intend to do on a regular basis throughout this year.

### International Women's Day

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.07 am): As honourable members are aware, today, 8 March, marks not only International Women's Day but the centenary of International Women's Day: 100 years of women making a difference and 100 years of many hard-won achievements for Queensland and Australian women. As we mark this day, I would like to remind us all of some of our achievements over that past century. They remind us of the incredible strides that we have taken and that it was not so very long ago that women in this state were denied some of the most basic rights, particularly in a democracy.

In 1905—just a little over that century—Queensland women were granted the right to vote in state elections. They exercised that right for the first time in the 1907 state election. It was not for another 60 years—in 1965—that Indigenous Queenslanders won the same right. In 1915, women gained the right to be elected into Queensland parliament. So in another 10 years after they were given the right to vote, they were allowed to stand for election. Yet it took until 1929 for Irene Longman to become the first Queensland woman elected here.

**Mr Johnson:** Now they are taking over.

**Ms BLIGH:** I take the interjection from the member for Gregory, who asserts that now we are taking over. Today, 32 of the 89 members of this House—or 35 per cent—are women.

It was not until 1965 that women could be sworn into the Queensland Police Service and then in 1990 the first women police officers were promoted to inspector level. In 1969 the ban on married women as permanent employees in the Queensland public sector was abolished. This is during our lifetime; women had to resign if they were in the Public Service and married. In 1984 the Sex Discrimination Act was passed and in 1989 the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act was proclaimed. Earlier this year we welcomed another significant milestone: the introduction of paid parental leave.

I am reminded of the words of suffragist Vida Goldstein, who said—

The world moves slowly, my masters, women's world especially—but it moves.

That is something to be thankful for. Our history is not just about key dates and landmark achievements. Today it is with pleasure that we also acknowledge the women who every day are working or volunteering to make the world a better place. We could not have seen a better example of that than the role of women in the disasters we have faced over the last two months, not only out there at the front line in uniforms as police officers, ambulance officers and SES personnel involved in all of those front-line tasks, including very grim and tragic search-and-rescue efforts in the Lockyer Valley. Similarly, we saw women involved in all the traditional roles that women play in their families and their communities in times of crisis, such as looking after their families, keeping them safe, explaining terrifying events to their children, being out there volunteering with the CWA, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, cooking food, bringing cakes down to the volunteers—all of those things that are an important part of the traditional role of women in the community.

The Queensland government's *Everyday women, extraordinary lives* online gallery is a tribute to many of those quiet achievers. It acknowledges Queensland women who have come to the fore during the recent disasters. Their efforts, I think, are reminiscent of women in World War II who mobilised through the Australian Women's Land Army to keep farming and industry moving. With the massive rebuilding task facing us we again will need to embrace all the resources that Queensland has to offer, including women as an untapped resource for key reconstruction industries.

We all have good reason to celebrate International Women's Day. When the rights of women are observed as human rights, all of society benefits and is elevated by it. Tonight I will be hosting a reception with the Minister for Women, Karen Struthers, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. I congratulate all of those women—not only those in the House now but also those who were the trailblazers, those who came before, those who beat a path to the door of this parliament. In gratitude I acknowledge their work in the past century.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### Visitors to Public Gallery

**Mr SPEAKER:** It being International Women's Day, I acknowledge in the public gallery the Pine Rivers CWA from the electorate of Kallangur and also the ladies from Mount Alvernia College, Stafford. Later we will be joined by St Ita's Primary School and the Centenary Probus Club.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance; Local Government Electoral System Review, Government Response

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (10.12 am): The Bligh government is getting on with the job of reconstructing Queensland. We remain committed to rebuilding people's communities, their homes and their lives following the floods and Cyclone Yasi. To help with the rebuilding, an extra \$700,000 has been made available to give Queenslanders affected by both the floods and Cyclone Yasi access to free legal information and advice. We know that there are many people discovering that the damage to their homes and possessions is not covered by their insurance policy. Where a person disagrees with the decision from their insurer they are able to access internal dispute resolution processes, and this funding will help them do that.

The Insurance Council of Australia and the federal government have provided \$250,000 and \$200,000 respectively to enable the creation of a state-wide network of lawyers to deliver free flood and cyclone legal information and advice to all Queenslanders who need it. On top of this, Legal Aid Queensland is providing \$250,000 directly to community legal centres in flood and cyclone affected areas to help people on the ground, particularly in regional areas of the state.

Legal Aid Queensland and community legal centres are already providing vital legal advice to Queenslanders whose homes have been damaged, and this funding will ensure increased assistance to those who need it most. I thank Legal Aid Queensland for their coordination of Queensland's Flood and Cyclone Legal Help services. They have been working with community legal centres and industry organisations such as the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service to ensure legal information and advice is available to affected communities.

In relation to the New Zealand matters, I associate myself with the remarks of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. I will be in Christchurch with my three sons on 1 October to see Australia beat Russia in a match there. I do not know who comrade Lawrence is supporting, but I will certainly be supporting Australia.

I would like to bring to the attention of members the government's response to the parliamentary Law, Justice and Safety Committee's report No. 78, *A new Local Government Electoral Act: review of local government electoral system (excluding BCC)*. The report follows an extensive inquiry process conducted by the committee across the second half of 2010. I commend the work of the committee.

From the detail of the report recommendations and the number of submissions received by the committee, it is obvious there is both a high-level interest in local government elections and a diversity of ideas across the local government sector and community. The government's response, tabled on 28 February, supports 21 of the committee's 33 recommendations. Key components of the government's response include all local government elections will be undertaken by the Electoral Commission of Queensland; support for new technology to better facilitate the conduct of local government elections; comprehensive training for local returning officers; retention of quadrennial elections on the last Saturday in March; and continuing to require local councillors to resign if they nominate as a candidate in a state election. This is particularly important to ensure local councillors do not treat office as a stepping stone to higher careers and to avoid conflicts of interest between their campaigning role and their local councillor role.

I note that the opposition do not share this view, with the member for Warrego criticising the government's position last week. Of all the recommendations in the report, it is breathtaking that this is the one the member for Warrego would focus on. He could have focused on recommendations giving ratepayers more say in council elections.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left, the Deputy Premier has the call.

**Mr LUCAS:** It is a rule that applies to us when it comes to federal elections.

**Mr Johnson:** He's got under your skin, has he?

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gregory will cease interjecting. The member for Hinchinbrook will cease interjecting.

**Mr LUCAS:** From your reaction I think I've got under yours. He could have focused on ensuring well-trained polling booth staff for efficient elections, or he could have highlighted the recommendation about future arrangements where council elections are affected by natural disasters. But, no, the focus was all on jobs for National Party mates. That is what those opposite were focused on. They want people to submit themselves to ratepayers for a four-year term, only to then turn around and go for another job. If they lose the election, they want to be able to get their old job back. Imagine if someone in the private sector said, 'I'm sorry, I want to go work for someone else but hold the job for me in case it doesn't work out.' It is typical of the member for Warrego that the one thing he would focus on is jobs for National Party mates.

I would like to thank the Electoral Commissioner and his office for their assistance in providing advice on the proposed reforms during recent consultation. I would also like to take this opportunity to further clarify the commission's position on the government's response. Since tabling the government response, the commissioner has noted in his discussions with the department that the ECQ neither supports nor opposes recommendation 4, an entirely appropriate position for this independent body. In relation to this recommendation, I note that the ECQ submission to the inquiry confirmed the commission has the experience and expertise to conduct future elections for all local governments in Queensland and is willing to do so. As the government response indicates, we will be introducing legislation later this year to implement this proposal. In relation to recommendation 29, the Electoral Commissioner has advised that he has no objection to the committee's recommendation in relation to postal voting.

As noted in my letter to the Clerk, the recommendations to be adopted by government will be included in the new Local Government Electoral Bill expected to be introduced to the House midyear. This bill will be subject to further targeted consultation including with the Electoral Commissioner and key local government stakeholders such as the Local Government Association of Queensland and Local Government Managers Australia. I commend to the House government's response to report No. 78 of the parliamentary Law, Justice and Safety Committee.

### **International Women's Day; Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance**

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.17 am): One hundred years ago, one million women marched for change on 8 March. Today we celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

It is not a well-known fact, but when Irene Longman was elected to this House in 1929 she was not allowed to sit in the dining room with the men; she sat out on the veranda. But now we have our first female Governor-General, our first woman Prime Minister and Australia's first popularly elected woman Premier. Despite these achievements, there are still many barriers that women unfairly face to participating equally in our society.

It is my scientifically formulated view that women are currently about 30 per cent equal, particularly in leadership and participation. For example, we make up about 30 per cent, on average, of members of parliaments and local governments around Australia but when it comes to income and economic security women are only around the 10 per cent equal mark. Women working full time year round in Australia are paid only about 82c for every dollar earned by men. The gender pay gap is currently 18 per cent in Australia. That gap widens to over 29.3 per cent in some industries.

There are only two women on Queensland's top 100 rich list. Given the barriers women still face, I have steered the Office for Women to advancing women's economic prosperity as a priority. We will do this through workforce participation, education and training, and leadership opportunities for Queensland women and girls. This includes expanding our government's highly successful Women in Hard Hats initiative to ensure that women and girls are able to take up opportunities in non-traditional industries that are critical to Queensland's reconstruction.

During the recovery and reconstruction from the floods and cyclones, women have been heavily involved in their traditional roles as carers, as well as being on the front line in the SES and the police, and in engineering and rebuilding roles. As a government, we have to ensure that everyone has the full support they need to recover from those disasters financially, physically and emotionally. We know that reliving and recounting the trauma many people have endured can be harrowing, which is why emotional support will be so important. Therefore, today I am pleased to announce a new support service for those people making submissions to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. This service will operate for the next 12 months and will act as a support for individuals who were affected by the floods and who wish to participate in the commission of inquiry. We want to hear from anyone affected by the floods who may want to share their story or experience.

The Flood Inquiry Support Service will be operated by Lifeline, which as a partner agency in community recovery operations has already been doing an outstanding job supporting flood victims and has been granted a further \$300,000 in funding to run the service. Lifeline will offer counselling, advice and referrals for people who attend the inquiry, whether in the formal surrounds of the inquiry or at community consultations that occur as part of the inquiry process. The support service will be there to also help individuals prepare submissions, to familiarise them with the inquiry process and, importantly, to offer debrief support to lay witnesses following their appearance at the commission. The service is already up and running. I urge individuals who may be considering taking part in the inquiry to contact the support service. The service can be contacted on 1300337828, weekdays between 9 am and 5 pm.

### **Female Firefighters; Emergency Management Queensland, Rescue of the Year Award**

 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.21 am): Women have a long and proud history of serving in our defence forces, police and ambulance services. However, women have only been a relatively recent addition to the permanent ranks of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. In fact, the QFRS did not employ its first permanent female firefighters until 1995, when three women joined the service. Over the next 10 years, a further 13 permanent female firefighters joined the service, taking the total number to 16. In 2005, a new continuous recruitment process, including an enhanced focus on attracting female applicants, was implemented and today there are currently 42 permanent female firefighters in Queensland. There are also around 177 female part-time auxiliary firefighters across the state and around 100 others working in our communications centres. I thank them all for their dedicated service to their local communities.

The government wants to see more women in the ranks of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. That is why today, International Women's Day, I am announcing an ambitious but achievable new target to increase the number of permanent female firefighters to 150 by 2015. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service will actively target additional female applicants, without compromising its stringent selection process. To achieve this the service will develop gender specific promotional materials; target quality applicants from the Australian defence forces, sporting associations, fitness centres and gyms, and other recruitment processes; appoint a case manager to ensure mentoring and support is provided to applicants through the application process; and also develop networks to provide enhanced peer support and advice to female applicants from expressions of interest right through to employment. All female applicants must meet the same standards as their male counterparts to qualify for employment with the service, including physical, mechanical and psychological testing. However, as the 42 women who are currently in the ranks and on the front line can attest, those standards do not preclude females.

There is no doubt that a career as a firefighter carries with it an element of risk. However, there is also the potential for great reward. I encourage any Queensland women who think they have got what it takes to join the internationally renowned ranks of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to visit the department's website.

While I am on my feet, I add my congratulations to the Emergency Management Queensland helicopter rescue crew on receiving the Rescue of the Year award at a recent international helicopter association conference in the United States.

### **Seqwater, Report on Floods**

 **Hon. KJ JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Resource Management) (10.24 am): As members of the House would be aware, the director-general of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, in his role as the regulator of dam safety, has released a report by dam operator Seqwater into the operation of Wivenhoe and Somerset dams during the January floods. The report was prepared by Seqwater as a requirement under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to submit a report to the department's Office of Water Supply Regulator within six weeks of a major flood event. The scope of this highly technical report is directly relevant to key matters to be assessed by the commission of inquiry, under its terms of reference. That is why, upon receiving Seqwater's report on Wednesday last week, the director-general provided it to the commission for consideration that day and also sought advice on the appropriateness of publishing the report. Having received advice yesterday that the commission held no concerns with the public release of this report, the department published it and it can now be viewed on the Department of Environment and Resource Management website. The report comprises more than 1,000 pages and five volumes of technical information.

The government is determined to be open and transparent in all matters relating to the commission's investigation into the floods. As the Premier has said, we want to know that our dams worked as they were supposed to and were operated as best as technically they could be, given information available at the time. The commission of inquiry is the appropriate forum to undertake that investigation and to review documents like Seqwater's report. The commission is scheduled to provide its interim report by 1 August 2011, which will provide recommendations to be addressed prior to the next wet season.

## **INTEGRITY, ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **Membership**

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (10.26 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) that the member for Yeerongpilly be discharged from the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee and that the member for Southport be appointed to the Integrity, Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee; and
- (2) that the member for Whitsunday be discharged from the Economic Development Committee; and
- (3) that the member for Mulgrave be discharged from the Environment and Resources Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## SCRUTINY OF LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.26 am): I table the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's *Legislation Alert No. 2 of 2011*. In addition, I table a copy of the correspondence received from the Brisbane Association for Rates Equity regarding the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010.

*Tabled paper:* Scrutiny of Legislation Committee, Legislation Alert No. 2 of 2011 [\[4005\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Copy of correspondence, dated 19 February 2011, from the Brisbane Association for Rates Equity to the Chair of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee regarding the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 [\[4006\]](#).

## LAW, JUSTICE AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Office of the Information Commissioner Report

 **Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.27 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 2 to the Legislative Assembly from the Office of the Information Commissioner titled *Results of desktop audits: Review of publication schemes, disclosure logs and information privacy awareness in departments, local governments and universities*. The report provides the results of desktop audits of agency websites assessing compliance by agencies with their obligations, under the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Information Privacy Act 2009, in relation to publication schemes, disclosure logs and certain information privacy principles.

*Tabled paper:* Office of the Information Commissioner Queensland: Report No. 2 to the Queensland Legislative Assembly, titled 'Results of Desktop Audits—Review of Publication Schemes, Disclosure Logs and Information Privacy Awareness in Departments, Local Governments and Universities' [\[4007\]](#).

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Legislative Assembly, Marks of Respect

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (10.27 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes that according to a parliamentary library study:

- 1) Since 2001 there have been 16 occasions—17 including this morning—in which the House has observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for a person or persons who have died.
- 2) Of those occasions that the House has observed silence since 2001, four occasions have been to commemorate Remembrance Day.
- 3) Only one of the occasions that the House has observed silence since 2001 was for a soldier killed whilst serving in Afghanistan—David Pearce, on 17 October 2007.
- 4) On one of the occasions, 2 December 2005, a minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect for an Australian man executed in Singapore after being found guilty of drug offences.

And calls on the Premier, on the first sitting day immediately following the death of any member of the Australian military on active overseas service, to move a motion for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Carbon Tax

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (10.29 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier finally put an end to her silly political games and her evasive, weasel words and explain why she has failed to stand up for Queensland in her refusal to oppose Labor's unfair carbon tax?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for his question. As I have outlined, right now Australia does not have a carbon tax nor does it have any details of one. What it has is a framework under which the matter can be considered and such a proposition can be developed. When that has been developed and I, members of the government and the Australian public know what the details are, we will make a judgement about it. In that judgement we will put Queensland first. As we did with the previous proposal in relation to an emissions trading scheme, we will be seeking adequate protections for our export exposed industries; we will be seeking appropriate protections for consumers and householders; and we will also be seeking appropriate protections for our agricultural sector.

What we also know is that in Queensland we have a special interest in what is happening with climate change. We have a particular interest in what happens nationally and, more importantly, we have a special interest in what happens internationally. Why? Firstly, Queensland is a large coal exporting state. What happens internationally on the issue of carbon emissions will ultimately matter to our economy not next year, not in five years time, but if we look forward two decades—10 years or 20 years—we can reasonably predict that many countries around the world will have moved to these sorts of schemes. What I do not want is to live in a country that has been left behind on this agenda. But we need to get that right. It is too important for us to not work carefully through all of the parameters as they are proposed.

Secondly, Queensland is home to some of the most beautiful natural environments on earth. We are home to the World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef, which will be incredibly sensitive to rising sea temperatures. The Great Barrier Reef is worth about \$5 billion to the Queensland economy. It is a precious natural icon and we are its guardians. I personally take that responsibility very seriously. Similarly, we are blessed with World Heritage rainforest in the Daintree, areas like Fraser Island and others—ecosystems that will be sensitive to climate change—and we want to see them protected.

We also know that Queenslanders want to see leadership on the issue of climate change, but they want to see us get it right. When we have the details, when we see the proposal, we will have a long, hard look at it and we will be making sure that we put Queensland and Queensland's interests absolutely ahead of everything else in our assessment of whether or not it is worthy of our support.

### Carbon Tax

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I note with interest that the Premier said that she needs to see details of the proposal before she decides whether she can fight against it. I, therefore, refer the Premier to her own *Ideas to Action* report that came out of the 2008 Queensland ideas forum—and I table a copy—which states that the state government will plan for uncertainties and the potential impact of a carbon tax. I ask: given that 2½ years have now passed, will the Premier publicly release for Queenslanders all the economic modelling on a potential carbon tax or was this just a talkfest after all?

*Tabled paper:* Extract from report titled 'Queensland 2020 Ideas to Action Forum Report' [4008].

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. The honourable member seems to have completely omitted the fact that 2½ years have passed since June 2008 and there has been a very significant series of actions on this issue federally. There has been a massive—

**Mr Nicholls:** Including rolling the Prime Minister.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Clayfield. The honourable the Premier has the call.

**Ms BLIGH:** The federal parliament, after an extensive period of public consultation and public debate, has rejected a model of dealing with carbon, formerly known as an emissions trading scheme and various other acronyms. We have seen both the federal parliament reject this and then the federal Liberal Party tear itself apart on the issue.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Stop the clock. The honourable the Premier.

**Ms BLIGH:** I stand by what we said in the Ideas to Action forum. What was identified then remains a challenge for Queensland, a challenge for Australia and a challenge for the planet. We face uncertain times ahead in relation to the effects of climate change and CO<sub>2</sub> on our atmosphere. Whether we do nothing or whether we do something, there is still uncertainty ahead of us. We need to make sure that we are working to look after the interests of Queensland, and that is what we will do. The member's question is based on an assumption that doing nothing—

**Mr Langbroek:** It's your document.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition has asked the question. The Premier is answering it. The Premier has the call.

**Ms BLIGH:** The questions that have been put forward this morning have built into them an assumption that doing nothing is not only possible but also provides a certain course for the future. There are uncertainties in every future contemplation whether it is on the issue of climate change or other issues. As I said, we are uncertain as a nation about where other states and nations will go on this issue and we are working with them as part of a global effort. We are uncertain as a nation how we should deal with this. It is not only on that side of politics. I am happy to take some of the interjections. These are big, diabolical policy issues and people are working rigorously and carefully to try to find the appropriate way forward. I commend those people like Ross Garnaut and others who are applying their considerable talents to finding a way through this. Those who seek to put their head in the sand on this issue do not serve the interests of Queenslanders.

### Natural Disasters

**Mrs MILLER:** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier inform the House on the status of the efforts to recognise Queensland's local flood heroes?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for her question.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Clayfield! That is twice. The Premier has the call.

**Ms BLIGH:** The member for Clayfield, whose constituents have, thankfully, been spared some of the impacts, may like to make jokes about it, but I commend the member for Bundamba for her efforts.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Clayfield will cease interjecting. The honourable the Premier has the call.

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for Bundamba for her question and for her deep care and compassion for the many thousands of her constituents whose lives have been affected not just a little bit but in devastating ways.

I am very pleased to have the chance this morning to talk about the importance of the local heroes program. Yes, we have put ads in the paper, and I would hope that every member who has constituents who worked as part of the community effort will be doing their best to help identify these people so they can be recognised. Many people from areas that were not affected by flooding nevertheless went to those areas that were. The member's area may not be affected by flooding in any way, but he will know some of the people in his own area who are SES volunteers, who are in the Red Cross or who just turned up to help as individuals. I know of stories where people got their P&C together to collect pencils and papers and took them out to flood affected areas. People did this individually, they did it collectively and they did it as part of their sporting groups. Because of the positions that we hold, many members of parliament will know of these people.

I think it is important that we recognise not only the devastation that happened during the disasters but also that we as a community were able to come together in a way that was genuine and heartfelt. Those people who pulled us together in that way should be recognised and thanked because we want them to keep doing it. We want them to be an inspiration in our community. We want them and their families to be recognised so that others in the community will feel inspired to act in similar ways after future events and may feel inspired to join an organisation like the SES so that they are ready to help out in future events which, tragically, we know will occur.

I urge every member of the House to please encourage their local people, their local heroes, to nominate and to support their nominations. I urge them to talk to their councillors about people who they think might be worthy of such recognition. These people will be acknowledged at events that we will be hosting. No matter what side of politics members are from, where an event is hosted in their electorate, they will be invited and they will have a role. I want to work with every member of the parliament whose area has been affected. We will make sure that people are doing this in a genuine, heartfelt way, in the same way as the efforts of these local heroes were contributed.

### Carbon Tax

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to Labor's carbon tax, which Julia Gillard admits will increase the cost of electricity, food and transport. Will the Premier put the interests of Queenslanders ahead of the interests of Julia Gillard by resigning as national president of the Labor Party to fight this insidious tax on everyday living?

**Ms BLIGH:** It is a funny old suggestion, from someone with as much political experience as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the best way to campaign either for or against a proposition of a political party is to do it from outside the political party, to resign from the party.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Deputy Leader, you have asked the question.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Stop the clock again. Deputy Leader, you have asked the question. The honourable Premier has the call. I call the Premier.

**Ms BLIGH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I am a member of a political party. I joined a political party because I believed it was the best way to join with others of like-minded views to campaign for things that I believed in. I know, from a wealth of experience myself, that there are often times inside political parties when things happen that you do not agree with. That is why you stand up at conference and have an argument about it and vote in favour of it or vote against it. Sometimes you win the vote; sometimes you do not. Then you go back the next year or the year after and have another crack at it. That is how progress is made. I have never believed—

**Mr Fraser:** Like you running for the leadership.

**Ms BLIGH:** Time after time after time. I have never believed that the way to influence an organisation that you have been a part of and whose interests you have spent your life serving is to walk away from it—to have a tantrum, to spit the dummy or in any way move outside of it. Like other members of my team and like ordinary branch members of the Australian Labor Party, we will have an opportunity to debate these issues inside the party, in the relevant party forums, and we will have an opportunity to do it as part of a wider public debate.

The issue of climate change is a challenge for our generation. The Australian Labor Party proudly seeks answers to this challenge. We do not claim to have all of the answers. These are things on which we will need to take advice from experts. What we do know is that those opposite continue to be climate change deniers. There is nothing to be gained—there is no public interest served—by putting your head in the sand, claiming that volcanoes are to blame. Climate change is real. We believe the science. We are determined to protect future generations. We will tackle climate change for future generations of Australians.

### Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

**Mr WENDT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the progress of the independent commission of inquiry into Queensland's devastating floods?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. He is another member whose constituents have been very badly affected by these floods and who knows some of the very vexed questions that people are asking themselves, asking the community and asking the government—and rightly so.

We have established an independent commission of inquiry. Obviously it is charged under the act under which it was established to conduct itself independently. I believe that the three people who have been appointed by the Governor to head this inquiry will do that in a way that honourably serves the people of Queensland in this quest. But I do want to acknowledge that, despite all of the efforts by the three commissioners and their staff to ensure that the inquiry is conducted in a way that welcomes people wanting to make submissions, these things are by their nature often legalistic. For people who have never been into a courtroom, for people who have never been involved in a commission of inquiry, the prospect of appearing or writing a submission could be very daunting. But those are the very voices that we need to make sure we are hearing.

We will have ample advice, I predict, provided to the inquiry from people with substantial technical expertise on a range of issues—and that is appropriate—but we do not want to miss the voices of ordinary people who felt and experienced these things firsthand. That is why, as I outlined last sitting, the government has put together a package that will be administered through Lifeline whereby counsellors are available to work with people who are planning or seeking to appear before the inquiry and who may want to talk about what that would be like and get some support while they do it. It is a service that is also available for people who do not want to appear or who will not be making a physical appearance but who want to put in a submission, whether that is one page or 20 pages or whatever it might be.

I advise members, if they have people in their electorates who have something to offer, who want to have their voices heard, who want to say something but who feel a little intimidated by the experience—and I do not blame them; it can be quite daunting—that this service is available. It is available through Lifeline and people should be encouraged to use it. I encourage members of parliament to get the word out to their constituents about this and to make sure they know that they are not alone. It is a very reasonable feeling that they might be having about not knowing where to start. The legal process can be quite confusing. That is why this \$300,000 assistance to Lifeline is there. I would, as I said, really encourage members who have constituents in this situation to put something in their local paper, to talk about it in their newsletters, to talk about it at their branch meetings and wherever they think somebody might get the word that this service is available because I think it will make a difference to those people who really need it.

### Carbon Tax

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is to the Minister for Finance. Labor's federal Treasurer, Wayne Swan, says that Labor's carbon tax is not really a tax at all. In her own words, will the new finance minister say if she agrees that the carbon tax is not really a tax and explain why?

**Ms NOLAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I will tell him in my own words that I believe the science of climate change, that I believe that climate change is real and that I believe that we as legislators have a responsibility to deal with it.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The minister has the call. She is answering the question. I call the minister.

**Ms NOLAN:** The member for Clayfield once upon a time used to be a member of the Liberal Party, and there were times in Queensland political history when the Liberal Party, too, believed in climate change. Indeed, on 21 February 2007 the then leader of the then Liberal Party, Dr Flegg, walked into this House and said—

Climate change calls for an immediate response.

He said—

Out of the challenge of dealing with carbon emissions also comes a great opportunity for Queensland.

**Ms NOLAN:** He was backed up at the time by Mr Langbroek, who commended the then leader of the then Liberal Party for taking this initiative. In debate on the private member's bill for a state based response to climate change he said—

The private member's bill before the House would give effect to laws that would allow corporations and individuals to manifest their commitment to saving our planet.

Time has gone by and the federal Labor Party has put a proposition on the table. What is the Queensland government's position? Well, we believe that Queensland households need to be properly protected and we believe that our trade exposed industries need to be properly protected so that they can continue to compete in a global world. We fundamentally believe that this is an issue that requires a response. We do not sign up with that side of the House to that mad wrecker, Tony Abbott, who is simply running away from this issue and playing the cheapest, most populist politics on an incredibly important issue for our time. We certainly have not utterly reversed our position from just three short years ago. We certainly have not changed from saying three years ago that it required an immediate response to today saying that it must absolutely, under all circumstances, be opposed.

### Queensland Economy

**Mr SHINE:** My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade. Can the Treasurer update the House on any recently published data on the Queensland economy?

**Mr FRASER:** I thank the member for Toowoomba North for his question and for his continued interest in the wellbeing of the Queensland economy. He is a fierce advocate for Toowoomba and the business community of Toowoomba. The government looks forward to being with him this weekend for another Toowoomba community cabinet.

I can advise the House of important data that has been released over the last week and in fact data that has been released over the last few minutes. The NAB business confidence survey came out at 10.30 this morning. It showed a rebound in business confidence in Queensland—a rebound to be well above the national business confidence rate.

More importantly than what business is feeling at the moment, what does the data tell us? The data released last week by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the national accounts showed that state final demand in Queensland in the December quarter grew by 0.6 per cent. That is ahead of the growth figure of the national economy of half a per cent. There is the December quarter recovery in action. That is the point we have made continuously. It has been growing at around that rate since June. This provides the facts that the recovery in Queensland was underway in the December quarter.

We saw business investment increase by 3½ per cent in that quarter to be around 10 per cent higher for the year—that critical productive capacity, the wealth producing sector of the economy, investment returning. We saw non-residential construction up. We saw machinery and equipment—a key leading indicator of future construction activity—also up by more than 11 per cent. What do the facts say? The facts say that the recovery in the Queensland economy was robust and occurring at the end of last year—the case that we have been making continuously.

While we continue to make that case, those opposite continue to campaign against confidence in the Queensland economy. They continue to talk down the economy. Despite the facts, they continue to deny the recovery that was occurring in the Queensland economy. Just as they have sought now to

deny the effects of climate change. As the finance minister pointed out, we might well remember a time when those opposite used to stand for something; when the Leader of the Opposition walked into this place back in 2007 and on climate change said—

Clearly it represents one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century.

It is intonation that observers will hear a familiar ring to.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr FRASER:** He said later—

We have talked about the gradual and devastating effects of climate change and we need to think laterally, logically and beyond populist politics at the next election—

There used to be a time when the Leader of the Opposition believed in something; before he sold himself out and now walks in here and pretends to stand for nothing. He denies every position he has held in the past in a craven pursuit of political power, puppeteered as he is by Bruce McIver and those inside the opposition office who seek to use him for their pursuit of power. If one does not stand for anything, one falls over. That is what is going to happen to the Leader of the Opposition.

*(Time expired)*

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left.

### Carbon Tax

**Mr SEENEY:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities. I refer to Labor's carbon tax and the Prime Minister's admission that, and I quote, 'it will have price impacts.' Can the minister guarantee that there will be no increase in Queensland electricity prices as a result of those price impacts that the Prime Minister was referring to? Will the minister stand up for Queensland families and oppose the price impacts of Labor's carbon tax on the cost of living of every Queensland family?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Of course what the honourable member fails to mention in any part of his question, or indeed any of the questions asked by his colleagues, is that the Prime Minister has made it quite clear that, in terms of setting a price on carbon for the purposes of establishing an emissions trading regime, just as former Prime Minister Rudd did, she will also be going down the path of an extensive package of assistance—

**Mr Nicholls:** Well, that worked well.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Once again I will say that what you have failed to acknowledge at any stage in your questions or the questions of your colleagues is that the Prime Minister has made it clear that, in terms of setting a price for carbon for the purpose of establishing an emissions trading regime, an extensive compensation package for householders would be put in place. Part of that package, as was the case—

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The minister has the call.

**Mr ROBERTSON:**—in the emissions trading scheme that was set out by former Prime Minister Rudd, went to compensating households for increases in electricity, particularly electricity generated by coal fired power stations. Alongside that we have seen significant investment in renewable energy which has a much lower carbon footprint. In terms of assessing any impact on future electricity prices, it is of course not possible to do that at this point in time and until the announcement is made as to what the price of carbon will be. It is from that starting point that any compensation package would be framed.

Of course, as the Premier has made clear, we as a government will ensure that our voices are heard in Canberra about legitimate concerns regarding household budgets and any impact of the carbon price on electricity prices. We will be in there arguing for an appropriate compensation package to ensure, particularly for those most vulnerable members of our community, that this does not have an impact on the electricity prices they pay. I can assure honourable members that we are committed to ensuring in our engagement with the Commonwealth government that we make these points loud and strong in all appropriate forums.

As my colleagues have already pointed out, this is an important issue that deserves a lot better thought and treatment than the shallow mutterings from those opposite. This will require a lot of thought and a lot of commitment—

**Mr Messenger** interjected.

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

**Mr ROBERTSON:** In my role as minister for energy I will be taking the views of Queensland to ministerial councils and I will use any opportunities I have to structure an appropriate compensation package for energy users in Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

### School Bullying

**Ms O'NEILL:** My question is to the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. Could the minister please update the House on the government's campaign against bullying in schools?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the honourable member for her question and for her interest in ensuring that Queensland schools stay safe. Can I assure all honourable members and, through the members of this place, all Queenslanders that the Queensland government will stay focused on addressing issues of bullying and violence in schools during 2011. Bullying is a complex social issue. As the Minister for Education, I want to keep a very strong focus on it. At a personal level, I have two young boys going through the education system—grade 1 and grade 3—and I want to make sure they have a safe environment. On another level, I assure all honourable members that, although not a victim of school bullying myself, with a surname like mine I am an expert on what happens in the schoolyard. That will bring a personal focus to what I do as the minister for education.

On a more serious level, the Queensland government has led the nation in responding to bullying and violence in schools. Last year we set up the Queensland Schools Alliance Against Violence. I particularly acknowledge the leadership of the Premier and also the leadership of the former minister for education and now Minister for Health. This is the first time ever we have brought together the state and the non-state system. We brought together representatives from the department, representatives from Catholic schools and representatives from independent schools to stand as one and say, 'We oppose violence and bullying in schools.' We will continue with that.

We have taken the recommendations of the committee. We have appointed the official adviser to the Queensland government, Dr Michael Carr-Gregg. I had the pleasure of attending his first forum this year in the electorate of Southport on the Gold Coast a few weeks ago. It was also attended by the member for Southport and the member for Burleigh. There was a breakfast the next day that was convened by the member for Broadwater. I thank them for their interest. I thank all members for their interest in standing up against bullying and violence. We will be having other workshops and forums conducted by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg throughout Queensland—in Cairns, Logan, Townsville, Kallangur—in the honourable member's electorate—Noosa, Redlands, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Gladstone and Rockhampton. They will continue.

Of course, we will also hold the first National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence to be held on 18 March—again, Queensland is leading the way in Australia to say no to violence and no to bullying at school, and I know that message will be heard loud and clear. We will also be holding the national symposium on strategic action against school bullying on 17 and 18 March. This is an important week for everyone in the Queensland community to stand up against bullies and to stand up against violence and bullying in schools. Every child in Queensland has the right to learn in a safe, supportive and caring environment. My responsibility as the Minister for Education is to ensure that that is delivered. That is what this government will continue to do. As I have said, we will continue to work with all of those sectors, all of the leaders in Queensland and all of those educators who stand up against bullying.

### Carbon Tax

**Mrs MENKENS:** My question is to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies. I refer to Labor's carbon tax and the Prime Minister's admission that, and I quote, 'It will have price impacts.' Can the minister guarantee there will be no impact whatsoever on the price of food? If not, why has Queensland Labor failed to stand up for families by refusing to oppose the new carbon tax?

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MULHERIN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As she comes from an agricultural area like the Burdekin, I know of her concerns. Queensland leads the way in many initiatives around carbon farming and—

**Mr Messenger** interjected.

**Mr MULHERIN:** we are working closely with peak bodies such as AgForce and QFF around those issues. We on this side of the chamber—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Just wait, Minister. Member for Burnett, I have asked you before to cease interjecting. That is your last warning. Next time I will deal with you. I call the minister.

**Mr MULHERIN:** We on this side of the chamber do believe in climate change whereas members opposite have had a real change of heart since the Liberal Party was hijacked by the National Party in the formation of the LNP. As the Premier indicated this morning, the Commonwealth government has announced a carbon tax. Until we get more information of what the impacts will be, particularly on our trade exposed industries such as mining and agriculture, we cannot really comment on the details around the carbon tax. However, there is one thing for sure: we will stand up for Queensland to ensure that industries such as agriculture and mining, which create many jobs in rural and regional Queensland, are protected from those impacts. With regard to householders who will be affected, we will work around those issues once we get the information from the Commonwealth government. This government will stand up for Queensland.

**Mr Cripps** interjected.

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

### Natural Disasters, QBuild

**Mr WETTENHALL:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology. Can the minister inform the House of QBuild's efforts to help disaster affected communities in the Far North and other parts of Queensland?

**Mr FINN:** I thank the member for Barron River for his question and also thank him for his efforts in the Far North assisting his community recover from the disasters that affected Far North Queensland. Yes, I can inform the House and I cannot praise the mighty QBuild workers highly enough for their efforts and work on cyclone and flood affected communities across Queensland. QBuild tradies and apprentices have been out in force throughout the state during our summer of disasters. They have been helping our communities recover and rebuild. Many of those workers have spent weeks away from their families working in tough conditions, and I want to thank them for their outstanding efforts.

Last week I visited Tully Heads and Hull Heads and saw firsthand the hardship and devastation that Cyclone Yasi caused in these communities. It was absolutely devastating to see the impacts of the storm surge that came through those communities. I met with QBuild workers who are out on the front line cleaning the streets, removing debris and rubbish, removing asbestos from wrecked homes and repairing the coastal foreshore. I saw very good asbestos removal practice from a group of workers following all of the requirements of asbestos removal. I did not think that as part of my political career I would be photographed with four topless men, but I was as they washed down after their work.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The minister is answering the question.

**Mr FINN:** I saw long arm excavators being deployed to decontaminate the mangrove areas and remove large items such as yachts, boats and cars from the mangroves. Salvageable items were being locked up in a temporary facility and there were workers removing asbestos and a whole range of materials from that community. However, one of the most moving experiences was meeting Mr Graham Donn from Hull Heads. He was surrounded by the devastation of that community, mowing his lawn. He and his dog were in the front yard and he was mowing the lawn trying desperately to return their community to normal. QBuild's work has been about helping communities return to normal. Mr Donn said to me that, without the efforts of the mighty QBuild workers coming into Hull Heads to do the work that they have done, that community would never have been able to face the herculean task that was in front of it as it goes down the path to recovery. QBuild rises to the occasion in times of disaster, and I know that all honourable members will join me in thanking those workers for their efforts.

### Carbon Tax

**Ms DAVIS:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. I refer to Labor's carbon tax and the Prime Minister's admission that, and I quote, 'It will have price impacts.' Can the minister guarantee there will be no impact whatsoever on public transport fares? If not, why has Queensland Labor failed to stand up for families by refusing to oppose the new carbon tax?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the shadow minister very much for her question. Of course public transport is a very important issue in South-East Queensland, and we are continuing to invest in infrastructure right across the South-East Queensland network. It is a network of some 10,000 square kilometres from Noosa all the way down to Coolangatta and out to Helidon, covering some 23 zones. We are continuing to invest in this infrastructure. Some \$1.3 billion will be spent over the next financial year. I notice that over on that side of the House you are climate change deniers, but we do believe that climate change is real. We will wait to see the outcome—

**Ms Davis:** Will there be price increases?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You have asked the question. We will wait to see the outcome of what the federal government is proposing and then we will respond. That is what this government will do. We will respond to what the federal government puts into the public arena. But I am more than happy to talk about the investment that we are providing for public transport in South-East Queensland.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. Member for Aspley, you have asked your question. The minister is answering the question. The minister has the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I note that members opposite have no policy when it comes to public transport in South-East Queensland, but we are providing the infrastructure. We will be spending \$200 million upgrading our network of 42 stations right across the state, and where is this money going? This money is going into electorates that are represented in this House.

**An opposition member:** Not mine!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** But wait; I have some information for you. We are continuing to invest—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, let us talk about it. In the electorate of Moggill we have a park-and-ride facility with 148 parks worth \$1.77 million completed. In Aspley you have Bald Hills train station with 159 parks worth \$3.3 million completed.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So what are you saying? You do not want us to continue to invest?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Aspley will cease interjecting. The minister will address her comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In Maroochydore we have a bus station worth \$5.5 million due for completion in 2012. Is that what you want us to sacrifice? No! We will continue to invest because that is the right thing to do.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister will address her comments through the chair.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In January the shadow minister said that she believed that we were not looking after pensioners. She said that hikes in Queensland's public transport costs will hurt pensioners and the elderly who rely exclusively on public transport. What did we do? We invested \$1.5 million and announced a daily go card cap—that is, free travel for journeys in excess of two trips in one day for Seniors Card holders, pensioners, concession card holders and healthcare card holders. That is what we are doing. We are continuing to invest. They have no policy and they have no views when it comes to climate change.

### Home and Community Care

**Ms FARMER:** My question is to the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. In light of the disasters that have hit Queensland in recent times, can the minister advise the House what help is available for elderly people and people with disabilities who cannot quite cope on their own right now?

**Mr PITT:** I thank the honourable member for her question and for her ongoing advocacy for people in the electorate of Bulimba and her personal interest in this area of home and community care. I am very pleased to advise the honourable member that only last week I joined with federal minister Mark Butler to announce \$47 million in new funding right across Queensland for people who need help at home. These funds are for our Home and Community Care program and these funds could not have come at a better time. A number of people are doing it tough right now, particularly given the natural disasters that we have gone through. These funds have been reaching out to these people, giving them a helping hand when they need it the most. I am talking about elderly people and people who cannot cope with their own in-home living situations. These are ordinary, everyday tasks such as showering, house cleaning and mowing the lawn.

Our home and community care workers are the salt of the earth. These are people who do housework, provide social support, take people to medical appointments, look at specialist care and personal care—and the list goes on. As I mentioned earlier, simple tasks such as taking a shower can be far too difficult for an elderly person who may have just broken a few bones in a fall. They are frail and are unable to help themselves. Our home and community care workers are there to make sure that their lives are being made a little better.

There are many examples of very strong bonds being formed between home and community care workers and the people they assist. A visit from a home and community care person can lift the spirits of an elderly person or a person with a disability. Sometimes it may be their only visitor, their only contact with the outside world. This is a very important thing and it is something that this side of the House really supports—looking after people who are our most vulnerable.

Right across Queensland, home and community care workers will benefit from these funds. Some will be able to upgrade kitchens, some will be able to have health equipment and others will be able to provide more services to people who need our help. This is about helping them to help others. These funds—\$47 million—right across Queensland are helping 10,000 new people to get new services. This is a boost to services and it is going to be providing 30,000 people who receive home and community care with additional services. We are talking about everyday tasks that most people take for granted.

I want to commend our home and community care workers for reaching out and giving a helping hand to fellow Queenslanders in need. Often their job is not nine to five and it is sometimes a thankless task. It is not easy, and I think we owe them a debt of gratitude.

### Dental Clinics, Waiting Times

**Mr McARDLE:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The minister has already been caught out hiding hospital waiting times. I now table this commitment from June 2009—almost two years ago—where Labor promised to report twice yearly on district dental clinic treatment times. Will the minister explain why this Labor promise has been broken and will he now give a commitment to publish each district's waiting times in the interests of transparency?

*Tabled paper:* Answer to Question on Notice No. 456, asked on 3 June 2009, regarding dental waiting lists [4009].

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would ask the honourable member for Caloundra to rephrase the question so that it does not offend the standing orders. He can go straight to the question without the preamble.

**Mr McARDLE:** I table a commitment from June 2009—almost two years ago—where Labor promised to report twice yearly on district dental clinic treatment times. Will the minister now give a commitment to publish each district's waiting times in the interests of transparency?

**Mr WILSON:** I thank the honourable member for the question. What we first must do is reject the premise of the question that has been put, because the opposition has form on putting mistruths into the public arena. Let us take the latest example of outpatient waiting lists to illustrate what they do. We put into the public arena, by the most unprecedented legislation in Australia, under RTI a document about outpatient waiting lists and it carried a clear caution or caveat—a caveat that you would think the shadow minister for health, given his background, would understand. It had a clear warning but, despite this clear warning, the opposition shopped it around the place and misled the Queensland public about what is happening with those waiting lists. It carried a clear warning that the figures in that document had yet to be verified as they would on a normal basis and produced in the annual report, published in the second quarter of this year. It went on to say that they had not been verified and it said 'that they cannot be relied upon as an accurate picture of the average outpatient waiting times'. That is what the document said. But did they say anything about that? No, they did not.

This government has an unprecedented record of transparency in hospital performance—

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Caloundra, you have asked your question. You have interjected several times on it.

**Mr WILSON:** Why do we have unprecedented transparency around our medical services and our hospital services? Because we believe what has been long understood by this government—that is, we want to improve, every day that we can, every service in the hospital system and we do that better every day by making sure that we measure as accurately as possible. What you do not measure you cannot improve. That is not only in the health area but in any policy area. That is why we publish, as I say, 1,800 items of information every quarter in the quarterly report on hospital performance. That includes dental. Not only that, we provide everything that is asked of us under RTI.

This government in the health area, and certainly in others, is unprecedented in the amount that it publishes and it shows Queenslanders our performance.

*(Time expired)*

### Fraud Prevention

**Mr KILBURN:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House what the Bligh government is doing to protect Queenslanders from fraud?

**Mr LUCAS:** I thank the honourable member for the question. This week is National Consumer Fraud Week. This year's theme is 'Scams: it's personal'. Queenslanders are being urged to take the antifraud message very personally. Criminals will stop at nothing to get their hands on your money and your identity. They will call at your home, hack into your computer, steal your mail or rifle through your rubbish. While many people see that as something that will happen to someone else, we know that one in 20 Queenslanders will be scammed this year.

It is very important that people remain vigilant about how they share, store and dispose of personal information and documents. In 2010 the Office of Fair Trading received 3,745 complaints—up from 2,173 in 2009. This increase does not necessarily mean that more people are being scammed but rather that more people are willing to report it. Historically, a lot of scams go unreported because people are embarrassed to admit that they have been duped. But reporting scams is vitally important so that we can get an accurate picture of scam activity in Queensland and develop strategies to combat it.

Speaking about frauds and scams, I was doing a bit of reading the other day and looked at what the Leader of the Opposition had been saying. On 17 January, in talking about the Premier in relation to cyclone preparation, he said—

I'd give the Premier a big tick.

Then on 4 February this year, ABC Online has him saying—

Premier Anna Bligh deserves praise for the way she has guided Queenslanders through the worst natural disasters.

He stated further—

It is testament to the fact that there were numerous warnings by the Premier, by senior police—

and so on. Then, of course, what happened in the meantime? Head office of the LNP called him in and told him to harden the hell up. It did not take much more than a month, because when he was up in Cairns as soon as someone raised something with him 'Old Curly' got confused and said—

**Mr SPEAKER:** It would be better if you called the honourable member by his correct title.

**Mr LUCAS:** The Leader of the Opposition said that Premier Anna Bligh is to blame for the state's downturn because visitors were scared away by her emergency warnings prior to the recent natural disasters. On 4 February she is doing a good job; on 2 March she is not. It is like the policy in the US military: don't ask, don't tell. That is his view. One could imagine that, if he were Premier, with a cyclone bearing down on Queensland he would go back to his people in his office after he had done the press conference saying, 'I think I mentioned the cyclone once, but I think I got away with it.' You cannot be an opposition leader with any credibility if you get in front of the media once and say that the Premier has done a good job because she is communicating with people but then have the gall, the first time someone raises it, to say something else. That is the hallmark of the Leader of the Opposition. That is why he is not fit in disasters.

*(Time expired)*

### Health Services

**Ms STONE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister please inform the House how innovative new ways of delivering health services are helping Queenslanders get better access to health care?

**Mr WILSON:** I am delighted to respond to the honourable member's question. I feel compelled to inform the House that the caution that I displayed in responding to the previous question from the shadow minister for health was utterly well placed. In other words, you do not accept the premise of a question asked by the shadow spokesperson for health in this area.

**Ms Bligh:** Or any area.

**Mr WILSON:** In any area. You do not in relation to outpatient waiting lists and you certainly do not in relation to an allegation made from the other side of the House that we have failed to fulfil an election promise about publishing half yearly the dental waiting list figures.

**Mr McArdle** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Caloundra will cease interjecting.

**Mr WILSON:** The Queensland government publishes half yearly on the internet—and it is on the Queensland Health website right now—the waiting lists for dental surgery in Queensland hospitals. That is what is published there. As I say, we embrace transparency and where we can improve that

transparency we are open to doing that where it is practical and reasonable. Why? Because we are focused on driving improvement in all areas—just like we are focused on driving improvements in the area of the 13HEALTH number. Just recently passed is the millionth call milestone for 13HEALTH. That is an illustration of how committed we are to improving the delivery of health services to Queenslanders, particularly in rural and regional Queensland. Not only do we want to provide them with the most excellent care in a hospital setting; we also want to be innovative and versatile in the way in which we provide assistance to them in their home. Indeed, you can imagine a young mother with a worried look on her face and a young toddler who is suffering a fever. She is in a position where she or her husband can ring 13HEALTH and get advice over the phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week and be given guidance about whether to take action by going to a hospital or obtaining some other assistance.

### **Wind Turbines, Buffer Zones**

**Mrs PRATT:** My question is to the Minister for Environment and Resource Management. Many jurisdictions throughout the world, including some state and local governments in Australia, have or are looking to introduce minimum two-kilometre buffer zones for wind turbines to protect local residents. As AGL has stated consistently to me and others that it will only abide by current state legislative requirements, will this Queensland government ensure that Queensland residents are protected by no less than this minimum?

**Ms JONES:** I thank the honourable member for her question and her ongoing advocacy for her community. I know that she is a very vocal advocate for her community and we have had dealings on a number of issues in her area. I am aware that AGL does have a proposal to introduce a wind farm in her community. At this stage my understanding is that no application has been made to do that. Let me take this opportunity to explain what the law is in Queensland right now and what safeguards there are in place.

Firstly, this would be deemed to be a proposal that would normally be considered under the State Planning Act by the local government, that being the assessment authority. To assist local governments in making the right decisions to protect residents from any new development, whether it be a wind farm or another development, we actually have in place an EPP which stipulates how one protects people from noise. It is the Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy. This sets guidelines to help the local government make a decision to assess those impacts.

I take the point from the honourable member that we are seeing a shift to renewable energy, both here in Queensland and throughout Australia and other jurisdictions in the world. What we have done at a national level is move to have a wind farm guideline. I will undertake to give a copy of this to the honourable member today so that she can inform her constituents of its contents. This guideline helps local government or any assessment manager—if it is deemed a major project it would be a decision of the state—across the country to make sure they are taking into account the possible noise impacts that it would have on local residents. I will provide this national guideline to the honourable member and details regarding the environmental protection policy for noise.

Speaking of noise, we have heard a lot of noise from the opposition in relation to how we as a state and as a nation deal with the impacts of climate change. Two things are very interesting to me. Those opposite have managed to ask a question of most ministers in the government except the minister for the environment. Why is it you would not ask a question of the minister for the environment? Because you are in complete denial.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Direct your comments through the chair. Those on my left will cease interjecting.

**Ms JONES:** It highlights that not only are they in denial, that to do nothing is a cheap option or to do nothing means there is no cost impost on ordinary Queenslanders and ordinary Australians, but they are also in denial about the very real threat of climate change to our environment. What are we custodians of in Queensland? We are custodians of the Great Barrier Reef. How much is the Great Barrier Reef worth to the Queensland economy? Over \$5 billion. I think it is very telling that once again the LNP has made it loud and clear to everyone that it is in denial about the impact of climate change and the impact on the Great Barrier Reef.

### **Carbon Tax**

**Mr CRIPPS:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to her recent visits to North Queensland where she would have learned of the enormous reliance on electricity for such things as air conditioning and refrigeration. Can the Premier assure North Queenslanders that Labor's carbon tax will not further increase already soaring electricity bills and advise what steps her government is taking to protect North Queenslanders from a serious cost of living threat on this essential service?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the member for the question. What we have seen throughout question time is a series of questions from those opposite which do nothing but expose, firstly, their hypocrisy on this and other issues and, secondly, their complete and utter inability to ever hold a position—to ever stand up for anything.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Those on my left will cease interjecting. Member for Hinchinbrook, you have been interjecting all morning. You are on your last warning.

**Ms BLIGH:** I think it is timely, as question time comes to a close this morning, to remind all members of the House that the first piece of legislation in Australia that I am aware of that sought to put a price on carbon was introduced by the Liberal and National parties here in this parliament and debated in June 2007. What was that bill? It was a voluntary carbon credit trading bill. How do you trade carbon? You put a price on it. If it does not have a price, it is not a trade. If it does not have a price, it is a gift.

There is only one political party in this parliament that has voted in support of a price on carbon and it is the party led by the member for Surfers Paradise. It was the member for Surfers Paradise who stood in this parliament and spoke in favour of a carbon trading bill. That was in June 2007. The LNP members voted for a price on carbon, a carbon tax, for Queenslanders only. In 2007, they thought it was such a good idea that Queensland should put itself at a disadvantage and be the only state in Australia that would tax carbon. That was the proposal put forward by the LNP and supported by the member for Surfers Paradise. Here they are, two and a bit years later, saying, 'Oh no, it's all too hard. What if everybody else is doing it too? We'd better run and hide. Anyone might think we had a position on something.'

We see not only hypocrisy but also weakness—utter moribund weakness. There is not even a shred or a sniff of a backbone. Members should go back and look at the voluntary carbon tax bill, the tax Queensland only bill, brought in by the member for Surfers Paradise—an utter fraud.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Toowoomba South, that was unparliamentary. You will withdraw it.

**Mr HORAN:** I withdraw.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Labor Government

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 am): Today we celebrate International Women's Day and I acknowledge the magnificent contributions that every day all Queensland women make to this great state—the contributions they have made in this place and the contributions that they have made to building Queensland.

Under Labor the rising cost of living is already breaking family budgets. Price increases for water, power, fuel, taxes and charges are hitting Queensland families hard. Twelve days ago, Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced a new carbon tax and for the past 12 days Premier Anna Bligh and Queensland Labor have refused to oppose this tax on Queensland lifestyles. This morning we have seen a conga line of weak contributions from the Premier, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for Energy, the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister for Transport—all advocating a new tax, all exhorting a new tax, all encouraging a new tax.

Why has the Premier not stood up for Queensland families? Why has Premier Bligh put her Canberra based presidency of the ALP before her responsibility to protect Queenslanders? A carbon tax will push up the price of fuel. A carbon tax will push up the price of power. A carbon tax will push up the price of food. A carbon tax is bad for Queensland business. A carbon tax is bad for Queensland families. The LNP will oppose a carbon tax every step of the way.

Queenslanders know they cannot trust Labor, whether it is about taxes on mining, taxes on carbon or taxes on floods, and they need only look at the recent flood events and Labor's management of them. Labor's attempt to keep secret crucial details relating to the operation of dams is a far cry from the promises made by Premier Bligh in the immediate aftermath of the Brisbane flood. The cover-up of documents relating to the operation of Wivenhoe Dam stinks. Brisbane flood victims deserve answers, not cover-ups. More than half of the pages of the dam manual were blanked out. The amount of water released from Wivenhoe was also kept secret. The great flood of Brisbane is quickly becoming the great Wivenhoe cover-up under Anna Bligh. Queensland Labor cannot help itself: lies, cover-ups, blanked out pages—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition, that is unparliamentary. You will withdraw it.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You will refer to the honourable Premier by the correct title.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Queensland Labor cannot help itself: lies, cover-ups, blanked out pages—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader of the Opposition will withdraw that.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw. The great flood is quickly becoming the great Wivenhoe cover-up under Premier Anna Bligh. They cannot help themselves: whether it is lies, cover-ups, blanked out pages—I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker. I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is three times. If it occurs again, I will ask the honourable gentleman to sit.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Many Brisbane people have lost everything. Many are not insured. They have not been able to get answers or money from the Premier's relief fund. On top of all that, the Bligh government is covering up the possible mismanagement of Wivenhoe Dam. Labor's handling of Wivenhoe is just the same as its handling of the health payroll fiasco; it is a cover-up from beginning to end. Who knows how much longer flood victims will wait for the assistance promised today. Already it has been two months and they are still waiting for the money that the Premier promised. That is the problem with Labor: they are great on promises, but hopeless on delivery.

There are two good reasons why Queensland should reject Labor at the next election. Three stand-out examples of long-term Labor mismanagement, incompetence and arrogance are the three ministers who have kept their jobs when they should have been sacked long ago. Those three ministers cannot be sacked because they run the factions and the factions run this long-term Labor government. The Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, is the man who could not pay nurses. He is the man who cannot be bothered answering correspondence or even reading briefing notes. A man who is legendary for his detached and incompetent management has survived as Deputy Premier because he is Bill Ludwig's boy, the chosen one of the AWU faction.

The Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, has presided over this state's economic demise. Under his appalling financial management, Queensland's AAA credit rating is but a distant memory. Debt is soaring by about \$1 billion a month. In fact, the most damning statistic of all is that debt is rising faster than even he can sell assets. For the next two years budget deficits will be close to \$4 billion each year. Queensland's debt is more than triple the average of the other states and more than double that of the next worst state, New South Wales. Queensland has higher unemployment, higher taxes, higher water charges and higher power charges. Economic refugees are leaving Queensland and going to the other states. Net migration to Queensland is the lowest it has been for 30 years. He sold the assets and Queensland has nothing to show for it. He is the most arrogant and incompetent minister in a government replete with arrogant and incompetent ministers. Yet the Treasurer keeps his job. How can that be? How can it be that somebody who has trashed our economic record and saddled our children with debt that they will be paying for all of their working lives cannot be sacked by the Premier? He is the king banana of the old guard faction, another factional hack destroying Queensland.

Now we turn to the minister for not very much at all these days, Stephen Robertson. He remains as a minister solely because he stamped his foot and threatened a by-election if he did not get a chauffeur driven car or a ministerial title. He is an old stager from the left faction. He outplayed the Premier when she tried to move him up the back. The people of Queensland—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Yes, you should be there. The people of Queensland know of his inept management and they know he should be sacked, but he is a factional hack and he will stay a minister for as long as he wants. Of course, there are many other ministerial duds on the Labor front bench. The Labor cabinet is a place where everybody rises to their own level of incompetence. No fool will be left behind by this long-term Labor train wreck. Queenslanders need look no further than the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the minister for exorbitant water bills and power price rises to know why this government has got to go. Factional deals keep hopeless ministers in jobs. This Labor government has useless, pathetic and inept ministers at every turn. Before the floods and cyclones, this government was a long-term incompetent disaster, staggering to the next election, bogged down by a pathetic zombie ministry, an ALP cabinet of the walking dead. After the reshuffle, the floods and the cyclones, nothing has changed. The zombie ministers are still there. They are just as hopeless and incompetent as they ever were and they are still running Queensland into the ground.

Queenslanders know that if they want to sack these zombie ministers they have to sack the government. If they want a Deputy Premier who actually cares about Queensland they must sack the government. If they want a Treasurer who will repair the damage of nearly 20 years of Labor mismanagement they must sack the government. If they want ministers who are chosen on worth and ability, not factional hacks, they must sack the government.

Labor is out of ideas. Labor is out of time. Labor is out of talent and Labor is out of touch with the needs of Queenslanders. After nearly 20 years of Labor, after nearly 20 years of mounting debt, after nearly 20 years of higher taxes and charges, after nearly 20 years of mismanagement of health, after nearly 20 years of a softly softly approach to crime, after nearly 20 years of ministers being selected because of factional loyalty, threat and obligation, after nearly 20 years of long-term Labor governments that only care about the next election, not the next generation, it is time for a change.

Only an LNP government can deliver a better Queensland and a fairer go for Queenslanders and their families. Queensland families know that the only party that really cares about them and understands how difficult it is to manage on a budget, with all of Labor's cost-of-living increases, is the LNP. The LNP is the only party that will look after families. The LNP is the only party that will get business moving again. The LNP is the only party that will bring state costs and taxes under control. The LNP is the only party that can turn the Queensland economy around to make this proud state the best-performing one once again. The LNP is the only party that can get back the AAA credit rating and restore Queensland's economic credibility. The LNP is the only party that has the guts to stand up for Queenslanders and oppose the ALP's unfair carbon tax. The LNP is the only party that can deliver a fresh approach, a new vision and a prosperous future for Queensland. We will work day and night between now and the next election to provide Queenslanders with a positive and energetic alternative to this long-term Labor government.

### Robina Hospital

 **Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (11.41 am): As a Gold Coast MP, I have long been an advocate for more services sooner for the Gold Coast. We are now benefiting from a massive investment in infrastructure by this government. Last Saturday, I was proud to officially open stages 2 and 3 of the Robina Hospital. It will serve the Gold Coast region for many, many years to come. It will serve our local community, improve services and make people's lives easier. I think everyone would agree that health infrastructure should be a top priority.

The Bligh government is investing almost \$2 billion on the Gold Coast. That is \$274.3 million towards the expansion of the Robina Hospital and \$1.76 billion towards the brand-new Gold Coast University Hospital. Robina Hospital has been steadily growing in size and capacity since our commitment to provide the Gold Coast community with a second public emergency department. The emergency department was completed as part of the \$42 million stage 1 of the hospital expansion in 2007. Not only was the ED opened that year; an extra 25 beds to support surgery, emergency, coronary care, intensive care and mental health services also opened at Robina Hospital.

This hospital has been redeveloped at a total cost of almost \$320 million, creating a total of 179 new beds in this facility. Significantly, it has been achieved on time and within budget. This means that the size of the hospital has effectively doubled, into a 364-bed facility, as a result of the first three stages of this expansion. In addition to more beds, brand-new operating theatres have been built and the two existing operating theatres are being upgraded. This will total five operating theatres and one endoscopy suite within the expanded hospital. There is also a \$2.7 million contribution from Bond University for the outstanding new research and education centre. Support services such as specialist outpatient clinic offices and waiting areas, pharmacy, medical imaging, pathology and allied health have also been expanded to support the additional beds and operating theatres.

My mother was a volunteer at Robina when it was St Vincent's Hospital, run by the Sisters of Charity, and she continued her volunteer work when it became a public hospital. I was pleased to note that the warm and friendly atmosphere of the original 185-bed St Vincent's Hospital has been retained during its expansion to 364 beds. Many of the staff from the early days of this hospital continue to work within it and have been an integral part of its planning and development.

I am proud to say that, on completion of the almost \$2 billion building program on the Gold Coast, in 2012 there will be a total of more than 1,100 public hospital beds on the Gold Coast. A jewel in the crown of Robina Hospital's expansion—and there is more than one—is the new supportive and palliative services unit. The palliative care ward was temporarily moved out of Robina Hospital prior to the commencement of the expansion. This caused some angst in the community, but now it is back, bigger and better, and the wait has been worth it. Benefits for patients and families include 20 single bedrooms, pull-out beds for family members, a garden terrace and courtyard and large patient lounges at each end of the ward. The garden terrace and courtyard features an expanse of lawn and a tranquil water feature that patients and their families can enjoy together.

Benefits have come from the efficient delivery of this project. The expansion program was accelerated and delivered three months ahead of the original program of works. It has enabled patients to be brought into areas of the new buildings earlier and accelerated the refurbishment process. It also enabled the scope of the initial works to be expanded to include a multilevel car park. Parking and health facilities have never been an easy mix, but this addition will ensure that 750 dedicated hospital car-parking spaces can be provided to staff, visitors and volunteers coming to Robina Hospital. This new car park is due to be open by the middle of this year.

Last but not least, the \$36 million Robina Health Precinct began construction this week. The precinct, located across the road, will complement the services being provided at the Robina Hospital. Facilities such as these are the face of modern public health care. I am proud to be part of a government that continues to provide first-class health services to Queensland.

### Gold Coast, Commonwealth Games Bid

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (11.46 am): When Brisbane hosted the Commonwealth Games in 1982 I was just 10 years old. I remember watching the opening ceremony and seeing the 13-metre-high kangaroo named Matilda enter QEII Stadium. Following Matilda's lap of honour, I remember seeing hundreds of children running out from her pouch, climbing on trampolines and somersaulting and jumping to *Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport*. I remember wanting to be one of those gymnasts and convincing my mother to buy me a trampoline.

I remember watching the great Tracey Wickham and other athletes of that time such as Lisa Curry-Kenny, Neil Brooks and Glynis Nunn-Cearns, to name a few, compete at their very best, win gold for Australia and become household names. Like many Queenslanders, I grew up watching their ongoing success and was inspired by their efforts. As I was a keen sportsperson, they became my heroes.

I feel extremely proud to have been appointed by the Premier to be the Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier on the Gold Coast and the Commonwealth Games. The Gold Coast bid to hold the 2018 Commonwealth Games is an exciting opportunity, and I will be doing everything I can to support the bid team and promote the Gold Coast. Immediately following my appointment, I met with the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games bid board members and staff to find out firsthand how hard they had been working on preparing for our bid. A team of enthusiastic, committed and vibrant people, the bid team has engaged key stakeholders and worked with the Gold Coast City Council to prepare our bid. They are very committed to getting the bid right and are doing everything possible to win our right to host the games.

I was pleased to welcome the new tourism minister, Jan Jarratt, to the Gold Coast recently. Keen to ensure the minister understood how important the games bid is to the coast and to Queensland, I facilitated a meeting with the minister and the CEO of the Commonwealth Games bid team, Mr Mark Peters. There are many reasons the Gold Coast is the place to host the Commonwealth Games, and all of the potential and the opportunities were first realised by our Premier, Anna Bligh, who led the push for a bid and who championed the Gold Coast as the host city.

A successful bid to host the games in 2018 would mean investment in infrastructure, road and transport infrastructure, accommodation, the building of new sporting venues and the redevelopment of existing facilities. The work to achieve all of this would create thousands of jobs and opportunities. Industry representatives are already excited that public investment to cater for the Commonwealth Games would stimulate private interest and investment on the Gold Coast and Queensland, setting us up for years to come. A successful bid would mean the spotlight would be shone on our great city and all that it has to offer. The Gold Coast community also has a fabulously generous volunteer base that is ideal for welcoming athletes and spectators and filling the many jobs required to host a Commonwealth Games event. Volunteering for such an event as the Commonwealth Games in our own city would be such a unique and fun experience and, for many, a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The opportunity to host a Commonwealth Games would give every Gold Coaster a chance to demonstrate great pride in our city and state and to reach out to our visiting international guests and athletes, offering them a warm welcome and friendly hospitality. The chance to bring our Commonwealth Games nations to the Gold Coast would generate interest and educational opportunities for our schoolchildren. They will learn about the Commonwealth nations through class activities, learn about and see at an elite level sportsmanship and athleticism that will inspire them to reach their own goals, try a sport, get healthy and appreciate the culture of participating nations.

Personally I am excited by the prospect of witnessing some of the best athletes in the world in action at a venue in my own home town. But I know some Gold Coasters are driven by the opportunity the 2018 games present for them to compete on their own home turf.

In 1982 Brisbane hosted the Commonwealth Games eight years after the 1974 floods. The time was seen as a coming of age for the city and the spotlight on Brisbane and its people made everyone proud. The 2018 Commonwealth Games will be held eight years after the devastating floods Queensland has recently experienced. As I mentioned, I was 10 when I watched my first Commonwealth Games. In 2018 my son Brock will be 10 years of age and I am looking forward to taking him to watch the games in our city.

### Australian Defence Force, Disaster Relief

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.51 am): Today I want to discuss a serious issue of concern to the communities in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. I want to commence my remarks by praising the efforts of the personnel from the Australian Defence Force who came to North Queensland and to Far North Queensland and in particular to my electorate of Hinchinbrook following the devastation caused by Cyclone Yasi. Their work was outstanding. It was done efficiently, quickly and thoroughly. In short, it was done in a very soldierly fashion.

Moving throughout my communities in my electorate in the weeks following Cyclone Yasi, I have been asked the question a number of times why was the Army withdrawn from the cyclone area in a way that they felt was too quick. The answer is that the ADF had completed the tasks that it had received orders to complete. That is what soldiers do: they follow orders. The question has been asked by many of my constituents in cyclone affected communities why was the Army leaving town because it was so obvious that there was much more work to be done.

The ADF completed its prescribed tasks of clearing public access on major public roads and clearing debris from public areas. As I said, those soldiers did so efficiently, quickly and thoroughly in a soldierly fashion. Some constituents in my electorate have suggested to me that local councils or the LDMG sent the ADF back to its base, but this is not right. The ADF does not take directions from councils. More importantly, the ADF does not take any direction from local disaster management groups.

Last year during the debate on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I drew to the attention of the House and in particular the minister that, despite the bill being a complete redrafting of the act, it was silent on the issue of how the ADF fitted into the legislation pertaining to disaster recovery arrangements in Queensland. I table my contribution to that debate for the information of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Speech, dated 2 September 2010, by Mr Andrew Cripps, member for Hinchinbrook, in debate on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[4010\]](#).

The minister responded to my contribution advising that there were well-established protocols concerning requests for assistance from the ADF after a natural disaster and that those requests came from the state government to the Commonwealth government. The minister also confirmed that the nature of the request for assistance—that being the types of assistance requested in natural disaster declared areas—is made from the state to the Commonwealth. I table the response by the minister to my contribution during the second reading debate.

*Tabled paper:* Speech, dated 5 October 2010, by Hon. Neil Roberts, Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services in debate on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[4011\]](#).

The obvious issue that I want to address today is the lack of a formal relationship between local disaster management groups and the ADF during a natural disaster—a gap in the provisions of the recently overhauled legislation that I think is a clear inadequacy which should be urgently addressed. I sat in a local disaster management group meeting in a local council in my electorate during the recovery process of Cyclone Yasi where the ADF liaison officer in attendance explained to the LDMG that the relationship for the direction of the ADF was between the state and the Commonwealth and that ADF personnel were unable to accept requested tasks from the LDMG directly. The LDMG, the local leadership of the community, had to submit requests through the district then on to the state which would then go to the Commonwealth and then come back to the ADF before a local need could be addressed. I think it is obvious that this is a deficiency in our disaster management legislation.

Local disaster management groups are made up of local civic leadership, local emergency services representatives, representatives from essential government services such as Queensland Health, and major essential utilities such as energy utilities. I think it is obvious that these representatives at the local level are best placed to identify and prioritise the resources of the ADF to tasks that confront the LDMG during its response after the initial request has been made by the state to the Commonwealth. I believe that the structure of the new Disaster Management Act is appropriate, and the LNP supported the bill through parliament. I would just ask the Minister for Emergency Services to give consideration to clarification of the relationship between local disaster management groups and the ADF once the request has been made from the state to the Commonwealth.

## Toowoomba, Ambulance and Health Services

 **Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.56 am): I would like to address some matters dealing with the health and wellbeing of people in Toowoomba, the first being the recent visit to Toowoomba by the emergency services minister, Mr Roberts, who officially handed over the keys to a new \$180,000 ambulance vehicle to staff at the Toowoomba QAS station. The fully equipped Mercedes 319 will be a valuable resource to ambulance services in the area.

The government is ensuring that our Ambulance Service can provide the best possible care to the Queensland community, and part of that commitment lies in making sure that ambulance officers have access to the resources and equipment they need to get the job done. This brand-new Mercedes will replace an existing vehicle in the nine-strong fleet based at the Toowoomba QAS station. The new vehicle will help the 56 ambulance officers working out of the Toowoomba station to continue to keep residents safe. Local ambulance officers do a great job in ensuring community safety, and it is important they have the necessary tools to continue that good work. This new vehicle will be a welcome addition to those ambulance services in Toowoomba.

I was with the minister when he took the opportunity to praise the efforts of local ambulance officers and, indeed, local fire and rescue officers in Toowoomba who had worked very hard under extreme conditions to continue to provide high levels of service during the recent floods. Toowoomba, as you know, Mr Speaker, was severely affected by the recent floods which had an impact on so many communities across the state. It is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of local paramedics and, indeed, of local fire and rescue officers that local services continued to be delivered to a high level during that period. The minister and I were very pleased to meet with and pass on our thanks to many of those officers on the day.

Also, I was very pleased to learn that construction had begun on the Toowoomba emergency department transit lounge at the Toowoomba Base Hospital which will further streamline patient services at the hospital. Patients awaiting discharge or transfer by ambulance can look forward to improved patient flow and the comfortable, specifically designed facilities this new transit lounge will deliver. This will be a significant advance for the Toowoomba Hospital which means that we can free up beds for those who need them most and ensure patients who are able to go home have a fully staffed, convenient location while final arrangements are made for their discharge.

The transit lounge, part of the Toowoomba Hospital emergency department expansion, will accommodate up to 16 patients at a time, including four short-stay beds. The Toowoomba emergency department expansion recently received an additional \$3 million boost—taking the total project cost to \$5 million—as a result of the historic health reform agreement signed this year between the state and Commonwealth governments.

The new \$10.6 million Toowoomba adolescent mental health unit and preparation for the \$9.55 million cancer care ward are also underway. This will further equip our city with state-of-the-art health facilities now and into the future. This is a real boost for the local economy, with an estimated 150 jobs expected to be created throughout the life of the project.

I will also address the performance of Toowoomba Hospital with respect to elective surgery. The latest quarterly report shows that Queensland's elective surgery waiting times are the shortest in Australia and also that the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended is the lowest in Queensland's history. At Toowoomba Hospital, 1,093 patients received elective surgery this quarter—an increase of 3.2 per cent on the 1,059 patients admitted during the same time last year.

Also, we saw some great improvements at Toowoomba Hospital in the number of patients waiting longer than clinically recommended for their elective surgery. There was a 42 per cent reduction in category 2 elective surgery patients waiting longer than recommended. The number of category 3 elective surgery patients waiting longer than clinically recommended was reduced by 72 per cent.

The latest emergency department figures are also excellent. The average wait for category 1 patients—that is, those in most urgent need of treatment—was less than a minute. Across all five categories, the average wait is 63 minutes. I commend the doctors, nurses and staff of the Toowoomba Base Hospital for the excellent work they are continuing to do for the people of Toowoomba and the Downs.

## Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.01 pm): I rise to make a few comments about the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry. The Floods Commission of Inquiry was set up by the Premier after the devastating floods of 10 January. There were floods well before that in other parts of Queensland. The Floods Commission of Inquiry website states—

Written submissions relating to issues of flood preparedness relevant to next summer's wet season (particularly dam operations, early warning systems and responses) are to be received by the Commission by 5.00pm, **11 March 2011**.

I feel that is a fairly short time frame as I have a lot of people in my area—and I am sure the member for Toowoomba South would agree that it is the case in his area as well—who are still trying to get over those events and get their lives back to normal. We have people who are struggling to get full services connected to their houses. They have lost phone lines, computers and so on.

I am calling on the Attorney-General to talk to the commission and extend that deadline from 11 March to 4 April, when all other submissions to the inquiry are required to be submitted. I think that requirement needs to be publicised. Only on around 27 February did I pick up on the fact that those are the closing dates. I had read that earlier but then was busy dealing with other issues in my electorate. It was only when I went back and looked at the website that I realised that 11 March is the closing date. As we would all realise, that is only three days away.

I have done a mail-out to try to advertise this fact. I have talked about this on the local radio and in the local papers to make people aware. I still feel the time frame is too short. I call on the Attorney-General to talk to the commission and have that time frame extended to 4 April. We need that sort of time frame to allow people to feel that they have had a reasonable time to put in submissions. At the moment they are still worried about getting back into their houses. I realise that on 4 April there will still be people in the same position, but this is about making people feel that they can have a say and have input into the inquiry.

The issue of preparedness is vitally important in my area. We could have done better. The departments could have done better. The local councils could have done better. Unfortunately, the loss of life was quite dramatic. The member for Toowoomba South told me that he was in town that day and did not realise what was going on. We have to get a better system so that we can warn people that this is happening. The weather bureau knew about these systems for hours. There really was the chance to provide more early warnings. What I want is an extension of time so that people can have the opportunity to talk about these issues with the inquiry.

There are also issues concerning land rezoning and levels. That is very important to people because it will determine whether they can go back into their properties. That is part of the preparedness issue. They can probably put that into a submission by 4 April. I feel that the date for all submissions should be extended to 4 April to give people an opportunity to make full and frank statements to the commission of inquiry.

People seeking leave to appear before the inquiry—admittedly that is for people who feel they will be adversely affected by the findings of the inquiry—had to apply by 28 February. I do not think people realised that, either. That date has well and truly gone. I have written to the commission to ask them whether there will be any exemptions in terms of leave to appear. There are rural fires and SES members who have a lot of angst about what has gone on. They want to make those submissions. Some of them want to appear before the inquiry. These are short time frames—and there was not much advertising—especially for those in areas that were traumatised by these floods such as those in my area and those in the area represented by the member for Toowoomba South. The people in those areas really need an extension of time. I call on the Attorney-General to have discussions with the commission and get an extension of time for these submissions.

### International Women's Day; Fire Ants

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.06 pm): I wanted to commence by congratulating all women on International Women's Day. It is a 100-year celebration. I particularly congratulate the women in my household—my daughter and my wife—who look after me extremely well. I am forever appreciative of that.

There is another anniversary we passed last month. For anybody who does not know, it was to do with fire ants. Fire ants have now been in Queensland for some time. I am not sure there would be too many members in this House who would know how long it has been since fire ants were first identified in Queensland.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr WENDT:** I am hearing five years and certainly that is not true.

**Mr Watt:** Ten.

**Mr WENDT:** I take the member for Everton's interjection. I knew he would be across these issues. It has been 10 years since fire ants were first identified in Queensland. As everybody would know, they came from South America. It is considered they were probably there in the 1930s. It is believed they were transported around in ship ballast or soil. It is also possible that they were actually in Queensland 20-odd years before they were identified. In fact, they could have been in Queensland for 30 years.

When they were first identified there were two incursions in Brisbane, around the container port, and one in Gladstone. It is gratifying to know that Queensland is the only place in the world to have identified and removed a colony. That means that Gladstone is free from fire ants. Hopefully, it will not be that much longer before the two incursions around Brisbane are eliminated.

My area of Ipswich West has been somewhat of a haven for fire ants for some time now. We have had lots of work done by the fire ant people.

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr WENDT:** There are a lot of fire ants there. Biosecurity Queensland is doing a great job to get rid of them. In the last 12 months we have had fire ants discovered in rural areas around my electorate, particularly around Purga, Harrisville—in the electorate of Lockyer—Lower Mount Walker, Mutdapilly, Peak Crossing, Grandchester, Waloon and Mount Mort.

They are certainly active. This is the time of year—the end of summer—when we are able to identify them and try to spray them. As everyone knows, fire ants damage citrus crops as well as seeds and grains including sorghum, soya beans, corn, sunflowers, potato and sweet potato as well as cabbages and beans. They feed on young growth and interfere with harvesting operations. They will also sting stock, including cattle, causing them to lose condition. Calves can be killed by the sting, which is quite incredible. Fire ants also pose a huge risk to human health and the environment in general. Texas in the US, where fire ants are extremely prevalent, has an annual bill of \$6.2 billion relating to fire ants.

To combat this Biosecurity Queensland has recently arranged a number of approved harvested feeds risk management plans, the first meeting of which was held in Kalbar on 1 December. There was another meeting in Rosewood last Wednesday night, which I attended and hosted, and there will be a meeting in Gatton, which the member for Lockyer might be pleased to know about, on 16 March, which is Wednesday week. We are talking to those farmers who use hay products, whether it is grass, lucerne, clover and the like, to try to explain to them how they can best avoid fire ants either on their own properties or from other properties around the area. We are trying to explain to them that there are a number of management practices that they can implement such as on-site monitoring which involves actively looking for fire ants in production and storage areas; farm biosecurity measures which involve monitoring material and equipment entering or leaving the property for the presence of fire ants; staff training which looks at things like harvesting processes and preventing the infestation of hay by fire ants following harvesting; and also record keeping to provide evidence of actions undertaken.

We are also issuing movement certificates so we can identify where material and equipment have gone. On the issue of movement certificates, it is worthwhile mentioning that Biosecurity Queensland recently had its first prosecution of a person who has been moving fire ants in soil from a restricted area to an unrestricted area. Obviously that is a very serious issue. Fire ants are still here after 10 years. The minister and other people I talk to assure me that we are on top of these insects and are sure that we can eradicate them as soon as possible. I also want to give a plug to Riki Fulton, the community engagement officer from Biosecurity Queensland, who is out there talking the good talk about how we can identify and get rid of these fire ants. For those who want to come along, as I said, the next meeting will be in Gatton on 16 March. At that meeting people will actually see live fire ants, and they are something to see.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kilburn): I call the member for Noosa for exactly three minutes.

### Cyclone Summits

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (12.11 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. On the Thursday of the last sitting week I asked a question without notice to the Minister for Emergency Services with regard to cyclone summits and the fact that they had apparently disappeared off the agenda in Queensland. During the course of his reply he referred, as did the Premier, to the sneaky little plan that they had in terms of these cyclone summits. I thought I would go back further to see where this idea came from, and they were set up as a result of a promise by Peter Beattie in 2006 following Cyclone Larry. He promised that there would be a cyclone summit every year from then on, and there certainly was in 2006, 2007 and 2008. However, after 2008 they disappeared.

As the minister pointed out in his reply to me, \$50,000 was given to the LGAQ to carry them on. The promise was that there would be a cyclone summit, and in 2006 it was the 'Cyclone Summit: Living with Cyclones, Queensland Prepared'. Peter Beattie at that summit congratulated the 200 delegates and the 30 presenters who had contributed to the success of the cyclone summit. Let us look at what happened in 2009, which was when the sneaky little deal was done with the LGAQ. It decided that it was going to hold the cyclone summit in Emerald. I am not sure that there have been too many cyclones in Emerald, but I went through and had a look at the program. I have even gone through and looked at

where people stayed and what they were going to eat and looked at the presenters and what they were going to talk about. Almost on the back page there was one reference—'TC Ellie and floods'. I presume that 'TC Ellie' means Tropical Cyclone Ellie.

**Mr ROBERTS:** I rise to a point of order. Queensland's disaster management system is based on an all-hazards approach which includes cyclones, floods and storms.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I call the member for Noosa.

**Mr ELMES:** 'TC Ellie and floods' is the sole reference to cyclones in the program for 2009. In 2010 the LGAQ decided that it would move to Home Hill. At least in Home Hill there is the odd cyclone from time to time, but I cannot find the word 'cyclone' appearing in the program for Home Hill at all. This government was required to pay over \$50,000 to the LGAQ to wash its hands, Pontius Pilate like, of its responsibility so far as informing and protecting the people of Queensland about the threat to our state from cyclones.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn):** I call the member for Currumbin for three minutes.

### International Women's Day

 **Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (12.14 pm):** Today marks the celebration of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. On this day every year we take time to reflect on the economic, social, political and cultural achievements of women around the world. I am proud that my party, the LNP, and its predecessors, the Liberal and National parties, led the charge for women to enter politics in Queensland. In 1991, some 20 years ago, the LNP's Joan Sheldon became the first woman to lead a political party in Queensland and followed by becoming the first female Deputy Premier and first female Treasurer of our state in 1996. Significantly, Joan Sheldon was also the first woman in our state to act as the Premier of Queensland. In 1986 the LNP's Yvonne Chapman became the first woman ever to be appointed to cabinet when she became minister for family services. However, Irene Longman, almost reverently, holds the title of the first woman to be elected to our state parliament in 1929 from our side of politics.

I was honoured to be invited to join the Women's Health Inc. at the UN breakfast this morning at the Great Hall of the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre. Over 1,000 women and a few men, including Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman, saluted the achievements of women. Guest speaker Justice Unity Dow, the first female justice appointed to the High Court of Botswana, conveyed a simple yet powerful message: if all is going well for you, then extend a hand of help to others, and that success comes through circumstances. In Unity's case, it was parental belief in education and the government's investment in these resources that helped her to prosper. The inimitable Margaret Thatcher was less subtle though when she said, 'If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman.' In 1996 it was the LNP that introduced paid maternity leave for women in the public sector—the first time ever it had been introduced into Queensland's public sector. Labor promised this but never delivered. It was also the LNP that established and funded the stand-alone Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission. I congratulate all women on International Women's Day.

### Back-to-School Road Safety Campaign

 **Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (12.16 pm):** I, too, take this opportunity to wish everyone a very happy International Women's Day celebrating 100 years of struggles which date back to the workplace, and those struggles still continue today.

There are many things children need to learn when Queensland's prep and year 1 students start school, and one of the most important would have to be road safety around schools and in the community. In order to educate and prepare preppies and year 1 students in good road safety behaviours, the Queensland government has launched a Back-to-School road safety campaign. The state government campaign aims to ensure Queensland children remain safe throughout their school lives, know all the road safety behaviours and reduce their risk of being involved in road tragedies, and what can be more important than the safety of our children.

The 2011 back-to-school road safety campaign will see every Queensland prep and year 1 student receive a road safety kit, and it has been a pleasure visiting state and private schools in my electorate to personally deliver the key messages and safety kits. I have visited seven local Brisbane Central primary schools—Fortitude Valley, Windsor, Kelvin Grove, New Farm and Brisbane Central state schools and Holy Spirit New Farm and on Friday this week Holy Rosary Windsor. All of the preppies and year 1 children were enthusiastic, very attentive and eager to learn good road safety behaviours and to become road safety heroes. All principals have been most helpful in enabling me to visit and speak to all of the prep and year 1 students, and I thank them for their assistance.

I have visited students in classrooms and at assemblies and I have been most impressed by their good behaviour, listening skills and good manners when receiving the kits. I believe this is an excellent state government initiative to teach young children about the dangers on roads, especially around schools, as part of one of the largest education campaigns targeting school road safety across the state, with approximately 1,500 schools participating. The road safety kits are well designed and are an important education tool aimed to make school travel safer for children to actively learn road safety behaviours with their parents and families. The kit provides students with fun activities to increase their awareness of road safety with very easy to understand key messages on, for example, how to cross a road, wearing a helmet and seat belt, and to be a cool and road smart kid. I believe that if we provide children with the right tools and right education from the start of school road safety will become second nature to them as adults, thus making this campaign a great state government initiative.

I also welcome the kit containing an information guide for parents outlining the importance of road safety for children, an activity booklet for students and parents to read together, a school tag and a magnetic photo frame designed with key school road safety messages. School posters highlighting the key road safety messages have also been distributed to school principals to hang around the schools to remind students of the importance of learning about road safety. The kits have been designed to ensure that each and every student is road safe and to incorporate the road safety learning within the family unit, helping to ensure that every Queensland road user practises safe behaviours. Additionally, resources will be available on the Transport website for all students to access and use, such as colouring-in activities, screen savers and downloadable versions of the back-to-school pack contents.

Road safety kits have been given to primary school students for the past decade, because this government wants to ensure that over time all students have been exposed to road safety messages. School transport safety is a serious, long-term investment in our children's future that the Bligh government is keen to promote. I think this year's kit is really well designed and fun looking. It has been revised to feature a road safety hero sharing his handy tips and hints with students and parents on what to do in different road situations. It is an absolute delight to see the preppies and year 1 students raise their hands in unison when asked, 'Who wants to be a road safety hero?' and eagerly wanting to ask questions and make comments on good road safety practices that they have learned already.

The Queensland government wants to ensure that parents, carers and children are road safety ready, and starting young with a good educational program is a positive step forward in achieving our goals. The key messages to the prep and year 1 students are simple yet powerful: be cool and be a road smart kid and road safety hero; always wear your helmet, always wear your seatbelt, always be careful when crossing the road; stop, look, listen and think; always wait for the bus to move away before crossing the road; always get in and out of the car at the kerbside. They are great messages and this is a great government initiative.

### **Road Safety; The Queensland Party**

 **Mr McLINDON** (Beaudesert—TQP) (12.21 pm): As my contribution follows that of the member for Brisbane Central, it is very pertinent that I raise a string of incidents that have occurred within the Beaudesert electorate and its surrounds. In September last year, eight-year-old Aleisha Jones was hit on Bluff Road in Cedar Vale. She had a near-death experience and was at Ronald McDonald House in Brisbane for some five months. In December last year, eight-year-old Joshua Stone was killed at Amber Crescent in Jimboomba. I was looking forward to meeting him on that very night at the awards for scouts, but instead I attended his funeral in Beaudesert. Five weeks ago, 16-year-old Long Urane was struck in Greenbank and he is currently still in a coma. Only last Friday, eight-year-old John Baker was struck on Mundoolun Road, Mundoolun and doctors cannot believe he survived. How many more kids will have to die and how many more grieving parents will have to break down on the phone to me before we take the issue of bus safety seriously?

I commend the government on the information packages that were just alluded to by the member for Brisbane Central, but I also believe that we need to have a holistic approach across the state, particularly for those areas that are on the cusp of town—the town-meets-country areas. Quite often growth regions such as Beaudesert, despite that increased growth, still have old country school roads. I currently have an e-petition before the House asking for education awareness, designated pick-up and drop-off zones and flashing lights on all school buses. I have raised this issue with the new Minister for Transport and she is happy to organise a meeting with me, the parents of those poor kids who have nearly been killed and the parents of Joshua Stone, may he rest in peace.

It was an honour to speak at the Hands Off Tara rally yesterday, which was held outside Parliament House, but I was extremely disappointed that not one member of the official opposition was there to support the farmers and families of rural and regional Queensland. This morning the Leader of the Opposition accused the Premier of ignoring Queensland families and bowing down to the ALP's agenda in Canberra in relation to a carbon tax, yet the LNP does exactly the same when it comes to CSG. I challenge all investigative journalists to join the dots and see just who is pulling the strings of the

LNP and exactly where the conflicts of interest lie. They will find them coming from none other than Canberra. The LNP had an opportunity to support the motion moved by The Queensland Party calling for a moratorium on 24 November, yet it crawled across the chamber and hid behind the government.

Those who saw *Four Corners* on 21 February would know that in that program Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith, an adviser to the federal government body NICNAS, which assesses and regulates industrial chemicals, stated—

I've had a look at the application and what is of concern—the manufacturer's safety data sheets, or the material safety data sheets they include, they are certainly not the Australian standard and as such they are in breach of both the Queensland Act and the national code for material safety data sheets.

They are actually in breach of the Queensland act. Furthermore, Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith goes on to say—

Of the 23 most commonly used compounds in fracturing fluids, the national regulator, NICNAS, has only assessed two of those 23 and of the two that they have assessed, they weren't assessed for their use in fracturing fluids.

I table the transcript of the *Four Corners* program for every member of this House to read.

*Tabled paper:* Annotated partial copy of *Four Corners* program transcript, dated 21 February 2011 [4012].

This is a huge issue that will be ongoing from hereon in to the state election, because there is no political party other than The Queensland Party in this chamber that sticks up for rural and regional Queensland. In the spirit of fair play, today I publicly extend an invitation to those ALP and LNP members who wish to become a member of The Queensland Party in order to stick up for their communities, that are walking away from the LNP in droves. Preselections will be opening in the CSG affected seats shortly and, mark my words, those seats will fall from the hands of the LNP like dominos. There is only one party in this parliament that truly represents rural and regional Queensland, and that is none other than The Queensland Party. On the topic of The Queensland Party, I am pleased to advise that 20 per cent of the state seats have preselected candidates and branches are forming on the Gold Coast and in Logan, Brisbane, Mount Isa, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.

It should come as no surprise that The Queensland Party has released more policies than the LNP, ranging across decentralisation strategies, small business incentives, accountability reforms, public transport initiatives and environmental platforms. I have a message for the speechwriter for the Leader of the Opposition: please refrain for your own sake from using 'long-term government' as your slogan in every speech, because what is more embarrassing than a long-term government? A long-term opposition that has failed to capitalise on the wants and the wishes of the Queensland public, that has failed to release policies, that continues to adopt a small-target approach and that has failed rural and regional Queensland absolutely dismally.

I invite the LNP members to get a backbone and start looking after their so-called heartland in rural and regional Queensland, because right now more and more people are realising that another voice, another dynamic, is needed in this parliament. In less than six months we are fast approaching having more members than the Greens. So the disenchantment is there. I now put that on the public record for those who want to join The Queensland Party, because I can tell them now that the next state election does not deserve to be won by the government and it certainly does not deserve to be won by the LNP. I look forward to raising this matter as an ongoing issue and I look forward to meeting the Tara residents next Monday.

## Townsville

 **Ms JOHNSTONE** (Townsville—ALP) (12.26 pm): A huge amount of work and effort is being put in by Townsville's community and business leaders into ensuring that Townsville continues to grow as the state's major economic hub outside of Brisbane. Townsville's CBD in particular is in the process of a major development, with a \$57 million upgrade to Flinders Street. Flinders Street is being transformed as part of the first stage of a CBD revitalisation vision for the city which will strengthen and grow Townsville's existing industries and create new opportunities for the future.

The Townsville Futures Plan Task Force is working on a vision that builds on Townsville's Public Service presence, the leadership it shows in tropical health, science and innovation and its links to the agriculture, mining and tourism sectors across the region. The task force is mapping out a plan that will take the region into the future. This plan will support the Queensland revitalisation strategy and also the work of the CBD task force.

The Premier herself identified the role of the state government in this process when she was working from Townsville in October last year. Action coming from the Premier's visit has seen the government recognising the need for new CBD office accommodation. I would like to acknowledge the importance an increased Public Service presence would have in revitalising the Townsville CBD. The state government is in conversation with the council about the options. Late last year the director-general of the Department of Public Works was in Townsville looking at possible sites and options. The Townsville Futures Plan Task Force will be reporting on this matter in the coming months. We also have the \$40 million Jezzine Barracks redevelopment and the upgrade of berth 10 at the port, which will all add up to exciting opportunities for growth.

Along with those planned investments we now have the added challenge of supporting business and industry in their economic recovery after Cyclone Yasi. Last Friday I was pleased to attend a breakfast, hosted by the local DEEDI office, which gave business and not-for-profit organisations an opportunity to get an overview of the range of assistance that is available to them and to ask questions specific to their individual circumstances. Approximately 70 attendees listened to presentations from DEEDI, from the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority, from the Australian Taxation Office and from Centrelink. The Townsville Community Legal Service was also present and I am very pleased with the announcement that it is receiving \$50,000 in extra funds to provide legal advice to people who have been affected by Cyclone Yasi. In particular, I encourage people who are in dispute with their insurance companies to contact the legal service to get advice.

Tourism operators and businesses have not been forgotten either. A range of supports have been rolled out quickly to remind potential visitor markets that North Queensland is open for business. Industry development measures of particular significance include an interstate tourism roadshow that will enable Queensland tourism operators to travel interstate and promote our region, telling potential visitors and trade operators in person that they are open and ready for holiday-makers; assistance for tourism businesses to attend interstate and international trade shows to promote Queensland, including the Australian Tourism Exchange in Sydney in April and overseas trade missions to growth markets such as China; trade advisory support; and recovery and capability building workshops that will help operators access both domestic and international markets and use technology to attract new customers.

On this very important occasion of International Women's Day, I also acknowledge Townsville's businesswomen leaders. The Townsville Businesswomen's Awards were held on Saturday night. Hosted and run by the Townsville Businesswomen's Network under the leadership of president Penelope-Ann Sullivan, these awards showcase businesswomen leaders in a range of categories including emerging, corporate, private and leadership awards. The overall winner this year is psychologist Kylie Lavers, founder of Solution Works. Ms Lavers was awarded in the emerging businesswoman category and then went on to take the overall Businesswoman of the Year award. Congratulations to all.

Happy International Women's Day to all the women in Townsville, in particular the wonderful women in my electorate office, Anne Blair-Hickman and Nikki Burrell. Thank you for all the great work that you do on my behalf for the people of Townsville.

I wish to finish with a plug for the flood relief concert which is being held in Townsville on 9 April. There has already been an overwhelming show of support from suppliers and production companies for the concert. A great turnout from the public could potentially see more than \$250,000 raised on the night. Not only will we be treated to the original working-class man himself, Jimmy Barnes; attendees will also get a taste of a lesser known but great local band, the Godfathers of Funk. My friend Jeff Jimmieson is a drummer extraordinaire in the band and I cannot wait to see them perform on the night.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Message from Governor



**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.31 pm):  
I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION

AMENDMENT BILL 2011

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Electrical Safety Act 2002, Electrical Safety Regulation 2002, Industrial Relations Act 1999, Industrial Relations Regulation 2000, Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2000 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, and to make minor and consequential amendments of legislation as stated in the schedule, for particular purposes.

GOVERNOR

(sgd)

Date: 7 MAR 2011

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 7 March 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[4013\]](#).

### First Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.32 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electrical Safety Act 2002, Electrical Safety Regulation 2002, Industrial Relations Act 1999, Industrial Relations Regulation 2000, Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2000 and the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003, and to make minor and consequential amendments of legislation as stated in the schedule, for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

*Tabled paper:* Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[4014\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[4015\]](#).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.33 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill currently before the House includes national model legislation outlining the new harmonised premarket requirements for the sale of electrical equipment in Australia and New Zealand to ensure consumer safety. The bill also provides for a national register of safe electrical equipment. This register can be accessed by consumers, suppliers, retailers and electrical safety inspectors to improve postmarket surveillance of electrical equipment being sold in Australia and New Zealand.

Existing legislation governing the safety of electrical equipment across Australia and New Zealand was enacted some years ago, at a time when most electrical equipment was manufactured onshore. Individual states and territories had somewhat different safety requirements for sale of equipment based on their conformity with Australian and New Zealand standards and local requirements. As the members of this House would be aware, since that time the electrical equipment industry has undergone a technological revolution and become global in a manufacturing and supply sense. The cost and availability of electrical equipment has also changed during this time, resulting in equipment being offered for sale at very low prices. It is imperative that these lower prices and availability of electrical equipment to the public not be at the expense of safety. This is particularly important with respect to equipment that could result in death by electric shock or fire such as room heaters, water pumps and lighting products. House fires started by electrical equipment tragically claim 15 lives across Australia and New Zealand each year and cost the community \$489 million per annum on average.

Electrical safety regulators in Australia and New Zealand have been working to meet these challenges and collectively decided in 2007 that a formal review of current arrangements was necessary. This review, finalised in 2009, resulted in a number of recommendations aimed at creating the uniform legislation that is contained in this bill. It also provides for an improvement in compliance activity needed to support the bill once enacted across Australia and New Zealand. The Queensland government is committed to implementing the recommendations of this review to reduce serious electrical incidents, injuries and property damage related to electrical equipment.

The Queensland Electrical Safety Office, which is part of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, has played a leading role in the development of this bill as national model legislation. This model is an example of how states and territories can work together in implementing national reform. Once enacted in Queensland, this model legislation is to be enacted in other jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand within 12 months. This will result in a uniform system for electrical equipment safety across Australia and New Zealand, providing consistent regulatory requirements for overseas and local manufacturers and suppliers of this equipment in a global market. Queensland is leading the way by becoming the first Australian jurisdiction to implement this important new safety legislation.

This bill also establishes a national register of electrical equipment that conforms to Australian and New Zealand safety standards. The register will act as the gateway for the supply of safe equipment to consumers. Energy Safe Victoria is to host the register. It is a close partner with Queensland in its establishment, as well as in relation to all other aspects of the national scheme. Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the territories and New Zealand have now also committed to the model legislation and are working through their own local processes. New South Wales has indicated limited involvement in the national scheme in the short term whilst moving to align with it in the medium term.

This bill establishes the concept of a responsible supplier of electrical equipment for the first time in Australia and New Zealand. These suppliers will be listed on the national register, providing assurance for retailers and consumers that they are sourcing safe equipment from the market. The responsible supplier will be the person or company who manufactures equipment in, or imports it into, Australia or New Zealand. They will be responsible for ensuring these products are safe to introduce into the community. Responsible suppliers must declare that their equipment meets relevant safety standards where it is considered low-risk equipment. However, where the equipment is considered medium or high risk, more will be asked of them.

Compliance folders and test reports will be required to prove this equipment is safe as part of the national system. The system takes a risk based approach to safety regulation in accordance with best practice regulatory methods. Responsible suppliers will then mark their products with the Regulatory Compliance Mark. This is to be used as the single mark indicating electrical equipment safety to consumers across Australia and New Zealand. It will act in a similar way to the Compliance Europe mark in communicating suitability for the local market to retailers and consumers.

Responsible suppliers will have their products check-tested by regulators under the national system to ensure the accuracy of declarations, compliance folders and test reports. These tests will be done randomly, based on incident data collected by regulators. Responsible suppliers of products that fail these tests will be traced through the national register and compliance and recall actions taken by regulators to ensure safety. The passage of this bill will enable electrical safety regulators to better protect consumers by making it much more difficult for unsafe electrical equipment to enter the Australian and New Zealand markets. It will also provide a more robust compliance and enforcement framework to respond to any safety breaches in an environment where overseas manufacturing and internet sales have become prevalent.

Industry was consulted throughout the review process by regulators. The bill has the support of the electrical manufacturing and supply industry in Australia and New Zealand. As a result, a set of workable transitional arrangements has been included in the bill to allow industry to comply and ensure that electrical equipment supply to Australia and New Zealand is not interrupted by these important changes in the law.

The Queensland government has been active in ensuring the electrical safety of Queenslanders in all segments of the electrical industry under the Electrical Safety Plan 2009–14 and in creating safer communities as part of Q2 initiatives. These reforms are the latest in a series which has seen electrical fatalities in Queensland reduced from above the national average prior to 2002 to well below the national average in recent years. Safety of electrical equipment is an important part of ensuring this safety record remains intact.

As well as electrical safety reforms, the bill deals with one of the last legacies of the Work Choices legislation, by protecting local government employees from the expiry of certain federal awards and agreements on 27 March 2011. Despite local governments returning to the state industrial relations jurisdiction in 2008, Work Choices gave some federal instruments a five-year life for local governments that were not constitutional corporations when Work Choices commenced. The expiry of these federal instruments means that affected local government employees could lose their entitlements.

The bill ensures that equivalent state instruments are in place when the federal instruments expire, so entitlements are retained. The state instruments will provide the same pay as the federal instruments and restore conditions that were removed under Work Choices, consistent with the 2008 amendments that returned local governments to the state jurisdiction.

The amendments maintain the industrial instruments that applied to the parties through their own negotiation or arbitration. Of course, if the parties want to change these industrial arrangements, for example by applying for a new award, they are free to do so through the normal industrial processes. It is not the intention of the government, through this bill, to influence any matter that might be before the commission in relation to future award coverage.

Another change to the industrial relations framework concerns the Queensland Workplace Rights Ombudsman. The ombudsman was established in 2007 in response to Work Choices. It is currently a statutory requirement that there be an ombudsman. With the significant changes to the industrial relations landscape since then, including the repeal of Work Choices and the establishment of the national Fair Work system, it is now desirable that there be greater discretion in relation to the ombudsman's office. The bill provides this discretion.

Also, to ensure the best use of resources, the bill provides that the ombudsman may conduct industry reviews but only at the request of the minister. This is to save duplication of functions with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, which also has the power to conduct reviews, and with the Commonwealth, which now has jurisdiction over all of Queensland's private sector employers.

In announcing these changes, I would like to commend the current ombudsman, Commissioner Don Brown, and his office for the work they have undertaken, particularly in relation to protecting our most vulnerable workers.

The bill also contains other amendments. The bill provides for the removal of Queensland workplace agreements from the state industrial relations system to give effect to a commitment to the Commonwealth, as part of Queensland's referral of its private sector industrial relations powers. There are no workers in the state jurisdiction on these agreements.

The bill also clarifies issues concerning workers compensation appeals to the Industrial Court of Queensland by clarifying the operation of the 21-day limit and ensuring that, consistent with appeals of industrial matters, the appeals are limited to errors of law or excess or want of jurisdiction. These provisions are subject to any overriding legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

## **MINES AND ENERGY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)**

### **Second Reading**

Resumed from 25 November 2010 (see p. 4357), on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (12.42 pm): I am pleased to rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. As I do at the consideration of every piece of legislation that relates to the mines and energy industry in Queensland, I remind the House and all Queenslanders of the importance of this industry to Queensland. The bill before the House today deals with performance standards for the gas industry, the collection of royalties, tenure related issues, and safety and health related issues. The broader comments that I will make certainly fit within that part of the industry that all of those things relate to.

The LNP and I generally have been strong supporters of the resources industry in Queensland. As members in this House know, every time that we consider legislation such as this I remind members of the House and the people of Queensland just how much Queenslanders owe to the resources industry and just how much the resources industry contributes to the lifestyle of every Queenslander. It goes without saying that those of us who come from regional Queensland and those of us who have seats in Central Queensland, as I do, fully recognise the importance of the resources industry to our seats, to our areas, to our districts and to our communities. We fully appreciate the economic benefits that that industry brings to the communities that we represent. I have often said that I do not think the people of Queensland generally appreciate the extent to which the resources industry contributes to the lifestyle that they all enjoy.

However, over the years that I have been delivering that message to this parliament, the situation facing the people of Queensland in relation to the resources they own has changed somewhat. There is no doubt that there was a time when we in the parliament and the government were very pleased to see the proposal of a resources project. There was always a deal of excitement when a resources project was proposed. There was an effort by the government to get that particular resources project up for the benefit of the people of Queensland. What has changed is the number of projects that are now available and are being proposed for development in Queensland. The numbers are quite staggering. The value in dollar terms of the investments that are coming to Queensland is so large as to be almost meaningless to most people. That allows the people of Queensland to set a higher standard. It allows the government to set a higher standard. It allows all of us to have a greater expectation about what the resources industry can do.

This afternoon, as we consider this legislation, the message that I send to the resources industry is that our support for the resources industry remains strong, but our tolerance for misbehaviour by the resources industry is becoming lower as the queue of projects becomes longer. That is a message that the resources industry needs to heed. It must not underestimate that message as it contemplates the possibility, at least, that the government in this place may change.

I commend the Labor government. I do not often commend the Labor government and I grit my teeth when I do. However, I commend the Labor government for acting decisively in regard to the Cougar Energy project at Kingaroy. I commend Minister Kate Jones for shutting that project down. I stand beside her in that decision. I will stand beside her and the LNP will stand beside the government in defending that decision in whatever litigation that company brings. That is an example of where a government needed to act against a resources company that did not meet the standards. That should be an example for the resources industry generally. They need to understand clearly that if the LNP is elected and becomes the government we will uphold those high standards. In government, the LNP will

continue to support the resources industry, but resource projects that fail to meet those high standards will be shut down. We will support the resources industry, but we will enforce strict regulations and we will shut down projects that do not meet those regulations. The LNP will shut down projects that do not meet the environmental standards that Queenslanders expect and we will have no hesitation in doing that. While we will continue to maintain our support for the resources industry, we will shut down projects that fail to treat our landholders and our communities with due respect.

The resources companies that are scrambling to invest in Queensland at the moment need to know that those are the conditions under which they will be investing. We support the resources industry. We support the investments that those companies make. However, they need to be aware also of our support for the strict regulations that have been improved by the passage of legislation through this House in recent years. Resources companies need to know that a breach of any of those regulations will result in swift action by an LNP government. Today I make that commitment on behalf of the LNP. I also make a very personal commitment. I have been a very strong supporter of the resources industry, not for any other reason than that it has been a tremendous contributor to the part of Queensland that I represent and I love so much. The Central Queensland region has fundamentally changed because of the resources industry and I will continue to support those types of developments that have benefited my constituents. However, if I am ever given the role of minister I will move very decisively to shut down projects that do not meet those standards.

It is particularly pertinent to the developing coal seam gas industry. It is an industry that has received bipartisan support in this House and an industry that I have strongly supported because, once again, I have seen some great benefits from the coal seam gas industry to the communities, to individuals, to families and to landholders whom I represent. I believe the coal seam gas industry has an enormous potential for Queenslanders.

The coal seam gas industry is also a huge industry. It is very difficult to get one's head around the size of some of the projects being proposed. Because of that huge size, I think the performance of the coal seam gas industry is even more important. The performance of the major companies that are involved in that industry comes under greater scrutiny from the general public than possibly some of the earlier resource projects in Queensland for a number of reasons. One, of course, is the co-existence that is required about which members in this House would have heard me talk many times. Another is the fact that the coal seam gas industry is increasingly moving into areas that are more closely settled and where, of course, their activities are going to come under more scrutiny.

My message to the coal seam gas industry is exactly the same as my message to the resources industry generally. They need to know that the LNP supports the coal seam gas industry. We strongly support the coal seam gas industry. We will strongly enforce the regulations, which the government has improved markedly in recent times, but we will shut down projects that do not meet those standards. Let there be no doubt: we will shut down projects that do not meet those standards. We value the investment of those companies, but there is a whole range of investment out there that we can access. We value the jobs that they bring and we value the business opportunities that they bring, but there is a whole range of project proponents out there who can bring those prospects to Queensland at the moment.

It was particularly disappointing to see some of the recent media coverage of the coal seam gas industry that involved QGC and BG. Like every other Queenslander, I was appalled by some of the television images of rusty gas wells standing in pools of water with gas bubbling up out of the ground around them. That is intolerable. That is the sort of thing that governments need to act against and act very quickly. I say once again very clearly that that is the type of thing that we in government would act against very decisively. I would encourage the government to act decisively against that type of obvious failure to meet an acceptable standard. It will have our support if it acts against that type of failure to meet the required standard. The members opposite will have our support and we will expect their support if the people of Queensland reverse the situation in this House. That sort of situation needs to be shut down and shut down quickly. My message to BG and to QGC today is very clear: we support their project. It involves billions of dollars of investment. It involves many, many jobs. It involves many, many business opportunities for Queensland businesses, but we will shut them down if they do not meet the standards that the people of Queensland require.

Everyone should understand the situation here. The gas companies are contracted to the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland own the gas. Queensland's coal seam gas is a huge resource, but it is owned by the people of Queensland. It is an energy resource of world-class standard and we contract companies such as BG to extract that gas on our behalf. If they do not do that job in a way that meets our standards, then we will contract someone else. We will not tolerate the types of images that we have seen on television.

One of the most disappointing things about the media coverage was the fact that nobody from QGC or BG fronted up to explain. Did they not think they had a responsibility to explain? Were they so arrogant that they thought they did not have to explain? The people of Queensland deserve an

explanation for that type of thing. Making those explanations is part of the obligation that those companies have. I take the opportunity to send that message very clearly and indicate to the government that it would have our support for decisive action against that type of failure to meet standards, and we would expect the support of Labor if the situation were reversed.

I also want to make some comments about the prime agricultural land issue because it is an issue that causes a lot of public concern. As far ago as 28 October 2008, when I was shadow minister, I said that the position of the LNP was very clear. It is recorded in *Hansard*. I said—

The black soil flood plains on the Darling Downs are regarded as some of the best country in the world.

...

They are places that should be protected at almost all cost.

...

... I think it is important that everybody involved in the process knows that under an LNP government, with our determined policy to protect prime agricultural land, the value of prime agricultural land will be a very important factor in the public interest test that is applied by an LNP minister and at every stage of the application process ...

Nothing has changed in our attitude. The message I sent then is exactly the same as the message I want to repeat today. I quote again—

If a company is going to spend its own money in exploring areas of prime agricultural land, then it needs to know very clearly that under an LNP government the value of that prime agricultural land will be a paramount consideration in the public interest test that we will apply. I cannot say it any clearer than that.

...

Landholders, who are the other part of the equation, also need to have confidence that an LNP government will ensure that the value of that prime agricultural land is a paramount consideration in—

our consideration of applications.

I cannot say it any clearer than that again today. Companies that apply for exploration permits over prime agricultural land, such as the exploration permit that was issued around Kingsthorpe and Gowrie near Toowoomba in recent times, need to understand that under an LNP government they will not proceed. Any money they spend there they spend at their own risk, and so it is with so much of the other prime agricultural land across the Darling Downs region. I say again very clearly to all of the resource companies that operate there: if you are developing projects on that prime agricultural land you need to know that under an LNP government those projects will not be approved. They will not be approved. I say to those people: do not come to us and tell us about the money that you have already invested, the money that you have already spent, and think that that is going to somehow override the determination that we have to protect that prime agricultural land. We will protect that prime agricultural land and we will be very ruthless in the protection of that prime agricultural land. The people of Queensland can set a very high standard for resource companies and their operations because there is such a long queue of companies wanting to establish projects in Queensland.

There is a very long queue and we welcome that investment. Queenslanders need to understand how valuable that investment is. They need to understand the benefits that flow to all Queenslanders from that investment. However, the people who make that investment also need to understand the responsibility that they have to the people of Queensland—to all Queenslanders, who are the owners of the resources—but especially to the people in rural and regional Queensland who deal with the consequences of those investments on an everyday basis, who have to live at the interface between the resources industry and the community generally. All Queenslanders are in a very fortunate position that, because of the long queue of resource companies wanting to invest in projects in our state, because of the amount of investment that is pending, we can set high standards both in terms of the performance of the projects and in terms of the projects that we approve.

Before I begin to deal with the details of the bill, I want to reiterate that the comments that I have made do not take away for one minute from the support that we have given to the resources industry over a long period. Any attempt to misconstrue those comments as not supporting the resources industry would be quite dishonest and wrong. We will continue to support the resources industry, as I believe every member in this parliament supports the resources industry. However, it is also important that, amongst the growing concern out there in the general community, the people of Queensland know where we stand in the case that an LNP government is elected at the next election. At the same time, in the role we have at the moment as opposition members and in my role as the opposition spokesman, I want to take this opportunity to reinforce my message to the government that, just as we stood beside it over the Cougar issue at Kingaroy, we will stand beside it in any attempt to ensure that standards are maintained and that things like prime agricultural land are protected.

The government has taken a long time on the development of its approach to the protection of prime agricultural land. A lot of people in the community are waiting desperately for some sort of security or resolution to that issue. We, too, wait to see what it is the government is going to propose. Whatever it is, philosophically we will lend support to the protection of prime agricultural land.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

**Mr SEENEY:** I will now briefly look at the details of the bill, and no doubt we will get a chance to look at the bill in more detail, if necessary, during consideration in detail. The bill seeks to introduce minimum energy performance standards for gas appliances. Of course the opposition has no problem with the introduction of such standards. The bill also seeks to adjust the process for arriving at royalty estimates for the budgetary process each year. What is outlined in the bill seems to the opposition to be common sense, and we do not have any intention of opposing that element of the bill either.

The bill makes an adjustment to the Gladstone Power Station Agreement, which I take it from the explanatory notes has been agreed between the parties and so the parliament is simply ticking this off. The bill also makes some amendments to safety and health related matters within the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act, the Explosives Act, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act. As with all advancements in safety or all attempts to increase the level of safety, of course those provisions would have our support. We should, though, at this point note, as I have done many times in the past, the great advances that have been made in regard to safety in the mining and construction industries and commend the people who over a period of time have been able to bring about quite an enormous cultural change in regard to safety, and may that effort continue. That has universal support.

The bill also makes minor amendments to a range of other acts. But the amendment that the opposition does have some problems with is the one that seeks to set a minimum age for the operation of machinery at a mine or a quarry. The member for Redlands will speak at some length about this. Suffice it for me to say that we will not be supporting the clauses that make up this particular part of the bill. The setting of a minimum age of 16 is something that concerns all of us who have grown up on farms or who have farms where children have grown up operating machinery. The setting of a statutory age is not the solution to arriving at a proper, safe environment in a family operated business.

Whether it be a farm or a quarry or a gravel business or a baker shop or whatever, in family operated businesses family members play roles as they grow up that are part and parcel of the family business. Setting a statutory minimum age for any of those roles is not the way to approach what has always been a difficult subject for regulators. Regulators should stay out of it and leave it to senior family members to decide what is or is not appropriate for their family members.

What is particularly concerning about the amendments in this legislation is that they seem to us to be motivated by a particular situation that has occurred within the electorate of Redlands. That is why I will allow the member for Redlands to address that particular matter in some detail. Philosophically, the concept of regulating what happens within family businesses, regulating minimum ages for children to participate in various activities in family businesses, is not a concept that we would support. That concludes my contribution to the second reading debate of this bill, and I look forward to consideration in detail.

**Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (2.35 pm): Today I rise to speak on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. It seeks to amend nine acts: the Clean Energy Act 2008, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Explosives Act 1999, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Gladstone Power Station Agreement Act 1993, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004.

It is the amendments to the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act to which I will contain most of my comments. It is an act that involves safety. I take on board the comments from the minister in an earlier interjection that safety is important, as was echoed by the previous speaker from this side of the House. Safety is paramount. But why this legislation has come about, and because it is very specific to my electorate I intend to spend my contribution dealing with—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! The clock has not been reset.

**Mr DOWLING:** I could probably speak for 38 minutes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! You can resume.

**Mr DOWLING:** I thought I had 20 minutes, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have been going for a few minutes. Put it at 18 minutes.

**Mr DOWLING:** Thank you.

**Mr Schwarten:** That is generous.

**Mr DOWLING:** Very generous, thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is why I will concentrate most of my efforts on that particular provision. Just by way of background, a man and his grandson have a very special bond, as it is with grandparents and grandchildren. It is a very special bond and it is one that is enjoyed by many. This is a story of a grandfather and his grandson.

There is another special bond that exists. Without being too sexist on International Women's Day, boys tend to gravitate to machinery, trucks, cars and things of that nature. A young boy growing up in that environment is obviously going to be drawn to that lifestyle. It happens right across Queensland. It happens on farms, where young kids get involved in farm life and they contribute very validly and very genuinely. In all honesty, given a chance, who here in this room would not love to jump onto a big machine and drive it around a quarry or a building site or something? Given the chance, we would jump at it. But that is unlikely to happen in this nanny state, because that is where we are heading. We are continuing down the path of a nanny state.

The creation of new section 250A in clause 93 goes straight to the heart of a nanny state. This provision is to place responsibility on senior executives for mines to ensure children under the age of 16 do not operate or maintain plant or mine equipment at a site. It is just part of the nanny state. Do you honestly think, Mr Deputy Speaker, that a grandfather would place his grandchild in jeopardy of any shape or form or that a father would put his child at risk or expose their business and their workplace to risk? Quite honestly, it would never happen and does not happen. This provision is here for one reason only. According to one of my residents, it is there for one reason only and that is payback. That resident has made a number of comments about this particular issue. He is astounded at the lengths to which bureaucrats and bureaucratic processes will go to win in the end.

We are talking about the lengths that bureaucrats will go to in an attempt to get even with a private family operated business that actually dared to challenge the bureaucratic process. They went through the proper court processes and it vindicated their activities. Instead of letting sleeping dogs lie, waking up to the fact that this was quite legitimate, quite reasonable and quite an accepted practice and taking into account all the processes that this operator was happy to put in place, the department had to go hunting scalps. It had to continue until it won in the end. That is where this legislation comes from.

Obviously we are all familiar with the case. It has been articulated in the papers over previous years. It involves Karreman Quarries and Dick Karreman and his grandson Dane. Dane has quite literally been brought up on those machines. He has been operating them for many years.

The legislation as it currently stands states that the operation of machinery in quarries and mines is competency based. There is no need for any further bureaucratic process. It has served us well since 1999. But now an almost vindictive process has meant that the legislation has to be amended. It has not been deemed necessary in the past for any age limits to be set for this kind of activity.

I just wonder how far we take this next line of argument, this nanna state mentality that is the Queensland government at this moment in time. Is it going to stretch to the agriculture and farming industries? Will we stop young people from driving the family tractors, the family headers or the family excavators or from running vehicles around the family property? Will we stop young people from having a go on ride-on mowers or from mowing family yards? It is only a matter of time before that happens. It seems that this government cannot help itself in overprotecting everyone. God forbid we should actually do anything that has any risk.

What about young kids riding trail bikes and motocross bikes and things like that? Will they be affected? We are going to be looking over the shoulder of any young person wanting to work with equipment in a family business. We are going to be driving them insane and stifling their family lifestyle, their business and their future opportunities as young people.

What about the young people who are disenfranchised and whom we try to engage in work through organisations like BoysTown, where they teach them carpentry, concreting, building and mechanical skills? These are largely young people. A lot of them are under 16. They have disengaged. Organisations like BoysTown try to re-engage them. Is this legislation going to stretch to young apprentice mechanics not being able to tinker with and maintain motor cars?

It is not as though Dane is not supervised when performing this function. It is not as though he is just thrown the keys to this bit of gear and told to go and play. It is not like that at all. This is a young fellow who has been trained, is qualified and is doing the right thing, and has been for a good many years. What about young fellows who detail cars and drive them around car yards or those who wash cars? What is going to happen to them? That is a business that has sprung up through a number of youth organisations that are designed to help young people.

This legislation involves the introduction of an age limit of 16 years for this one discipline—mining and quarrying. It is only a matter of time before it affects others, because Labor cannot help itself. It has to impose its bureaucratic will on every aspect of people's lives.

What about aviation? There are no age limits for learning how to fly an aircraft. The only proviso is that when a person is sitting in the seat they can see out the window. I am told that that is normally, depending on the height of the child, anywhere from 12 onwards. They can fly an aircraft. I would suggest that flying an aircraft has infinitely more risk associated with it than does operating a machine around a quarry. The aviation industry does not have an issue with that but this government apparently does.

This legislation is very specific and it targets one operator. Site owners do not take risks. They do not just run amok. They do not just go crazy and expose their business, their equipment and their grandchildren to those kinds of things. The current legislation is more than adequate to deal with the issues that were raised. If this legislation is allowed to pass—and I fear it will—it will be the thin end of the wedge. It always is with Labor.

There are some extracts from the case that Karreman actually won that I will highlight. What happens is that the rock is quarried from a part of the site and transported to a crushing area. It is then sorted into size. That is where young Dane works: he works on the excavator. He sorts the sizes. He moves the rock to the conveyor belt and puts it into piles so that it can be loaded onto other vehicles.

It is not as though he is necessarily coming into contact with anyone. To cover off all of the safety issues that the department was trying to impose, they had in place a strategy. Someone else would actually start the machine and do the prechecks of this loader. It was able to be confirmed that everything was in running order, that everything was safe, that Dane was safe and that he was going to work in an area that had no other workers in it. He was not going to come into contact with anyone else at that particular site.

There is a remote kill switch for his unit with the site supervisor. This quarry site is particularly interesting. They have a huge observation tower in the middle of the site. From there they can observe the activities around the quarry. They have a kill switch in that tower so they can actually stop the machine at any time—a dead man's switch, as it were.

All of these things were in place to create a safe working environment. But was that good enough? No. We have some bureaucrat, someone with an axe to grind by the sounds of things—and as it has been relayed to me—who could not help themselves but to impose their will. It does not matter whether it makes sense. It does not matter whether it is reasonable. It does not matter whether it is logical. They imposed their will. I would question what contribution that sort of government strategy makes to obtaining a good outcome. I would suggest it has no positive outcome.

This young fellow, Dane, has had over 250 hours of training in the operation of this loader. He has plenty of experience. He has been doing it for a number of years. He is 10 now. He has been operating machinery around this place since he was seven—without incident, I hasten to add, but with strict supervision, with strict controls and with a safety ethos instilled into him.

He has successfully operated the loader for some 500 hours. In loader operator terms that is a significant time. He has worked with numerous persons. He has been supervised and assessed by numerous people. Do members know what? Apparently he is a damn good operator of this excavator. He performs the job incredibly well. He is on par with any other operator. That was testimony that was given at the hearing of this case. His basic capacity to operate the loader is not disputed in any way, shape or form.

So then it gets back to: what is the issue? Clearly, from the department's point of view the issue was with age. It had nothing to do with safety. It had nothing to do with hazard reduction and hazard management. That came out in the hearing. The issue between the two parties—and the two parties in this case are the state mining supervisor and the operator of this mine—is the definition of 'hazard'. In court the appellant contended that the hazard is the operation of the loader and the respondent contended that the hazard of the operation is the age of the loader operator—that being nine years of age. Clearly, it was not about safety; it was about age. Someone decided they would like to have a go at that issue. I suggest that it was done for no real worth; it was simply some bureaucrat having a go.

I understand that that person no longer holds that position and has moved on, but this young person is more than capable. I hear the hushed tones from across the chamber and I can just hear them now coming after the farmer. I can hear them now coming after the farmer in that a young son or daughter working on the land on a farm will no longer be able to help in the family business—the farm. I can hear it now. It is almost like they are telegraphing a punch. That is an important understanding of this issue that some of those voices opposite obviously do not have. Farming is a family business. This is a family business. This is a young person who has all the smarts, all the wherewithal, all the skill and all the understanding and maturity to do what they have done for the past three or four years, and they are quite happy to continue doing it. That bond is broken by this nanna state mentality—a grandson who one day will presumably take over the family business and run the family business. At the moment he is getting a fantastic grassroots experience.

But, no, not with this government, not with this Labor government dipping its oar into the water. It is almost like it cannot help itself. In the absence of anything serious to do or anything relevant to do, it just needs to introduce more regulation, create a few more officers, a few more departments, a few more seat warmers and a few more people just to block the process and just to interfere. That is what it is about. Then there is the question of integrity. The representative from the government was slammed—absolutely slammed—in the tribunal hearing. This was the evidence that was given—

We say with the greatest respect that he was an unsatisfactory witness. It is not necessary for us to say that he was being deliberately untruthful, but he was certainly evasive.

What kind of comment is that for a QC to make while deliberating? The evidence continues—

We say, far from frank with the court, Mr Bellingham clearly—clearly you would infer—decided that as a matter of policy children should not be on quarries and that the children should not operate machinery on quarries in any circumstance.

Again it is not about safety; it is just some age issue that this guy has gone wandering off on. So it is about age; it is not about safety. If the government wants to make it just about age, fine, but do not try to hide behind safety. Let us not pretend to the world and couch it in terms of safety. This is a young bloke who has been working with this machinery. He is familiar with this machinery. He is familiar with the operation. He actually loves doing what he is doing. He gets out there on his school holidays and weekends. Well, he used to until some petty bureaucrat with nothing better to do decided to introduce new legislation after he got thrown out of the hearings. What kind of lunacy is that? With all due respect, I do not even necessarily know that the minister was driving this initiative and this change. I fear it may have come the other way. At least I would give the minister some credibility for being a little more astute on something like this rather than to chase down this very minor issue.

It is really the nanna state. It is nothing more and nothing less than a nanna state. It even goes one step further than that: it is actually bureaucratic payback. It is actually a get square. It is saying, 'How dare you challenge and then have the audacity to win the argument, because you know what? I have the resources of the entire government and I can just put in any bit of legislation I like. I can then roll it up to the House and it will go through on the numbers without any real due consideration.' That is what I believe has happened in this case and that is what I believe was the instigation and the catalyst for this legislation.

This young kid has been operating this 30-tonne piece of gear for 500 hours without incident—500 hours without incident! I tell you what: he should be commended, as should his grandfather and the rest of the people involved in the site who trained him and taught him the respect and the skill that one needs to operate that level of machinery. This is totally about getting back—payback. It is getting square—nothing more, nothing less. I am gobsmacked that this government, this bureaucrat and this department were able to waste so much time on what is and can only be described as a vendetta—a vendetta and a payback.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (2.54 pm): I want to commend the speech from the member for Redlands in relation to the age limit that has been proposed in this legislation to operate machinery. It is very unfair on future generations to have these restrictions put in place. It has been said here before that young people can fly an aeroplane at 16 years of age. They learn to do that from a young age. This issue goes on from there. As the member for Redlands also asked: will this apply to farm activities? What about the opal mining industry? It is a small business. It is a recreational business. I have obviously been a member of parliament for a long time and have listened to the School of the Air and have heard kids talking about being out there. Some operate machinery and some do not, but basically they crack the opal nuts and they are part of it. They have done that since they could effectively manage a machine of some description. I do not think that there is any logical reason for this to occur. I appeal to the minister to reject this proposal. I do not think that there is a reason for it.

I keep coming back to the situation where the government has been done over in the courts. The law of the land said the government was wrong with regard to Ashley McKay and tree clearing. It went back and forth to court five times. The government kept on trying to change the legislation, and it did that with all of the tree clearing legislation. It loses and it then changes the legislation so it can try to win the next time. This is a very similar case. I do not want to harp on about it, but it is so wrong that the government can do this based on age. It should be based on competency. There are many kids out there who are far better drivers and operators than adults. Anyone with a heartbeat can get a job in the mining industry. At the end of the day we have to understand that some of these kids are really very good. When I went to Microsoft in Seattle someone asked where it finds computer whizzes to make new programs. We were told that 14-year-old kids tend to make those programs.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** A laptop's not going to tip over and kill them.

**Mr HOBBS:** These are not going to tip over and kill them, for heaven's sake. There is more chance of an adult tipping over a machine than there is of a kid if they are trained properly, and no-one in their right mind would allow a kid to operate—

**Mr Hinchliffe:** A 30-tonne piece of machinery?

**Mr HOBBS:** So? It is a piece of machinery.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Ministers on my right! The member for Warrego has the call.

**Mr HOBBS:** These machines can turn on a threepence. They can manage them, and they are like they are with everything else. We see kids on skateboards. They have abilities and skills that none of us have. They can turn upside down and inside out on those damn things, and they can do the same thing with machinery. The government has gone over the top in this regard, and this is an important issue.

The other thing, too, is how much consultation was done on this bill? Was there considerable consultation with the community? I do not see that there was consultation on this issue in relation to the age of people who are able to operate a machine.

This bill also makes changes to the Explosives Act. A bullet is classified as an explosive. Does that mean now that if somebody takes supplies from town—mum goes in to pick up the groceries, or whatever—and picks up a packet of bullets to take home they are now caught under this new insurance situation? How far do we go? We have licensed kangaroo shooters and so forth, but at the end of the day ammunition with no gun is not of great consequence. But is there something that may impact on the common-sense approach of just freighting a simple bit of equipment? I think that issue needs to be clarified as well.

There have been instances where a bureaucrat has found a bullet on a place, but there was no gun there—someone just left the bullet there. Yet someone was prosecuted for having an explosive device, for heaven's sake. How bad is that? There is not a lot of common sense. In conclusion, I think there is far too much regulation coming in. How often do we hear that governments are going to reduce red tape, yet look at this bill! There is more coming in. We are creating more red tape today. We should be trying to reduce the impact on people, on businesses and on our lives.

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (3.01 pm): I have read this bill and I had some comments to make on the gas equipment standards that are contained in it, but I want to address the fanciful contributions of the member for Warrego and the member for Redlands. They put forward one of the most ridiculous propositions I have ever heard. To think that we should be giving children, who we do not let have access to a Hyundai Getz in their local street, access to 30-tonne mining loading equipment is a significant example of hypocrisy. We are talking about the mining industry. We are talking about some of the biggest machines on the face of the earth. We are talking about one of the most dangerous workplaces that our state has. We are talking about tonnes and tonnes of rock. We are talking about heavy earthmoving equipment.

This is a dangerous industry. To hear this argument from the member for Warrego and the member for Redlands that children should be able to drive excavating equipment and loading equipment in this environment is just ridiculous. Frankly, I do not even think they are serious about it. I think they are here to do a bit of chest beating and to wind up the issue. I would be very keen to see whether an amendment is moved during the consideration in detail stage of this bill to say that children should be able to use equipment in the mining industry. I think they are happy to come in here and make these complaints and then go back to their constituents and say, 'I stood up for what was right.' They are going to do nothing about it, because they do not stand for anything. They are happy to complain, but they do not stand for anything. Frankly, workplace health and safety is about preventing things happening.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr MOORHEAD:** I take that interjection from the member for Rockhampton. We are dealing with one of the most dangerous industries and in this environment the notion of workplace health and safety laws is to stop accidents happening before they occur. It is not about waiting until something happens and then saying, 'We should have done something about it.' This is about saying, 'Does anyone in their right mind think that the risk of children operating heavy earthmoving equipment in a mining environment is a risk that we are prepared to take?' and the answer is no. I could just imagine if a child had died in this environment. The LNP would be up here harassing and screaming at the minister and saying, 'Won't someone think of the children? How could you let this happen?' We are talking about the responsible approach of making sure that such a thing does not happen. We are not waiting to react to an awful incident that could occur if this legislation does not pass; we are making sure that lives are protected.

The best form of workplace health and safety is to prevent the accidents occurring, not to try to put the ambulances at the bottom of the cliff and wait until people have fallen off and injured themselves and then take them for rehabilitation. This bill is a great initiative and I support it all the way. I wish the LNP members would take their job seriously and take some responsibility for their proposals. I really doubt that we will see an amendment moved in this debate here today saying that children should be allowed to operate equipment in a quarrying and mining environment.

This legislation also amends various acts to achieve improved energy efficiency for gas appliances. In 2004, the Ministerial Council on Energy released the Switch on Gas strategy—a 10-year pathway addressing the energy performance of gas appliances and equipment. Gas water heaters and space heaters were identified for energy efficiency regulation for the period 2008 to 2011. When it comes to energy efficiency, water heating is one of the big areas in which we can make improvements and reduce costs to households and reduce the impact on the environment. Through the successful equipment energy efficiency program, governments have been working with the gas industry to revise energy labelling and to introduce mandatory minimum energy performance standards for gas appliances. From commencement, all gas water heaters manufactured or imported into Australia will be required to meet a minimum gas energy rating of four stars based on the current Australian Gas Association star rating scheme.

The amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 are the first step towards the nationwide introduction of MEPS for domestic gas water heaters. The general requirements for MEPS for domestic gas water heaters, including offences and penalties for noncompliance, will be set out in the amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Regulation 2004, which are to be progressed in coming months. This initiative is the first of its kind for gas appliances and equipment in Australia and is expected to be followed with a regulatory proposal for MEPS for other gas appliances, such as space heaters.

Estimates indicate that around 12 per cent of Queensland households are currently fitted with a gas water heater. On 1 January 2010, a ban was introduced in Queensland prohibiting the installation of electric storage hot-water systems as replacements in areas where residents have access to a reticulated gas supply. It is anticipated that this ban will lead to the increased penetration of gas water heaters in Queensland, with approximately 430 gas water heater installations estimated over the next 10 years. The introduction of MEPS for gas water heaters is projected to reduce Queensland's associated gas consumption by 1.01 petajoules and greenhouse gas emissions from 67 kilotonnes over the next 10 years. This measure will complement the existing provisions of the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code, which requires gas water heaters installed in all new houses and existing houses with access to reticulated gas to have an energy rating of at least five stars.

I know that there is much opportunity for growing gas use in my electorate to help households both reduce their carbon footprint and pressure on the household budget of energy costs. The APA Group, the owner of the gas pipeline, has a high-pressure line that goes through Logan to service the Logan Hospital. That has meant that some homes in Kingston, Slacks Creek and Loganlea have had the opportunity to convert to gas over previous decades. The current case-by-case consideration of where gas pipelines should be extended has made it difficult to significantly expand this service. This issue was raised at the recent Kingston South Neighbourhood Watch meeting along with the question of whether gas water heaters would be compulsory. The minister was able to provide me with information, which I provided to those residents, to assure them that the requirement to install a gas hot-water system applies only to those homes that already have reticulated natural gas and does not require anyone to engage APA to install gas to their home. However, with environmental and cost benefits, I am strongly encouraging those local residents who can move to gas to make the switch and reduce their impact on the environment and to reduce the impact of energy costs on their household bills.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (3.10 pm): This bill has a series of objectives, ranging from regulation and prescription of gas water heaters to regulation involved in mine operational safety. Accidents invariably result from two major factors, one being the human factor and the other being the condition or environmental factor failing. This bill has the desire to address both of these.

Fittingly, in his second reading speech the minister stated the importance of Queensland's mining industry. Coal, gas and a limited liquids industry supply 20 per cent of Queensland's income directly and employ thousands of Queenslanders. Eighty-five per cent of those come from the regions from which those resources are derived. Indirect income may provide another 20 per cent of the state's income.

The state has a focus on a switch-over to gas for those needing water-heating options where there are reticulated—piped—gas supplies. This plan has an end objective of decreasing the need for electricity for hot water supply. To give some detail, electricity for hot water is costing each consumer on average \$150-\$170 of a \$450-\$550 quarterly electricity account. Gas is not necessarily any cheaper, but it decreases the need for greater peak electricity supply, it reduces the burning of fossil fuels generating carbon and may have a higher water-heating efficiency with newer water heaters. The difficulty has been that the efficiency of gas water heaters has been slow to improve. This bill has an ambition, as stated in the minister's second reading speech, to impose 'a regulatory proposal for minimum energy performance standards for other gas appliances'. The authorities are expecting, to quote again from the minister's second reading speech, a decrease in Queensland gas consumption by 1.01 petajoules and a reduction of 67 kilotonnes of greenhouse gases over the next 10 years. To date, gas hot water heaters have not reached efficiencies that would have made the transition worthwhile. It is compounded by the purchasing contracts that prospective users have to enter into that are expensive and wasteful. This bill is a progression to the five-star gas hot-water system strategy.

The majority of homes on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, and in many parts of Brisbane, have no reticulated gas along their streets so they are unsuitable for this option. Those streets of Brisbane that do have reticulated gas might have an annual rate of 10 per cent of water heaters needing replacement. But 50 per cent of those cannot afford any gas solution based on current applications for exemptions. Of the 50 per cent who can afford it—in other words, not applying for exemption—40 per cent appear to be choosing solar where appropriate. In those cases they do so to save costs but will require electricity boosters to be turned on constantly, both to maintain a temperature of 65 degrees and to ensure water bacterial growth is guaranteed to be suppressed. In other words, it defeats the intent of the solar option in that case. The other 40 per cent will install gas under the new system. It seems unclear what the 20 per cent residual of the total amount will do.

Therefore, when one calculates the numbers, this mandate for a five-star strategy for an efficient gas system is actually a jump two steps too far. By mandating either gas or solar by default, we do not achieve the energy-saving objective and, worst of all, because the numbers of those who say they cannot be afforded or are granted the exemption in percentage terms are so high, the benefit of the system's installation is not realised.

The percentage growth of gas take-up beyond the 12 per cent at present confirms the figures. Therefore the logic of the approach is flawed. That the defeat is achieved by the failure of not enough infrastructure and the fact that the new systems are not affordable does not mean the initiative is still worthwhile. It is not. To facilitate true outcomes for that 40 per cent who cannot afford a new gas system, they should be subsidised with either gas or solar where appropriate. This bill does not offer that—nor does any other—so the end outcome of the program is failure by design.

So why are we doing this? I do not want to be seen as a doubter. The pursuit of better energy performing gas appliances is aspirationally good, but it must be market driven. If it is not, a subsidy to those installing the systems is needed. To deliver the offset, an equal benefit for the cost of paying for that offset, not dissimilar to the rules that apply to justification for any tax, must apply. By implication, the Labor government knows that this cannot be justified. Therefore, rather than repeat the solar hot water disaster it has just sought to deny householders their right to achieve replacement of an electric water heater with a new gas system. Tragically, it may leave us in a state whereby it will not deliver the intended result. Therefore, this system was intentionally, by design, a failure.

I turn to other issues covered by the bill. The safety and health related amendments are good and are directed at changing some of those things that may be considered to contribute to accidents where they are absent. The initial change is to ensure that coalmine site senior executives have a certified coalmine working plan. Surveyors must have a coalmine certificate or an approved qualification. This is a reasonable step. The remaining changes within the bill relating to safety are sensible and seem directed at establishing regulatory protocols in our state that conform with those in other states and also conform to the idea that in a rapidly expanding mining industry we need to have set protocols that we all agree on. In practical terms it should make the workplace safer, and that is a good thing.

There are changes to the royalty system of payments. These have been discussed in detail by the shadow minister, the member for Callide. The critical issue is that royalties are paid to the states by resource companies accessing resources owned by the states. This is as it should be and is protected under our Constitution and agreements that link us in Federation. At one stage the Premier and her government were prepared to cede our royalty payments to a failing federal government with the mining tax. With current federal Labor members refusing to rule out a federal mining tax, we continue to be in a situation where our critical state income, paid directly to us by resource companies, is threatened. This is a critical issue.

This bill ensures that forward estimates of royalty payments via data collection from resource-renting companies are formalised by amending the Mineral Resources Act and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004. This is an entirely sensible step and will clearly enable credible factual data being available for budget estimates. To do anything less would make a budget, whilst not worthless, of much lower value and nearly useless as a planning tool. I remain very concerned about the excessive waste of the hard-earned royalty dollars and the frivolous expenditure that is politically driven. Whilst proportionately not all goes on non-productive expenditure, far too much is being spent without due regard for the major efforts that are made in raising that income.

It is very easy for a government to overlook the many years of exploration when one in a thousand of those who get an ATP gets to yield anything at all. Of those, some one in a thousand—so one in a million—generate substantial income for our great state. The Treasury must never take that payment for granted—nor should any government. Whilst the state is due those funds, we must consider the risk taken by investors, the stress upon staff, the sweat and toil of workers and the dignity of the companies that rebate those funds to us. This mutual benefit must be treated with care, since investment can just go elsewhere when either the cost of labour or the severity of restrictions put in place by government dictates where that investment will be made. Such is the portability of money in a competitive global village.

It is largely energy related investments that are providing this income. Africa, Indonesia and India are serious competitors to us and we must never overlook the fact that crazy ideas like carbon prices, an extra mining tax and ridiculous environmental demands dressed up as sound policy initiatives by Labor governments are just too big an impost on significant investment in our state. We need to reassure business that we are open for business and we must continuously state the message that we are not careless with how we spend hard-earned income provided to us by those companies. We are due it, but we need to make sure that we recognise how difficult it was to raise it.

Plenty of voters are watching, and so is the world. This bill is fairly straightforward, but simple errors based on false assumptions may make it weaker. We support all bar the issues spoken about by the member for Redlands. I dispute the minister's final statement in his second reading speech that the bill delivers many positive benefits for the people of Queensland. I think the effects are neutral at best. This bill would have been greatly improved by bipartisan negotiation prior to its introduction.

 **Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (3.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. Over the past 13 years, I have become very interested in mining because there are a lot of mines in my electorate such as the Meandu Mine, the proposed mine at Coolabunia and Cougar Energy's UCG operation which, as everyone in the House would be aware, caused a lot of issues in my electorate and the town of Kingaroy. I thank Minister Kate Jones for her due diligence with regards to UCG in the South Burnett. I thank her for taking very seriously the people's concerns. In fact, I commend her. She did not turn a blind eye or say that this was just another whingeing community. She took it to heart. She had the matter investigated by an expert panel, which looked at the entire project. As we all know, after the report was released the decision was made that Cougar Energy was not to proceed.

In saying that, many believe that the people of the South Burnett and I in particular are opposed to any sort of gas mining. That is not the truth. We all know there has to be progress, but it has to be done in a proper and secure way. There cannot be a Russian roulette approach that may risk a community simply because megadollars would come out of a venture. We all know that that is the way of the future, but we have to recognise that the people who live in the area—and some families may have lived there for generations—have rights. Unfortunately, regardless of who is in power, governments reap a lot of money from mining companies and that money holds a lot of sway when governments need money.

One of the lessons learned from the Cougar Energy exercise is that the government did not do its own homework in the first instance. It did not lay down proper ground rules for a company to follow, because there was no baseline data to compare before and after the event. There was no proper investigation of where the underground water ran. Governments must endeavour to find out those things. We all know that ours is the driest continent in the world. We all know that the underground watertables travel almost the length of Australia, from the north to the south. We all know there are interconnections underground that we do not see. They could be mapped. I believe it is essential that all underground watercourses be mapped in the future so that severe damage is not done to the nation as a whole. We can say, 'You cannot touch the prime farming land, the good arable land; you cannot destroy that', but that land will be destroyed if we do not preserve the underground watertables and the underground streams and rivers that run into those watertables. If we do not preserve those, crops will not grow. If we cannot water crops and animals, and all the other things that happen on the land, we will be a very poor country in the not-too-distant future.

I commend the member for Callide. He stood in this House and said that he backed the minister all the way when it came to shutting down Cougar Energy. At last, he has made the right move—at last. Throughout this whole process, throughout the time that we were fighting to reveal the truth about what was happening on the Cougar Energy site and have that placed in the public arena and brought into this House for debate so that it could be investigated, I cannot remember—although it may have done, but I have asked the library to search this for me—the opposition stating that it had major concerns about UCG. Today at 3.11, the library sent me an email that states—

We have checked Hansard for the 52nd and 53rd Parliament, and searched for relevant media, but we have not been able to find any instance where Mr Seeney has asked for Cougar Energy to be shut down.

That is fine, but today he said he backed the minister all the way.

I am very angry about this. I want to correct the record in the House, for the simple reason that I do not like people taking credit or even suggesting that they deserve a bit of credit if they have, in fact, not done anything here in this House. With all due respect to Mr Seeney, and I do respect the man, perhaps it should have been said that in the past an error was made in supporting a project or whatever, but at least admit that the project was supported in the first instance and was not opposed in any way, shape or form. I made inquiries at the minister's office as to whether or not any correspondence had been received from the opposition in relation to Cougar Energy. One official letter basically asked for an update, but that was it. The member for Callide did not raise any concerns. However, I am glad he is on the right side.

The member for Callide also said, and I support him in this, that we have to monitor any mining company and any relatively new mining ventures in Australia and in Queensland to make sure they do the right thing. It is up to the government to do that, and to do it before the event. It should not be done after the event, when people's properties and livelihoods have been jeopardised, as they could have been and as some people believe they were in the South Burnett. People's cattle were tested. They had to come up with new forms of testing to test the cattle for benzene. As I said earlier, they had no baseline data to compare that data with. All those things should be put in place in the first instance.

Many members would know that yesterday outside parliament a march was held by people from the Darling Downs, concerned about mining, fracking and so on. The government must take that seriously, because those people are living with it every single day. They are the ones who are experiencing impacts on their properties. It is all right to say that that should not happen, that we should not have rusting wells, we should not have water and gases bubbling out of the ground. It is right that that should not be happening, but it is happening because to a great degree we let the companies self-monitor. There should be independent monitoring. I hate putting another layer of bureaucracy on any industry, but in an instance like this when the very livelihood of the state is threatened—and that is true, because lately all our dollars seem to be coming from the mining industry—we have to make sure we get it right in the very first instance and that companies do not carry on with improper practices.

I am passionate about UCG. That does not mean I am totally opposed to it, but I am very passionate about it being done in the right way. In the first instance we have to get the underground water tables, streams and rivers mapped so that we do not impact greatly on them in the future.

The issue of safety has been talked about here in the House. I must admit that I learned to drive as soon as I was old enough to stand on the clutch with both feet, hang on with one hand and push the gear stick with the other. I was not a big girl when I was younger. I must have been 7½ by the time I could actually jump onto the clutch and had the coordination to change the gear. By the time I was 8½ I was ploughing paddocks and pulling a scuffler and potato digger. By the time I got to high school I could probably drive as well as any man or woman who had been driving for 20 years. I can understand why people on the land, especially where it is a family concern, do make use of their children in this manner. I would have thought it very improper if my father had banned me from driving at that age. I was able to do it, so I figured I could do it. If I was big enough to do it, I could do it.

This legislation talks about mine sites being proper, fully-fledged industrial mine sites. I would not be a bit surprised if there were fathers, mothers or whoever drives a 30-tonne truck out there who have snuck their kid into the seat on a day when the mine was not working and let them have a steer. It happens. We have even heard of that sort of thing happening with commercial flights and one thing or another in the past. People do allow their children a little freedom. However, there is not a parent alive who I believe would intentionally risk the life of their child.

I turn now to the issue of gravel mining on the Brisbane River. Last week I walked along what used to be a beautiful riverbank. The actual riverbank was not there anymore so I could not walk upon it. I walked about 15 feet lower than the original riverbank. The riverbed must have been 20 to 30 yards wider than it was the last time I walked along it. I spoke to one man who was so devastated he could not go to his neighbour's place to see what he had lost. He himself had lost five or six acres of land which had washed away. I went to look at what the bloke down from him had lost. He had lost almost 30 acres of land from the riverbank. I would like the minister—and I invite him now—to come with me one day to talk to these property owners about the damage that has been done by the river which they believe has been severely exacerbated by gravel quarrying in the Brisbane River by Karreman Brothers.

After seeing the devastation I personally believe that a very close look has to be taken into whether or not that operation did cause the severe damage because below the point of quarrying the damage is nowhere near as severe. That operation has removed all that used to control the river and slow it down a little bit. In this case the floodwater just ran through there and gouged everything but slowed down below where the work had taken place. Unless the minister goes and sees it for himself, I do not think he will understand the damage that has been caused. Also of concern is the issue of licensing, permits et cetera. There seems to be some secrecy with regard to the type of permit or licence that Karreman has or the amount they are allowed to quarry. Nobody seems to be able to get any answers, which I find a little bit disturbing. I would have thought that that kind of thing would be public knowledge.

I was not going to speak very long on this bill, but I am passionate. Although a lot of people say I am not a greenie and that I am opposed to the greenie philosophy, that is not true. When you are born on the land you are very much a greenie on your own property. I know very well that as you learn something you must adopt it in the best interests of the country. We now have to look overseas to see exactly the issues relating to UCG mining and gas mining. They have had huge issues overseas. People keep telling me that there are successful operations overseas. However, I cannot find one. I have asked and asked for members of this parliament and ministers of this government to tell me where they are so that I can at least investigate them for myself. I have not been able to find a UCG or CSG

operation that has not had a huge impact on the residents in the surrounding area. If the minister could find me one example I would be happy. I ask every minister, new and old, to find me one example that I can show to the people of my community and other communities.

I would also like the minister to show me an example—if he can find one—of a successful clean-up operation and to tell me how long it actually took. Some in America claim to have been successful, but the impact still exists today. I would like to know exactly what people have to do to clean up. How do they clean up the underground caverns that they burn? How do they stop the contaminants from drifting here, there and everywhere? It is always said that there is minimal risk, but when it comes to our underground water, I am afraid minimal risk does not exist. There must be no risk to our groundwater, our underground water and our communities.

These operations will have to be very well set up in the first instance. Regulations will have to be so tight. If one person breaches them they should be held up as an example to every other mining company that comes along. The Cougar Energy operation appeared to choose which government regulations it would comply with and it did not necessarily understand the one relating to time limits within which to report incidents. It is my belief that if a company, big or small, chooses to flout the rules, it is up to the government to be very severe. If that means that the company never operates at a particular site or even in Queensland as a whole, then so be it. We should not be willingly sacrificing our long-term future for a short-term gain, and I believe that is exactly what has been going on.

I wish the minister well in his new role. I think he and I will have a lot to talk about over the remainder of the term and I hope it is a positive conversation. I hope that in the first instance he looks after the people, the towns and the communities in the rural areas where most of this mining occurs. Yes, there are big benefits to a mine being located in someone's area. We know that. I even fought for the existence of the Kunioon Mine when it was thought Meandu was going to close because I know the value in the 400-plus jobs. I fought because I knew the reputation of the company that was taking over Meandu Mine and that they would keep those jobs. If I did not have faith in the company that was operating that mine, members would hear about it. This whole parliament would hear about it.

I did have concerns with Cougar. The people of my community stood up, and they were only a small group to start with. At first we all thought they were anti-mining people. However, they fought and they did it with knowledge, not with emotion. They gathered the knowledge and they presented their case. That is how they won—I hope—with the government. They did it by being realistic and putting forward the arguments in a true and proper manner. Again, I appreciate that the government listened to them.

I hope that the people in the next towns or locales affected by mining, whether it be UCG or CSG, are protected by this government because of the lessons that we have all learned with regard to the UCG project in the South Burnett. I look forward to hearing what the minister has to say.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (3.39 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. Our shadow minister, the honourable Jeff Seeney, covered a lot of points very, very well. I will not repeat many of them, but I will repeat a few of his statements later. Most of Queensland is under some sort of tenure, permit or lease held by a resources company. In the last few years we have seen regulations strengthened by this government, and this bill strengthens them again. With that, we are certainly in agreement. We heard our shadow minister speak very strongly this morning and he made some very good statements.

In my electorate there is a little area called Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe. That area is currently under an exploration permit held by a company called Blackwood Coal. Australia Pacific Coal, I believe, owns about 10 per cent of that company. The people of that area are extremely concerned. There was a meeting called and I was the only politician who attended that meeting. There were between 700 and 1,000 people at that meeting. I stood and spoke about what they could possibly do to try to stop this exploration for coal going ahead. I want the minister to listen closely to this because he will face those people next weekend in Toowoomba and I would like him to make the same statement that the opposition has made. We heard our shadow minister say this morning that he will stop that mine going ahead. We will stop it. We will not allow it. That means that any money spent by Blackwood Coal now will be on the shelf if we win government. It is as simple as that. We are not going to allow Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe to be dug up. There are too many people who will be affected. There is a school at Gowrie Junction, there is a school at Kingsthorpe and there is a school at Oakey. It is simply unacceptable for that lease to be so close to an inhabited area. We will certainly be taking them to task.

I will be tabling letters. My office now has nearly 500 letters written to me to pass on to the minister. My staff at this moment are absolutely inundated. They are going through those letters and putting them together. That is the strength of what is happening out there—500 letters. Never has there been an issue in my 10 years of parliament about which that many people have written to me personally. These letters are not corporate letters; they are personal letters written to me to pass on to the minister. The minister will be getting a copy of each and every one of those letters. I hope the minister replies to

each and every one of those people and I hope he listens to the deputations that he may get next weekend. We would love to hear him give those people the satisfaction that the exploration permit will not be strengthened in any way or go ahead any further.

The real estate values in an area immediately go down as soon as there is talk of what may happen and the emotion surrounding what may happen. I had a developer meet with me just the other day who has developed a number of blocks and he is immediately at a standstill. He needs to sell those blocks to continue. It is going to cost him. People are scared about what is going to happen. We saw Acland coal come in right beside this area. They first came to me probably in 2001 and said, 'We're going to employ 75 per cent local labour,' and they were great. They were brilliant. That was Acland stage 1. Then we had Acland stage 2.

Now we have Acland stage 3 and we have a whopping great hole. There is no-one in the town. There is only one bloke still there who has dug his feet in. He will be living on a pinnacle because everything will be gone around him. The school went. You name it—the whole town is gone. It was beautiful prime farming agricultural land. People in the town of Jondaryan cannot drink their tank water because the loading facility is at Jondaryan. There is coal dust in the gutters. They cannot put white clothes on their clothes lines. The shadow minister spoke about the wealth mining creates but, when it occurs in close-knit areas and in areas where people want to live because of the lifestyle, it is totally unacceptable that there is an impost upon those people. So we will be fighting to stop that mine going ahead and it is as simple as that.

I want to read a letter that we got from Blackwood Coal. It will not take long. It reads—

Dear Land Owner & Local Resident,

Due to the increased local media coverage regarding the development of Exploration Permit for Coal (EPC) 1979, I am writing to provide clarification about the current status and future potential geological development of the EPC.

Blackwood Coal Pty Ltd ... has entered into a joint venture (JV) arrangement with Australian Pacific Coal Ltd—

they actually bought 90 per cent of the lease—

to develop a number of EPCs in the Surat and Clarence Moreton coal basins, one of these is EPC 1979 located east of Toowoomba in south east Queensland. The JV is managed by Blackwood Coal in consultation with APC.

Development of EPC 1979 is in very early stages of development with preliminary geological assessment being carried out to identify areas of interest to potentially conduct further assessment in specific areas of the EPC. Work conducted to date has identified a corridor of interest running in NW-SE direction as shown below in Fig 1. The JV has identified an area in the north west of the EPC, 15km east of Oakey for further geological assessment.

How far is Oakey from Toowoomba, Minister? Toowoomba is east of Oakey. The letter continues—

Earlier geological assessments undertaken by APC had identified an area of interest around the Gowrie Junction/Kingsthorpe area which they referred to as the "East Acland Target Area". Considering the latest geological information, the Joint Venture management team does not believe that this area warrants further assessment at this time.

So they are saying that it does not warrant further assessment at this time, but they know the time it takes. I heard the same story from Ambre Energy with regard to Felton, and now look at the stage that is at. The minister is about to sign off on some very interesting things. I do not know if he will sign off. I do not think he would, but they will be put on his table to sign and, while I have breath in me, I will be fighting that as well. The letter continues—

Development of an EPC into a mine typically takes 8-10yrs with many development/verification stages in between.

The letter goes on. I want to say that we simply do not want and cannot possibly have a coalmine that close to a beautiful major city and the surrounding small towns. The devastation would be immense. The people there have a right to be angry. The minister has some time to do some research into this before they have their community cabinet in Toowoomba next weekend. The minister needs to give those people a promise, because it is the minister who has to sign off on a permit to mine. The minister has the opportunity to stop that and nip it in the bud.

There is another part of this bill that concerns me. We heard the member for Redlands speak in depth about clause 93 which inserts new section 250A. We heard the member for Redlands talk about a young child who was caught on a weekend where there was no public access driving a machine in a privately owned quarry. But because quarries come under the mining act they are classed as mines. This was a quarry; it was not a regulated mine where you have to have a uniform, you have to sign on and you can be breath tested. That is what this was about. So there were all the problems that came from that.

I believe this sets a precedent and it is a precedent that I am very, very concerned about. No doubt safety regulations must be put in place. There is absolutely no doubt in the mining industry that safety must come first. But what about ride-on mowers on the footpath? Are they going to start to come

into it? What about our agricultural industry? Many of us have raised our children on a farm. My children learned to drive before they were 10. They could hop in the ute and confidently drive. They were not allowed to get out of first gear. As they progressed and got older, we taught them how to drive tractors and trucks.

This provision has the potential to be grabbed by bureaucrats and expanded. We are very, very concerned that this is a case that has been used to set a precedent. This provision has been snuck into this legislation. It is a very small clause, with very little written there.

We heard our shadow minister also talk about our prime agricultural land. I believe that my electorate is the richest agricultural electorate in Queensland. That area covers Cecil Plains and the sweeping plains right back to Toowoomba. There is no possible way that we can mine any of that country in any shape or form. We will be protecting our prime agricultural land under an LNP government when we win government.

 **Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (3.49 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) which seeks to amend various acts administered within the mines and energy portfolios to achieve and enhance safety and health measures in Queensland's mining industry. I have spoken very proudly of my electorate on many occasions in this House, the mighty Mount Isa electorate. My electorate is in the heart of the north-west minerals province which is a world-class mining and minerals processing area. The electorate of Mount Isa boasts many of the richest mines in Australia in base metals. Mount Isa Mines in the city of Mount Isa has been going some 86 years. We all know that the mining industry makes a significant contribution to the Queensland economy. This government most certainly has been very committed to ensuring that this industry is one of the safest in the world.

A number of the proposed amendments are designed to further enhance health and safety measures in the mining industry. It is now required that all mine operators develop and maintain a fully documented safety and health management system. I will personally continue to support legislation which is developed in partnership with industry, workers and unions in a consultative and meaningful way to ensure that we have policies, practices and procedures in respect of the management of risk for workers right across-the-board.

I speak to miners, workers and many associated with this industry on a very regular basis. From my perspective, the ultimate outcome of this amended legislation reflects where the industry wants to be positioned. The amendment requiring that only one safety and health management system is to apply to each mine site and removing the need for contractors to have their own system has received very strong support.

In my electorate there was a fatality at a mine a number of years ago. There was a great sense of confusion for about 24 to 48 hours until we could get in there and actually determine what had happened. That then led to a coroner's report which basically said that each mine site should have a single system, and rightly so.

We got a little waylaid with some opposition speakers talking about kids driving on the family farm and when kids can drive. I think we have all been there, and particularly people from the bush. We tend to make our kids grow up pretty early. Both of my sons were pretty competent drivers by the time they were 12.

**Mrs Keech:** They had to be.

**Mrs KIERNAN:** They had to be. It was purely a safety issue and a matter of our kids having the confidence and ability to drive if one of their parents got into trouble. I understand where those speakers are coming from. But I have to say that I think it is drawing a longbow to associate it with the fact that we have a 10-year-old kid in a quarry working heavy equipment. The reality is that we are putting in place a minimum age requirement of 16. Being from a very strong mining, rural and fishing region—with a vast range of industries—I think people would be pretty comfortable with that requirement.

In drawing a parallel with the rural sector I was having a look for some information. One of the things we are very conscious of is farm accidents and farm safety. Certainly my part of the world is not immune to real tragedies. There have been tragedies on some of our vast cattle properties. I think those speakers who suggest that the rural sector is not looking at farm safety or, as it is called in our country, safety on cattle properties are a little bit deluded. These industries are very much looking at safety.

A national farm safety researcher says that farm accidents and deaths are costing the agricultural sector more than \$1 billion per year. John Temperley from the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety has stated that each on-farm accident costs at least \$1 million.

**Mr Schwarten:** It is not so long ago that the National Party opposed any workplace health and safety on farms, you know that don't you?

**Mrs KIERNAN:** I will take that interjection from the member for Rockhampton. John Temperley goes to on to say—

... while there is a decline rate of deaths from farming accidents, the cost is still significant.

... the fatality rate for tractor accidents has dropped markedly in the last 10 years, since rollover protection bars were made compulsory.

The member for Gregory and I just had a bit of a stoush about bullbars and anyone wanting to tinker with our right to have the safety of a bullbar, but that is a story for another day.

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Mrs KIERNAN:** I will take that interjection—sort of. One of the things that this researcher talked about was quad bike accidents. He said that they were the most common cause of deaths on farms. He stated—

In Australia, in the last 10 years, there has been 140 quad bike related fatalities with their use—70 per cent of which occurred on-farm and about 28 per cent were fatalities associated with rollover of the bikes.

He went on to align this to the mining industry. He stated—

... the industry has also sparked big improvements in farm safety in recent years.

That is basically attributed to the downturn in mining. We had workers going back to cattle properties and onto family farms. They had quite a different outlook when it came to safety. For many of the graziers I talk to and work closely with safety is a real issue on their properties. The agricultural sector is seeing the efforts that the mining industry has put into preventing injuries in its industry and people are mirroring that on their family farms.

That just about says it all for me. The reality today is that all industries have the safety of their workers as their No. 1 priority. That is as it should be. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.58 pm): In rising to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010, there are certain aspects of this legislation that I want to canvass this afternoon. I have heard various members make contributions in relation to different aspects of this legislation. The mining industry is one of those industries that is vital and important to not only the ongoing viability and welfare of this state but also the quality of life that we enjoy in this great state that we live in. For a long time now—probably for the last 50 years—mining has become very significant to this state's welfare and the economy in conjunction with agriculture. This afternoon I have heard members make reference to sustainable farming land, the mining industry and the LNG industry, which is causing some grief in other parts of the state.

One issue I want to touch on relates to mine safety. Mine safety is in the conscience of each and every one of us, and it is a very dangerous industry. Every industry is dangerous when we do not follow the protocols and uphold the standards that have been set by experienced operators such as coalminers, mine management, contractors and all parties involved in the mining industry. Queensland has a mining industry record we can be fiercely proud of. That record has not been a good record because we have paid lip-service to those protocols and standards. Over a long period of time both sides of government have made amendments to the mining act, which has put in place safeguards that have made our industry safe and one where we are fiercely proud of the protocols. There are quite a few mine sites in my electorate where there have been so many days or so many months or so many years since there has been a certain type of accident. We can all be fiercely proud of the achievements of those companies and more so the miners who work in these mines, especially the underground blokes. That is a dangerous industry. Those who work in the open-cut industry also do a fantastic job. I pay tribute to people like Andrew Vickers from the CFMEU and the work that it is doing to create environments to ensure that our mines are safe.

While talking about safety in mines, I want to touch on the issue of drive-in drive-out workers—one of my pet subjects. I want to quote an article concerning my good friend the member for Kennedy, Bob Katter—

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Bob is a good mate of mine. We do not always agree on everything, but at the end of the day Bob has raised a very relevant point and one that I believe we have to canvass here this afternoon. Earlier my colleague the member for Mount Isa spoke about the importance of mining in her electorate. The article states—

The federal Member for Kennedy, Bob Katter, says he is investigating numerous complaints from Mount Isa residents that they cannot secure jobs at local mines and industries.

Mr Katter says several people have told him that a local employment agency is overlooking their applications in favour of fly in, fly out workers.

This destabilises these mining towns and destabilises the industry at large. The CFMEU, the unions, the miners themselves and the contractors are people who live and spend their dollars in those communities. They build their houses there and rear their families there. They are the heart and soul of the mining industry that has been so vital and so important to the ongoing viability of this state over a long period of time. Whoever dreamt up the idea of fly-in fly-out needs flogging with a hobble chain because all they are doing is decimating these communities and scourging these communities because those workers go into those towns for 10 or 12 days and are gone again when their time is up. There is no contribution at all to those communities.

In that regard I refer to the town of Blackwater, and I congratulate the minister on his elevation to this important portfolio. Blackwater has fly-in fly-out workers, but it is not so much fly-in fly-out anymore because the airport has closed. BMA no longer wants to maintain that airport and therefore there are no domestic air services coming into Blackwater unfortunately. Blackwater is a town of 8,000 people, 6,000 of whom reside there and the other 2,000 drive in and drive out. As the minister knows, those mining camps are absolutely deplorable. A press release from the Queensland Resources Council states—

Commenting on recommendations handed down today by Coroner Annette Hennessy, Chief Executive of the Queensland Resources Council Michael Roche said the QRC had for some time been working on a guidance note on fatigue with the Queensland Mines Inspectorate and the major mining unions.

That relates to these drive-in drive-out workers. When they come off shift, many of those people are fatigued but hop in their cars and drive 400, 500, 600 or 700 kilometres back to their loved ones. All that does is jeopardise the safety of those motorists on the roads. We have seen this happen time and time again, and the Capricorn Highway between Rockhampton and Emerald would have to be one of the most unsafe roads in Queensland because of the heavy concentration of not only mining traffic but also other traffic associated with the agricultural and tourism industries. It is very important that we get some sanity back into this debate, and that comes back to the issue of sustainable living in these mining communities. Blackwater is a fantastic community and a community where the planning has been done so well. There are beautiful big wide streets and there is tons of room to build more homes and residential estates. The ULDA is making recommendations about affordable land for affordable housing so we can get mums, dads and kids back into that community.

This government has to grow some balls as far as I am concerned in relation to making certain that we look after those communities and encourage people to come and live in those communities and reside in those communities, educate their kids in those communities and be a part of that community. I know not everyone can live in those communities. There are certain advantages to having a drive-in drive-out workforce, but this is one reason why there is a breakdown of these communities. It is healthy that mum and dad are at home together as much as possible with the family unit, and that brings me back to Blackwater. Blackwater has a hospital which is totally inadequate in terms of servicing that community, and I hope that the new health minister decides to upgrade or build a new hospital in Blackwater. Time and time again the Premier talks about decentralisation, and everybody in this House supports decentralisation. The towns that we are talking about here have the nucleus to be great places to live and to encourage industry to go there, not only with the mining industry but the agricultural industry and everything else that happens in those centres. At the end of the day, the safety of these mines and miners is also about the economies of those towns. We have seen what the CEO of the Resources Council and the Coroner have said. The police, the ambulance and other emergency service personnel are absolutely horrified at how unsafe some of these areas are becoming because of the overtaxing of the road system and the situation that those people are confronted with.

That brings me now to royalties from mining. I know that the federal government has made certain waves in relation to the taxing of the mining industry and channelling some of that money back into those areas. I have heard a lot of people say, 'We have to get our fair share,' but I have to say here today that we have to get more than our fair share. I say that to the minister and I say that to the government. This issue is about catch-up in rural and regional Queensland. We saw what happened in Western Australia with the mining royalties going back to the bush. I can guarantee that that is going to happen here at the next election, because we in the bush want our fair share. All of those back country roads from Brisbane right through to Mount Isa are an absolute dismal disgrace, but they are carrying the lifeblood of this nation—the commerce traffic, the traffic that is generating the dollars through the mining industry, the livestock industry, the wool industry, the grain industry, agriculture at large. Those roads also carry the tourist traffic. We have a magnificent tourist industry.

Mr Deputy Speaker, just a moment ago I was talking to you about SES personnel and what they are subjected to. The other day I drove on the road between Barcaldine and Longreach right up to Winton. There are potholes in that road, there are dual truck tracks in some places that are 30 or 40 feet long and deep. One day someone in one of those little tupperware cars, trying to pass a type 2 road train, will flip their car and we are going to have another fatality. It is no laughing matter; it is a serious matter. The other day I drove that road after rain. You could see the water in the tracks. You think that it is only two inches deep, but some of those tracks are a foot deep. This is a serious situation. I think it is time now for Anthony Albanese and our state ministers to have a look at this road firsthand. That road to Mount Isa that goes on to the Northern Territory is carrying a lot of heavy traffic. Members might ask,

'What has this got to do with the mining industry?' or 'What has this got to do with productivity?' This issue has a lot to do with it. It is about royalties and bringing some of that money back into those regions so that we can get our fair share. At the end of the day, it is about looking after those people who generate the wealth of this state and of this nation.

The other issue I want to touch on is that of local jobs. In recent weeks we have seen the disastrous outcome of the floods in the south-east, in my own area, at Rockhampton and on the Downs. We have seen all this devastation. I think that now is the time to take a long, hard look at the decentralisation of this state through the mining industry, the agricultural industry and the tourism industry. There is no time like now to be selling to the rest of Australia that this state is open for business through tourism.

I want to talk about the negativity that is coming from some of those people who in the middle of a cyclone walk out with a microphone and a TV camera and say, 'No, you can't go here, it is too dangerous.' What in the bloody hell are they doing out there in the middle of the night anyway? They should not be there. Everybody else is in a safe enclosure.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kilburn): Order! Member for Gregory, we have let one comment bordering on unparliamentary language go so far. Can we keep the language at a parliamentary level.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise, but I get a bit excited. I will try to do the right thing by you, as I try to do by everybody. Sometimes I fail.

**Mr Schwarten:** I agree with you on that. I think we all do.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I will take the interjection from my good friend the member for Rockhampton. He is dead right again. These people do not portray a good image like he and I try to do. That is what it is about: it is leading by example and doing the right thing. The other day I saw a bloke out in the middle of a street in Townsville and I thought, 'God!' You see sheets of iron flying around. I was waiting for a head to come off, but it did not happen.

I will get away from that subject for a moment. The real issue is that we see too much negativity and not the promotion of our great state. Now is the time—and western Queensland is no exception. In the north-west and the south-west—right across the state—this state is open for business. I think we should be getting people to go out there now and show them with our mining industry just what we have done—how we are trying to generate business and encourage people to go and live in those areas, how we have seen our railway workers restore that railway track that was washed away and absolutely decimated in the floods and the good work that people are doing. A lot of these people do not give a continental about that, because they do not know what is going on. I would suggest that they go and have a look and see the productivity that is going on outside of this area so that we can see how the wealth is being generated again in this state through the hard work and the vision of people who know nothing else but to do the proper thing all the time.

In closing, I want to refer to the issue that was raised by other speakers today about the 16-year age barrier on young people driving machinery in quarries. I know there is a law applicable to this matter, but I ask members to err on the side of caution. Being a station bloke myself and being reared on the land and growing up with horses, motorbikes, tractors, trucks and all of those sorts of things, I know that you learn from a very young age how to drive that machinery. I know young people who can really master that machinery, who can virtually turn it inside out and do a very able job. Some of these kiddies leave school at the age of 15 and go into workplace environments—get a job on a station, or whatever. I just hope that down the track we are not going to see some sort of an amendment put in place that will discriminate against young people being able to take advantage of a workplace environment because of their age. That is something that we have to be very careful about. I heard the member for Mount Isa talk about quad bikes. They are coots of things. They are so dangerous. I believe that people need to be trained and shown how to operate them, because the ones that are rigid are very difficult to manoeuvre. If you do not understand them, they are not a safe vehicle.

This is an issue that comes back to common sense. A lot of these young people—these 14-, 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds—are as able, active and agile as most people who have been manning and operating machinery for a long time. I feel that we do not need to be overregulating certain areas of industry, certain aspects of opportunities for young people, through saying all the time, 'You cannot do that'. There is so much red tape now that is regulating and stifling people. I know this is a safety issue and that we are all passionate about safety, but the fact of the matter is that I think sometimes we go too far. I say to the minister today that I believe it is very important that we address the issue in a proper and a responsible way so that we will not have ramifications further down the track where somebody who is genuine about workplace safety is penalised. I refer to young people working on stations. The 16-year-old might drive the Toyota to pick up the horse truck or something. The situation could result in that not being able to happen.

 **Mr McLINDON** (Beaudesert—TQP) (4.18 pm): That was a fantastic and very passionate speech by the member for Gregory in regard to decentralisation and rural and regional Queensland. In fact, he is sounding more and more like a Queensland Party member every day.

I would like to make a contribution to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). We need to understand that, although, yes, Queensland is a resource-rich state, we need to have a 50-year vision. Despite the two and a quarter year electoral cycle, which seems to be on the agenda imminently again, we need to look outside the political cycle and have a 50-year vision, even a 100-year vision for Queensland in terms of how we are going to make the best use of the resources that this great state provides, whether that is coal, LNG, UCG or CSG. I think it is absolutely imperative that we do not look at the big dollar in the short term but that we look at the big picture in the long term.

What needs to happen, particularly in relation to CSG, is a thorough investigation of the regulations for the benefit of landholders. Whilst there are some 1,200 regulations in the rapidly expanding CSG industry, it is important to note that it does not suffice to have 30-odd people who are supposed to enforce that many regulations in anywhere up to 44,000 wells across Queensland. What we need to see is regulatory measures that are only put in place once all the facts have been put before both the state and federal parliament. I believe that that is lacking.

I made reference this morning to the *Four Corners* program aired on 21 February. In that program Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith, who is an adviser to the federal government body of NICNAS which assesses and regulates industrial chemicals, said—

I've had a look at the application and what is of concern—the manufacturer's safety data sheets, or the material safety data sheets they include, they are certainly not the Australian standard and as such they are in breach of both the Queensland Act and the national code for material safety data sheets.

Furthermore in relation to CSG, she continues—

Of the 23 most commonly used compounds in fracturing fluids, the national regulator, NICNAS, has only assessed two of those 23 and of the two that they have assessed, they weren't assessed for their use in fracturing fluids.

It is of grave concern when the very doctor who reports and advises the federal body cannot herself give approval to the two that have been tested of the 23 in a practice that is rapidly expanding in this great state. We talk about decentralisation of rural and regional Queensland. During the recent tragic floods we saw the importance of rural and regional Queensland and the impact it has on South-East Queensland. We need to realise that inevitably over time globalisation will turn back to localisation. What we need to understand is that localisation in 30 to 50 years from now will be more important than ever. Our kids and our kids' kids will be reading the history of today and what we are approving in a slaphappy, ad hoc and steamrolling way and they will wonder why we in this parliament did not go through due process in terms of making sure that these industries would have minimal impact on both the environment and food security in Queensland in the future.

What is very upsetting is that the opposition, when The Queensland Party called for a moratorium on 24 November last year, sheepishly went across to the government's side. One can have more respect for the ALP because at least we know their position. They have given it the green light. I respect their position because I know where they stand. However, on the other side, it is extremely concerning when the opposition can vote against a moratorium and yet on the same day the member for Warrego puts out an e-petition calling for a moratorium. I congratulate the member for Warrego for doing that, but talk is one thing and walk is another. What we have seen is a growing disenchantment in these rural and regional communities. This is certainly one issue that we will take from here to the state election, whenever that might be. I think it is abhorrent for a major political party in this state, which claims to stand up for rural and regional Queensland, to walk away from its very core base. It is an absolute tragedy that it takes a party that has only been established in the last six or seven months, with the help of the five Independents—and I thank them for their support for that motion on 24 November—to support these communities. This will, in generations to come, be a pivotal point in the destruction of many areas of this great state. It is my hope that neither the government nor the opposition will win outright at the next state election. It is the only way we will get a true representation of the people's voice in the people's House.

As I said, decentralisation and food security is paramount. I would hate to see mines under foreign ownership destroy our land because the necessary measures are not in place. Imports are on the increase and we must have in place the necessary checks and balances. I think we need to take this issue very seriously as a parliament; we do not want to look back in years to come and regret things being done sloppily. I congratulate Dr Mariann Lloyd-Smith who came out and spoke the truth. She said that the community was not ready and that it was a breach of the Queensland act. That is very concerning. I call on the minister to reconsider the government's position on that moratorium.

The member for Gregory also mentioned royalties for regions. I think this is certainly something that needs to be reviewed. I remember the trip that I took to Weipa last year. Some \$30 million in royalties come out of Rio Tinto yet they could not even get their public pool refurbished for the cost of \$400,000. They had been waiting three or four years for that refurbishment without any response from the government. It is sad to see these communities struggle. The mining sector in these towns provide so much in terms of revenue for the government. These communities should get their fair share of that revenue.

This bill was an ideal opportunity to revisit the CSG expansion through the objectives of the bill in relation to the Clean Energy Act 2008 and the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999. Within these objectives of the bill it would have been an ideal opportunity to at least put a bit of a handbrake on it. It is a very rational approach. Most Queenslanders are pretty decent people. They certainly do not like getting knocked around. They are not saying the government should put a red light on the industry. They are just saying, 'Let's walk through it and make sure the impacts are assessed.' I think it is a very reasonable request. I certainly do not believe these people's voices are being heard. I will do everything I can to keep that on the agenda, including going to the blockade next Monday at Tara.

The new section 250A in clause 93 places responsibility on senior site executives for mines to ensure that children under the age of 16 do not operate or maintain plant at a mine site. I think that is a very reasonable request and measure and I thank the government for putting this in. Quite frankly, I do not think it would be wise for children under 16 to use some of the machinery being discussed here. Although on private property or in certain circumstances people under 16 can operate these machines, I think when we are talking about the industry itself it is a very reasonable measure to take. The last thing I want to see is a bunch of 14- or 15-year-olds on \$5 or \$6 an hour running these plants. I think it is ludicrous to leave it open.

One of the members of the government suggested to the opposition members that if they are against that measure, they should tell the House what measure they would suggest. This is the problem with the opposition. It is great to be against something but unless you have an alternative you are wasting your time. I have spent many hours over the last two years explaining this to the LNP to no avail. I think this is a very sensible measure. I pose the question too as The Queensland Party: if the official opposition have something else to offer then we can consider an amendment. I am more than happy to debate that. Right now there is nothing on the table. It is a sensible, practical measure that should be enacted. There have been arguments about light aircraft licences for younger persons and maybe this is something we need to review in terms of streamlining that. I do not think it adds a layer of bureaucracy at all. It is a very practical measure. In fact, some opposition members have praised the intellectual capability of people who are under 16, as I do too, but I remember trying to have the voting age reduced to 17 and the way I got hounded when I was in that party all those days ago. Maybe we need to look at the age restrictions relating to some rights and licences. Maybe we can look at it with a holistic approach and give recognition to youth where it is due. I certainly will support that clause.

I would like to see a greater 50-year vision in the mining industry. We can all too quickly get wrapped up in the two and a bit year political cycle. If we take a helicopter's view and look at things holistically, I think Queensland can still be a very rich resource state that is producing for this state, the nation and the world but in a sensible fashion so that we do not destroy what we have today and ruin tomorrow. Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your attention. I look forward to joining those people in Tara next Monday.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (4.28 pm): In speaking to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2), it is good to see the provisions to implement the safety and health recommendations made by the Ombudsman, including the establishment of a Commissioner for Mine Safety and Health, and the alignment of mine safety and health legislation with other workplace health and safety legislation. Mine safety is probably one of the most important issues that will ever come our way. The coalition strongly emphasised this when, five years ago, Queensland suffered from a lack of suitable available inspectors. However, after much lobbying, to its credit the government introduced different grades of mine inspector and put in place career paths to broaden the skills and the knowledge within the inspectorate for this vital service.

It is very important to remember that mining towns need to become family friendly. As the member for Gregory has stated, one of the big issues when it comes to accidents and deaths resulting from fatigue is that many people who work in mining towns do not necessarily live in the towns. Some may live five or six hours drive away, sometimes a little further. They may be at home for five days and then will need to get back to work. Many have no choice but to drive. That is as a result of what has happened over the years. That issue needs to be addressed for safety reasons. It is very important to make mining towns family friendly.

The bill imposes an age limit of 16 on those operating heavy machinery. This will impact on family owned and operated mining and quarrying operations and on school based apprenticeships. Many small mining operators run family operations and teenagers have been encouraged to learn how to operate machinery and work equipment from a young age. This legislation will effectively destroy a tradition of teaching sons and daughters the family trade. The usual age for recruitment of a school based apprentice is 15. The ability to properly educate and train is undermined if the incentives for young people to operate machinery and equipment are removed. No theory can replace the experience of learning to safely manoeuvre and control machinery and equipment. That experience is essential to the education of school based apprentices and family members who want to learn those trades at an early age.

This country covers three million square miles. Imposing high age limits for the operation of machinery will teach our young generation to be idle and to fear stepping out and having a go as it may cause injury. What are we going to resort to? Will we stop our children from playing cricket? I received a black eye when a cricket ball hit me in the head, but my coach just said, 'Next time, duck.' Do we ban cricket because we fear our children may get hurt? Do we ban rugby league because we fear our children may get hurt? Do we want to turn the children of this country and state into a bunch of wusses? This is bad legislation.

Another deficiency of the proposed legislation is its failure to provide adequate measures to ensure that the allocation of quarry sale permits will provide the maximum return in royalties. This legislation is supposed to enhance the administration of tenure related resources. However, it does not address the insufficient checks and balances in the tendering process. The proposed changes to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 fall hopelessly short of the mark and should go further to ensure that future royalty revenue estimates are used as a commitment from the holders of tenures that they will, in fact, develop and utilise the tenure site. Under current practices, quarry operators conduct extensive and costly research to secure suitable pits for the extraction of quarry products. This involves considerable time, money and effort on the part of the quarry business in assessing the suitability of a proposed pit. They are then required to submit an expression of interest to DERM for the intended quarry site. DERM then releases an open tender for the proposed site and the quarry business, which has gone to considerable expense to identify the site being tendered for, must apply for a tenure with no guarantee that it will be successful. I have been advised of numerous cases where operators have conducted costly research on a proposed quarry, only to find that the site is allocated to another applicant who has neither the resources nor the intention of developing the site into a working quarry. I call on the government to review this. I have written to the minister about the situation. I bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.34 pm): I wish to support the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. The bill amends several pieces of legislation including the Clean Energy Act 2008, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Explosives Act 1999, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Gladstone Power Station Agreement Act 1993, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004.

I am very pleased with the amendments to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and the related acts, as they strengthen the safety and health measures in the mining, gas and other industries. The legislative changes in relation to mine surveyors are most welcome. Mine surveyors will have to be registered with a professional body constituted pursuant to the Surveyors Act 2003 or, if not, they must hold such competency as approved and recognised by the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee.

The plans of coalmine workings are critical to miners as well as to our community. In Queensland, coalmining began in my electorate of Bundamba in the 1850s, in the Goodna and Redbank suburbs, and there were very few recorded plans of those mines. It is the same for the mines in the Bundamba and Dinmore areas in my electorate. About 150 years later, the lack of plans of those coalmine workings and the lack of accurate recordings of those plans has caused great concern in our community. For example, with the Ipswich Motorway upgrade we had to undertake a great deal of investigative work to find out where the mines were under the motorway so that we could prop them up.

A recent coronial inquiry into the death of a miner resulted in the recommendation that the coalmining industry should adopt a system of improving the records of coalminers' competency and experience, and also the portability of those records. This should be supported by all members of this House in the interests of the health and safety of our coalminers.

I place on record my support of Simtars, the head office of which is located in my electorate. They do a remarkable job in terms of safety in the coalmining industry. They are absolutely world-class. They have helped numerous other coalmining nations throughout the world and safety is their business. I place on record my support for Stewart Bell and Paul Harrison and their teams, as they are dedicated to mine safety. I personally thank them for their work and their dedication to coalmining safety. In fact, Stewart Bell is so highly regarded worldwide that he has been appointed as a commissioner to the royal commission into the Pike River mining disaster in New Zealand. I understand that he is currently on a plane to New Zealand. The first hearing of the Pike River mining disaster is due to be held on 5 April this year. I am sure that with Stewart Bell as a commissioner that royal commission will leave no stone unturned.

I refer to new division 2AA, which relates to access to abandoned mines. This is very close to my heart, because in my electorate of Bundamba there are numerous abandoned mines. Previously in this House I have described Swanbank as being like the set of a *Mad Max* movie. It is absolutely disgraceful

that in past years mine owners were allowed to leave our environment in such a disgraceful state. Abandoned mine sites can be dangerous places. The public servants who work in the abandoned mine section of the department of mines are often in my electorate, checking on the status of those mines.

In relation to abandoned mines, Neil Randolph, a local miner, is a very trusted employee of the department of mines and is also trusted by our community. We trust his judgement. If Neil says that a mine shaft should be capped then so be it. If Neil says that work needs to be done in relation to clean-ups or repairs then as a community we accept his judgement. Why do we accept his judgement? Because he is one of us; he is a Goodna boy. We also accept the judgement of 'Harro' and Stewart Bell, because they are locals to us as well. Like our local union officials, Andrew Vickers and our retired coalminers, they are still dedicated to the coalmining industry. In fact, Andrew is the national secretary of the CFMEU. He works out of the Sydney office, but he comes back to his home in our electorate as often as he can.

Our old boys, our retired coalminers, are of great assistance to our other government departments as well, especially Main Roads. Main Roads quite often calls them together to explore their knowledge and experience in relation to the planning of mines because they were not surveyed properly when they were first designed and they use that knowledge in relation to road planning.

I would like to say—and many people in this House know—that I am a proud supporter of the coalmining industry but I am also very passionate about health and safety matters. I am also passionate about one other thing, which is my absolute abhorrence of fly-in fly-out workforces. I do not agree with them, and I would like to place that on the record. When I was in Collinsville last year I saw firsthand those disgusting, disgraceful camps on the outskirts of Collinsville and I think they should be banned. These fly-in fly-out camps do not contribute in any shape, manner or form to the communities. The workers fly in, they go out to these camps, which are often on the distant outskirts of the particular towns, and they make no contribution to the community. I would like to agree with the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, in relation to this.

I know Blackwater well because I worked there for four years in the Curragh Mine. I also do not agree necessarily with the drive-in drive-out proposals in Blackwater and those other towns. I believe it is a workplace health and safety issue; it is actually dangerous. I recognise that it has been going on for decades, particularly around Blackwater. But consider what it is like for the families if their husbands, fathers and grandfathers are killed in a car accident driving along the Capricorn Highway for the sake of the couple of hours that it takes to get back to Rockhampton.

I am fully in support of Mining Communities United, which is a group of women who are the driving force against fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workforces. I am absolutely proud to support what they are doing in relation to the coalmining industry. Donna Bulloch is the president of the Mining Communities United organisation and she is supported by many retired coalminers like Len Jones and others in the coalmining communities, as well as the retired miners of the Ipswich community. I would like to support the Mining Communities United organisation with the solidarity and friendship of the mining towns as they are the backbone and the wealth of this state.

In conclusion, these coalmining companies should do what was done when we built the Curragh Mine back in the 1980s; they should be providing—and they should be made to provide—decent housing and decent single person's quarters in the towns. In my view, it is not good enough that they have these disgraceful camps. Some of them that I have seen are not even hooked up to sewerage systems. They have sewage running freely over land. To see it is just absolutely unbelievable. I do know that a couple of the companies are looking at providing decent mining type camps on their mining leases, but I cannot see how it is good to have miners living in dongas cooped up like chooks in a pen. That is not the way miners should be living in this day and age. In fact, I cannot understand why we as a government continue to allow this to occur in 2011. I would be very grateful if the minister would comment on this. This sort of idea where miners are cooped up like chooks in a pen is just not on. Miners should be in the mining towns with their families, with their kids. I can tell you that when they are not, they tend to go out to the coalmining communities for a couple of years and then their families start to break down. The kids miss their fathers. The kids also miss their grandfathers in this situation. It is absolute social dysfunction that we as a community cannot afford to keep seeing in the state's wealthiest industry, which is the coalmining industry.

I implore the minister to please talk to the coal companies and tell them that we have to go back to the situation where they supply the coalmining houses and single's quarters in the towns. That is when the miners and their families can join the local football clubs, the netball clubs and the golf clubs. In fact, when we mandated in this state as a condition that the coalmining companies had to supply this sort of housing, everyone was on an equal playing field. If you wanted to open a mine you knew you had to build the 200 or 300 houses. That was part of it. I think we need to go back to that particular situation.

It is not good enough that BMA can make these multibillion-dollar profits and at the same time sit idly by as people drive-in drive-out and fly-in fly-out and we as a government as well as the federal government are left with the costs of social dysfunction and of these mining towns going down the

gurgler. On behalf of a generation of coalmining families, I am asking the minister to take these issues seriously and to do whatever he can to make sure that our mining towns are looked after and that Donna Bulloch and her group, Mining Communities United, are taken seriously. We can save our coal towns. I would like to commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (4.45 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). It is widely recognised that the mining and energy sectors are critically important to the Queensland economy and that the sustainability of the mining and energy sectors is critically important to the future prosperity of the Queensland way of life. According to figures from the Queensland Resources Council, in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area, the area which includes the Morayfield state electorate, there are 413 residents employed in the mining and energy sectors earning close to \$54 million a year in wages. According to those figures, the mining and energy sectors generate more than \$173 million in economic activity in the Moreton Bay Regional Council area. Just as the mining and energy sectors are important to Queensland, those sectors are also important to the people of the Morayfield state electorate.

This bill introduces a number of key reforms in the area of energy efficiency for gas appliances, enhanced safety and health measures for the resource industry and clarity around the collection of key royalty revenue estimates information. Whilst I support all the amendments contained in this bill as good amendments I would like to spend a little time discussing the key amendments relating to the enhanced safety and health measures which will flow from this bill.

Our community expects and demands that workers are safe when they are at work. Accordingly, I am pleased that this Queensland government has a strong commitment to ensuring the mining industry in Queensland is one of the safest industries in the world. I also acknowledge the hard work of our colleagues in the union movement in respect of worker safety and their advocacy on behalf of their members and all workers in the mining industry.

The amendments will address some issues which have arisen with respect to the requirement under existing legislation for all mine operators to develop and maintain a fully documented safety and health management system. A safety and health management system consists of a formal consultative approach to identifying hazards and managing safety risks and includes systematic procedures, practices and policies for the management of risk. In respect of this current requirement, it is possible for more than one safety and health management system to be in operation at a single mine site. This means that it is possible for a number of inconsistencies and incompatibilities to exist in respect of the mine's various safety and health management systems. In light of this possibility and in light of a recent recommendation of the Queensland Coroner, it is appropriate that the legislation be amended to make it clear that only one safety and health management system is to apply at any particular mine site. This amending bill gives effect to that proposition and, accordingly, ensures that there is certainty and consistency in respect of a mine's safety and health management system. I understand that key stakeholders in the mining industry have responded very positively to this proposed amendment.

Health and safety in the mining and energy industries will also be enhanced by further amendments which impose obligations on persons designing, erecting or constructing earthworks structures. These new obligations will be similar to those which presently exist for suppliers and designers of plant. The amendments seek to ensure earthworks are designed, erected and constructed in a manner that, when used properly, ensure the safety risk to any person is at an acceptable level.

Honourable members have heard me speak before in this parliament about my passion and commitment to the concept of the safety net—that wonderful principle of looking after the most vulnerable, most marginalised and most disadvantaged in our community. Accordingly, I am very pleased that under this bill measures will be put in place to ensure that children under the age of 16 years will be precluded from operating or maintaining plant and machinery. This is in response to a recent discovery that a child under the age of 10 years was operating heavy machinery at a quarry.

This amendment is not about being unfair or limiting opportunities for children. This is about the safety of our children and our young people and the safety of people connected to the operation and maintenance of plant and machinery. I make no apologies for supporting an amendment which enhances safety and provides greater protections for young people and children. This amendment is entirely consistent with a proposal being put forward under the National Mine Safety Framework, which sets a minimum age of 16 years for employment on mine sites.

I commend the former minister for this portfolio area, the Hon. Stephen Robertson, for his hard work in ensuring that this bill is before the parliament. But I also commend the incoming minister, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, his staff and departmental staff for their hard work in respect of this bill. I commend this bill to the House and I encourage all members of the House to support it.

 **Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.51 pm): In this bill there are some important issues of safety regarding mining. One of the matters that has been brought up by my colleagues on this side is that, under this legislation, under-age people will not be allowed to operate machinery in quarries and

mines. I think the speech by the member for Redlands was outstanding. He is very familiar with the particular issue that has been the catalyst for this legislation. It would appear to be based as much on vindictiveness for having lost a court case than on real issues of safety.

Other members have talked about people aged 16 years and under who operate particular types of machinery. Our concern with this clause is whether it will be taken further and further. For example, people aged 16 are able to fly planes. The reason they can is the instruction, the training and the safety provisions that go with it. Likewise, people under 16 can drive in speedway. There are special speedway events for junior drivers, but the drivers are trained by the speedway club. They have all the safety arrangements in place. They develop those skills early. They drive a certain level of vehicle in that speedway. As a consequence, they are well occupied, well trained and able to take part in an event like that.

Our concern is that this type of almost nanny state legislation will move on and on to affect people who have family businesses in which their children work with machinery and equipment. It might be manufacturing type businesses, where safety is paramount, where they are trained and naturally careful with it all. It might be rural operations or all sorts of operations where people aged 16 and under are working with equipment, be it machinery or be it small motors such as whipper snippers or chainsaws. People aged 16 and under are allowed, under supervision and proper training, to operate firearms. We can have great trust in young people to do things with their families and in their family operated businesses—in a whole range of businesses, not simply rural businesses—providing they have the competency and the training.

The issue of the coalmining permit for the Gowrie Junction-Kingsthorpe area has been raised a number of times during this debate. It is EPC 1979. If ever an exploration permit has been granted that is absurd and ridiculous, it is this one. This exploration permit covers areas that are straight-out residential. It covers areas of small lifestyle farms of only one or two acres. It covers residential blocks that are probably half an acre to three-quarters of an acre. In the case of Gowrie Junction itself, it covers house blocks. It covers very small farms. It goes right to the edge of Toowoomba so that people in the suburb of Cotswold Hills completely overlook this area. Who knows what will happen to all these houses at Gowrie Junction or on the hill? I had a look on Sunday. I was standing on the southern side of the creek and I looked across at a complete hillside of houses, right in the midst of this exploration permit area. Permits like this should never be issued. If we were looking at Brisbane, it would be like taking the outer suburbs of Brisbane where there is a mix of straight-out residential house blocks, one-acre lifestyle blocks, up to five acres or 20 acres and one or two smaller farms. It is just absurd and ridiculous the area that this permit covers.

More than that—and many people here have spoken about humanitarian aspects of mining, particularly with regard to safety—these people are mostly on middle incomes or lower incomes and could only afford to buy these lower priced house blocks. Their whole life is in limbo and has been put on hold. If they get transferred with their job, how are they going to sell their house? No-one wants to buy a house in these areas because they are in the midst of this exploration permit area. A person might be transferred to another town but cannot go because they cannot sell their house. They could probably sell it for maybe half the value that it had, but they would not have the wherewithal to buy elsewhere. There are older people there who are just devastated and in a dreadful stressed state because of it. People who have children with asthma are concerned. I met a lady on Sunday who has a child with cystic fibrosis. Everybody is just devastated. We should not have to put people through this devastation.

We have a serious problem with mining as it encroaches upon populated areas. Usually mining occurs in outer areas of the state—the more remote areas, the more sparsely populated areas that are not residential areas and lifestyle areas. The vast majority of the Toowoomba Regional Council is now under exploration permits, and much of that is covering residential areas, lifestyle blocks and greenspace areas that surround the intensely populated areas of Toowoomba and covering areas that are planned for the future development of Toowoomba—for sporting fields and residential areas as the city grows. So I join with our shadow minister in saying that this sort of permit should never have been issued, and the power exists for the minister to rescind something such as this.

The other issues on the Downs, of course, involve some of the best agricultural land in the world—the blacksoil plains, particularly out in the Norwin-Cecil Plains area. It is perhaps the deepest black soil in the world. They have some of the highest yields in terms of corn, sorghum and cotton that are ever achieved in any part of the world. They are sites of high-tech farming. All this land is laser levelled, one in 1,000. It is all subject to head ditches and channels for flood irrigation, catching the overland flow on these properties or sucking it up from the sumps and the river when the river is in flood. It is so high-tech, it is levelled to such a degree, that it costs hundreds of thousands, if not millions, to get these farms to this state of layout.

So it is not possible to come on to these places like you can come on to open range land and plant a gas drill or bore every 800 metres. It just does not work because they have lateral-move irrigators to save water as allocations get cut back. They have irrigation ditches and channels. The equipment that works these places, because of the shortage of labour, includes big machines that do a

number of processes in one pasture. They plant the seed, they put a spot of water on the seed, they put the insecticide in the patch where the seed has gone in and they put the fertiliser in. They have a whole lot of equipment that does other things. So there are a number of processes in one pasture all under GPS orientation. You cannot just go on to these places willy-nilly and do that. More importantly than that, this is the most magnificent food bowl and grain-growing area of the world, bar none. We should not be mining this precious land, which is such a minor part of Queensland in percentage area terms.

I also agree with the strong words put forward by our shadow minister in relation to coal seam gas. Companies that do not meet their obligations, companies that do not do what was agreed in negotiations with the landholder and the government and companies that do not abide by safety, do not show proper care and concern for underground water aquifers, do not show courtesy in going onto properties and do not pay compensation and maintain the physical state of these bores and wells should have their licences revoked.

Under an LNP government people could look forward to a strong minister who would stand up to these people and make sure that the property rights of landowners are protected, that the water rights of people are protected, that prime agricultural land is absolutely protected and that we would not have this ridiculous and absurd situation of people's lives being thrown into absolute turmoil due to an exploration permit being placed over a region that contains large areas of residential, lifestyle and other types of blocks. It is cruel to do that to people. It is stupid. We would not do it on the edge of Brisbane or Ipswich or Sydney. It is a Sydney firm that has done this. They would not do it out at Dural, Windsor, Campbelltown or places like that.

It is about time some common sense came into this process. People may say that they may not be granted a mining permit in the future, but they must have some confidence that one will be granted if they have gone ahead and sought an exploration permit. If they are not going to be granted a mining permit then they are being led up the garden path, spending good money on an exploration permit and destroying the lives of thousands of people in the meantime. I implore the minister to act on this matter and use the powers that he has available to him to stop the ridiculous exploration permit over Kingsthorpe and Gowrie Junction.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.02 pm): I rise to speak to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2010. There are a number of issues of importance in this bill, particularly in relation to my electorate. But before I look at those, I point out that a number of speakers from the LNP have raised the issue of children under 16 not being able to operate or maintain plant. They have made allegations about a matter that was before the courts and where the government obviously lost the case. They interpret the clauses in this bill related to precluding a child under 16 from operating or maintaining plant as a payback. There have been interjections from members of the ALP saying that that is not the case and alleging that members of the LNP support child labour and all sorts of fanciful things like that.

I do know that governments do not take being defeated in courts very well. We have been in this place before debating a town planning issue in particular but a local government issue as well where the government of the day—and it was a Labor government—was defeated in court and subsequently brought legislation into this chamber to overturn the court's decision. At the time I did not support it. It was disappointing to see that the person who was victorious in the court case had that win overturned legislatively. They were not compensated in any way, shape or form. I felt that it was a very sad use of the powers of this chamber.

I do not know whether that is the case in this instance. I thank the minister for coming to speak with the member for Nanango and me about this. I would seek clarification that the clauses in this bill relating to quarry and gas operations and the preclusion on children under 16 being able to operate or maintain plant apply to major companies only. That would answer the question about child labour. Clause 24 talks about the site senior executive for a coalmine. The other mention of that provision is under the amendments related to petroleum and gas production. It talks about a child or a person under the age of 16 being precluded from operating plant.

I want clarification that that is only for major enterprises. Whilst all of us support child safety—and I am talking about physical safety, not the department of child safety—there would be some very small enterprises where kids under the age of 16 thoroughly enjoy being part of the processes of a family business. I am not talking about three-year-olds or anything like that. Some teenage boys and some teenage girls would love to be involved in that sort of activity. It would keep them appropriately involved. The parents who would be overseeing that activity would do so in a safe environment. They certainly have no interest in their children being harmed. I could see it being disadvantageous to a family unit for a young person to be precluded from doing what young people have done for years and years.

In our community we are precluding young ones from doing so many things that they are becoming inevitably linked to video games, phones and TVs. A lot of things that we did as kids—and I am showing my age—cannot be done now. We were allowed to play throughout the day provided we checked in at lunchtime and at dinnertime and were home before dark. Those options are not available.

All family members need to be able to participate if it is a family business. In a small business that participation would be safe. I am not saying that in a large business it would not be. I would like clarification that it is only, as the bill indicates, for a coalmine with a site senior executive and for gas and petroleum operations—that is, it is major operations only that will be affected.

People have talked about the *Four Corners* report on LNG. I watched that program. Whilst we are the end of the production line in Gladstone, the business in my electorate cannot exist without the capturing of the gas in the Surat Basin in particular. That program concerned me. It concerned me that I got an email before the program went to air from representatives of the companies that were named saying that *Four Corners* was going to air this program and it is not factual. I noted that they did not take the opportunity to respond to it in the media.

At the conclusion of the program I got another email to say, 'This is our response to the issues raised.' I find that process very questionable. I certainly would be concerned—and I believe all of us in this chamber would be—if anything went ahead that put at risk the artesian basin and the water that it supplies to our great nation. That report indicated that it is at risk. I believe we should exercise absolute and ultimate caution when it comes to doing anything that could affect that water supply.

The royalties to the regions has also been mentioned. This bill sets up a process whereby companies have to indicate or forward plan when it comes to royalties. An estimate of royalties must be provided to the minister in certain circumstances.

I have a lot of sympathy for Royalties for Regions that exists in Western Australia because my electorate is being sadly neglected in terms of the necessary infrastructure that is required for LNG. Three proposals have now been approved federally and by the state, two with final investment decisions made and no doubt the third one will be along in fairly quick succession. However, we have precious little in the way of infrastructure to be able to prepare our community for that demand. I thank the Minister for Health—I met with him today—and other ministers I have spoken with such as the Minister for Community Services, whom I talked to in relation to affordable housing. It is these sorts of infrastructure needs that the royalties need to be going to, not waiting until the royalties are in the government's hot hands but recognising that those royalties are forthcoming and are significant and that investing in the Gladstone electorate now is essential for our community to remain supportive of the industries that will be set up in the Gladstone electorate. The community is becoming exceedingly frustrated and angry about the lack of infrastructure, and that indeed will only escalate unless it sees a significant investment in infrastructure, both built and social infrastructure for families, now and not later.

The bill also deals with the amendment of the Gladstone Power Station Agreement Act. I do not pretend to understand the ins and outs of that, but I do need to put on the record not only because of the questions that were asked this morning in question time but also because of the general media coverage of the proposed carbon tax by the Prime Minister that the electorate of Gladstone will be significantly affected if a carbon tax is introduced. The power station is one of those industries that would be significantly affected. Whilst many years ago now—15 years ago—I opposed the privatisation of the Gladstone Power Station, I do have a very strong working relationship with the managing director who is there now. Mr Schumacher is a very decent man to deal with and has managed that workforce very amicably and very well, and I commend him for that. However, I do have to put on the record that the coal-dependent—the resource-dependent—industries in my electorate would be most disturbed about the proposed tax, and Rio has already made that point clear.

The only other issue that I wanted to raise is in relation to oil shale, and that is the requirement for consultation with particular coal or oil shale mining tenement holders. In the petroleum amendments there are a number of proposals that will affect oil shale mining. I think Gladstone has the only Queensland oil shale processing and mining proposal that is currently in the process of refurbishment, changing its process and reoperating in the electorate. Again, as with others who have talked about the LNG industry and the impact on landowners, oil shale has had an impact on landowners in my electorate. Overwhelmingly, in any of those projects that affect private landowners, the underlying conditions of all dealings with landowners should be that they are dealt with with respect, that they are dealt with with dignity and fairness and that the dealings are equitable and they are paid what they deserve. If land is to be used for industrial purposes they should be compensated for that land as industrial land, not as the current process is in that it is bought as rural land and then sold off by government to others as industrial land. If governments abide by those rules of respect, dignity, fairness, equity and transparency, then the community will remain supportive of industrial development. If landowners are not, the community will rightly react and will object to any proposals that will impact on their properties, and that is the same in Gladstone as it is down on the gas fields where so many landowners appear to be disadvantaged in the way that their properties are managed, in the way that they are dealt with, certainly in the way that the properties are affected by the plethora of gas pumps that will be installed across the place and with the lack of direct and honest information in relation to the impact on their water source.

There are a number of issues that are of concern in this bill. I look forward to the minister's response to my questions, particularly on the age and the size of the operators of mines and the 16-year limit on operators and maintenance people. I look forward to the debate.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (5.15 pm), in reply: First of all I want to thank all honourable members for their participation in the debate, especially the member for Callide for his strong support for the safety regulations introduced by Labor governments over recent years in relation to mine safety and the protection of the environment in relation to a number of different resource operations. However, I do want to warn him about some of the verballing he has been subjected to by some of his so-called colleagues since. There are a few things I think they have suggested he said which I am not quite sure he did say, and I will be interested to see whether the party room discussions are as interesting as I hear they have been for the last couple of days.

The Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) was introduced into the House by my colleague and now Minister for Energy and Water Utilities on 25 November 2010 to improve energy efficiency for gas appliances, enhance administration of Queensland's tenure related and safety and health related resource legislation, provide the statutory authority for the collection of forward royalty revenue estimates information, and allow for variations to the Gladstone Power Station agreement under the Gladstone Power Station Agreement Act 1993.

The bill, through amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, takes the necessary steps to revise energy labelling and introduce mandatory minimum energy performance standards, or MEPS, for gas appliances. All governments across Australia have committed to implementing this national initiative set through the Equipment Energy Efficiency, or E3, Program of the National Framework for Energy Efficiency. The general requirements for MEPS for domestic gas water heaters, including offences and penalties for noncompliance, will be set out in the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Regulation 2004, with amendments to be developed in the coming months. The introduction of MEPS for gas water heaters is projected to reduce Queensland's associated gas consumption by 1.01 petajoules and greenhouse gas emissions by 67 kilotons over the next 10 years. This is the equivalent of taking some 16,000 cars off our roads.

While Queensland has one of the safest mining industries in the world, this government will continue to strive to improve the safety of our mining industry. To reaffirm the Queensland government's commitment to improving the health and safety of workers in mining, the bill proposes various amendments to complement existing legislation and remove ambiguity. Currently it is common for contractors working at a mine site to use their own safety and health management system, either by itself or in conjunction with the mine's existing safety and health management systems. While most mines make an effort to map the interaction of the mine operator's safety and health management system and those of contractors working on the same site, coronial inquest findings have revealed that multiple safety and health management systems have led to confusion and may have contributed to the tragic death of a mineworker. The bill establishes a requirement for a single safety and health management system to be followed at any given site, removing any confusion and ensuring improved safety and health outcomes. Industry stakeholders have responded very positively to these amendments.

The member for Redlands raised concerns about setting a minimum age requirement for children to carry out work on mine sites, and that was reflected by a number of opposition members. This issue first came to the attention of the Mines Inspectorate when a complaint was received from a member of the public about a child operating machinery.

The reality is that children and heavy mining equipment do not mix. As the member for Waterford said, no-one would let a child drive a Hyundai Getz on a public road, so why would we let a child operate a 30-tonne excavator in a dangerous environment like a quarry? The member for Redlands describes this as a nanny state and as overregulation. Sometimes I think some of the members opposite would repeal the Factory Act 1804 if they had the chance.

The member for Warrego asked if consultation took place. I can reassure him that we saw the Queensland Resources Council being consulted about the amendments and it had no problem with the amendments. The Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee was also consulted in mid-2010. The quarrying industry is represented on this committee and the committee raised no questions. I would also like to reassure the member for Warrego that the amendment to require insurance for explosives is related to items highlighted in the Australian Dangerous Goods Code and the Australian Explosives Code. Neither of those codes requires insurance for bullets that people with a weapons licence would use.

In referring to the requirement for over-16s to operate equipment on a mine site or a quarry site, the member for Gladstone sought clarification about the operation of that amendment. I must clarify for her that there is no connection between that amendment and the mine safety regulation changes that we are also talking about. It is a case that a dangerous mine site is a dangerous mine site. It does not matter what the ownership structure is; it is a mine site, and that is where we see the challenge and difficulty. We want to keep that clear distinction. To that end, I want to reassure members who think this amendment is somehow the beginning of steps towards the regulation not allowing younger people to operate equipment on farms and so forth. There is a clear distinction between the experience and history of heavy industrial mining and quarrying sites and agricultural properties. This amendment is about responding to the dangerous nature of mining and quarrying sites.

In that context the reality is that, as the member for Callide recognised, Queensland mines are among the safest in the world. The amendments that are before the House are about ensuring that this situation remains the case. The report shows that during 2009-10 Queensland suffered one fatality in the industry—a vehicle related accident in a quarry—compared to four industry fatalities the previous year. Work related injuries in the mining industry also fell in the key performance areas of severity, duration and days lost to injury. Medical treatments dropped from 924 to 546 injuries, while lost-time injuries fell from 301 to 285 injuries. There were 413 disabling injuries, down from 417 the previous year. All of these reductions in numbers represent progress, but we want to make our mining industry even safer for the workers in the industry.

A number of members during their contribution to the second reading debate raised issues that are outside the provisions of the bill—issues relating to Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe. There were concerns raised by the member for Nanango, the member for Condamine and the member for Toowoomba South. There were also concerns raised by the members for Gregory and Bundamba about FIFO and DIDO—fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out. I would be happy to talk to those members about those issues and provide them with appropriate briefings.

The amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 that are included in the bill seek to formalise a previous longstanding practice of collecting future royalty revenue estimates from major producers. These amendments will improve the accuracy of budgetary information collected by the government and provide certainty to producers as to the confidentiality of this information.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the former minister for his contribution to bringing this legislation before the House, everyone in those areas of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation who administer mines and energy portfolio areas and the officers of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel and other departments who have contributed to the development and coordination of this extensive bill. I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Queensland Resources Council, the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia and other industry representatives and members who have helped with the development of this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—



**Mr HINCHLIFFE** (5.25 pm): I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 67 (Plans of coal mine workings))**

Page 13, line 16—

*omit, insert—*

“mining (A) or ‘mining (O)’; or’.

**2 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 67 (Plans of coal mine workings))**

Page 13, line 17, ‘underground’—

*omit, insert—*

‘surface’.

**3 Clause 10 (Amendment of s 67 (Plans of coal mine workings))**

Page 13, line 24—

*omit, insert—*

“mining (A)”; or’.

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Explanatory notes to the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe’s amendments to the Mines and Energy Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) [4016].

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Clause 24—

 **Mr SEENEY** (5.26 pm): Clause 24 seeks to insert a new section 272A into the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999. It encompasses the issue that has been well and truly canvassed in the consideration of the bill before the House by a whole range of members on both sides of the House, including the minister. I did not spend a deal of time on the issue in my contribution to the second reading debate, but I have listened with interest to some of the contributions that have been made by other members and I think a lot of those contributions actually missed the point.

I believe the pertinent issue in what the government is proposing to do here is the appropriateness or otherwise of controlling by regulation what happens within a family business. A number of members have expressed a view about a particular situation that seems to have been the trigger for this clause being included in the legislation. Although every member has a right to approach the debate in whatever way they would like, I do not think that is the right way to approach the consideration of this clause.

This clause seeks to regulate what happens within a family business, in this case either a family owned and operated mine for the purpose of this clause or a family owned and operated quarry in a later clause in the bill, which we will come to. It is the concept that is important—the concept of the state regulating what happens within a family business. Once you go down this track, the question is: where do you stop? Once the state decides that it is going to regulate what happens within a family business in regard to the role that children might play in that family business, where does it stop? What is an appropriate level of government regulation in such a situation?

**Mr Moorhead:** That’s what we debated today, and putting kids in mines is not appropriate. It is not appropriate whether they are family or not.

**Mr SEENEY:** The point that the honourable member obviously fails to grasp, either because he is unable to or he just does not want to, is that we are talking about the broader concept of the interference of the state in what is a private arrangement, an arrangement within a family. Whether the family is operating the family business or whether the family is engaged in a non-commercial activity, there is a question about the degree to which the state should intervene and control those activities by regulation.

Of course there are situations where the state seeks to prevent child abuse, neglect or mistreatment, but to try to regulate every possible circumstance that may be involved in the wide range of activities, both commercial and non-commercial, that families are engaged in is, to me, a ludicrous path to go down. The natural conclusion of what is being proposed in this clause leads us down that path. That is why the opposition will be opposing this clause. It has nothing to do with whether it is a 10-, 20- or 30-tonne loader or any other nonsense that the members opposite have been engaged in here; it is a question about whether the state should seek to regulate these things.

At what point should the state take away from the parents of a child the ability to make a decision about whether or not that child can engage in a particular activity? Should that point be defined by a division of commercial activities and non-commercial activities? How do we justify that? Once one decides that this is an appropriate regulation for this particular circumstance that was the incentive for it being here, to where do you extend the argument? Do you extend it to the baker’s shop and the daughter of a baker who seeks to help her parents out by slicing the bread? Are we going to have emotive comments in here about how sharp the bread slicers are and how inappropriate it would be for a child to be within a certain distance of a machine such as that? Or a child who helps out in a family delicatessen where there is obviously similar slicing equipment or a child that helps out in a family fast food restaurant? There are endless situations that would have to be regulated if we accepted this concept of the state regulating these activities. I would suggest that once we as a parliament decide that it is right and appropriate to regulate one activity, there is very little logic that would support not regulating the rest. The rest is an infinite variety of activities that are involved in family businesses.

A number of people have raised the example of farms. Farms are probably the stand-out example of where families work together in what is almost a combination of a business and a lifestyle. It is very difficult to make the division in a farming situation between what is part of the commercial operation and what is part of the lifestyle that a lot of people choose for their families. All of the activities that farm kids have traditionally been involved in for generations, whether it is working with stock or working with horses or a whole range of cultivation type activities, there is a very fine line between the commercial side of that activity and it being part of the child's hobby or part of the lifestyle that the family has chosen. In that situation it becomes absurd to try to regulate those activities in the way that this particular clause seeks to regulate one particular activity.

It is very appropriate, I think, for the parliament to pause and think about this, because this clause is here, as has been indicated by a number of speakers, because of one particular issue that the department has sought to solve by legislation because the particular officers who were involved could not bring about the outcome any other way. They sought to bring about an outcome to a situation that some would suggest had nothing to do with them, but they sought to bring about an outcome anyway. This clause is here in this legislation because they were unsuccessful in bringing about that outcome. I would warrant a guess that those officers have not thought through the implications of seeking to implement this sort of regulation. I would suggest that nobody in the former minister's office, particularly the former minister, thought through the concepts and the philosophies that were involved here.

I would guess, without too much fear of being wrong, that this proposition was just put up to the minister's office with a briefing note to say, 'We have to solve this, Minister. Sign on the dotted line', and the previous minister, knowing full well his capabilities in terms of understanding legislation, would have just signed on the dotted line. I would like to think that the new minister has a greater degree of intellectual examination of these issues than that. There are some very important conceptual questions involved here. There are some very important questions about what the role of the state is in a family's activities, be they commercial or non-commercial activities, and what the role of the state is in seeking to regulate those activities. That is what is involved in what is suggested here. It is not just about solving a problem for some stubborn officer in the department. I suggest every member think carefully about that before they vote on this clause.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I think I need to make it absolutely and utterly clear to the member for Callide that this is not an amendment to legislation that has a general application. Since I became a member of this House in 2006 I have seen on a number of occasions the member for Callide and his colleagues support sensible, sound legislation that is about protecting the safety of workers in this state. They have supported specific and separate legislation that applies to mine and quarry sites separately to the rest of other workplaces, including farms and other circumstances across the rest of this state.

The member for Callide in his contribution to the second reading debate made it very clear that he is very proud of the record of safety in the Queensland mining industry. That is a consequence of the outstanding and separate legislation that we have in special recognition of how significant the dangers are in these very dangerous work sites. I do intellectually understand the concern that the member for Callide is raising about this issue, but his motivations for suggesting that this specifically applied amendment is somehow a first step towards things being applied generally belies his support for very specific and strenuous levels of safety regulation on mine sites that he has supported, in my observation, over the past four years and, indeed, I would suggest probably has supported long before that as well.

I do not think that the concerns that the member for Callide is raising are valid. I do not think that they are justified in this circumstance. I am not entirely clear on what the motivations are to try to think that in this instance special and appropriately specialist legislation to protect the safety of people in and around dangerous mine and quarry sites is somehow different from the ones he has supported in the past, how that has not been the thin end of the wedge towards applying the full depth of the very strenuous safety regulations that apply to mines and quarry sites across other workplaces in this state. He has not expressed those concerns before but he does today. Why does he do that? I am unsure.

The most extraordinary thing relating to specifics that have been raised by a number of members of the House in the second reading debate, which the member for Callide is following up, refer to this happening on a quarry site. The clause that the member for Callide is questioning at this point—and I will be interested to see how the opposition vote on this—is about the application of a requirement for the operation of heavy machinery to be undertaken by over-16s on a coalmine. Does anyone seriously suggest—and I want to hear about this from members opposite—that eight-year-olds should be operating heavy machinery on coalmines?

**Mr SEENEY:** The minister is right about one thing and one thing only, which is the point that he made at the end of his contribution to the House a moment ago. This particular clause does apply to the coalmining situation, but it contains a concept that is repeated later in the bill applying to quarry sites. Rather than debate each one separately, I have taken the course of action that is quite common in the

consideration of such legislation and have spoken about the entire concept at the point that it first appears in the bill. Let us not hear any nonsense that misrepresents why we are talking about this particular concept here. I can repeat my speech later in the debate when this point reappears in the bill.

I come to the substance of the case that the minister is trying to put. He suggested that there was some sort of comparison between the fact that there is specific safety legislation for mining and, therefore, that is justification for some specific regulation of a family's activities in mining. He completely misses the point that there is a genuine role for the government to set safety standards in industry. We all support that role of the state government. There is a genuine argument to be made that the standards that are set across different industries quite rightly reflect the differing risks in those industries. That is also a genuine role for the government.

What we are talking about here is a move by the state into an area that is not regulated. There is no separate set of standards for family activities across a range of differing situations. That is exactly the case that I seek to avoid, because as soon as we as legislators accept that the state has some sort of a role to play in the regulation of what children can do in a family situation, as soon as we accept that principle, there is nothing to stop the state applying that principle across a whole range of different activities, whether they be commercial activities, sporting activities, recreational activities or whatever.

The role of the state is unquestionable when it comes to setting safety standards in workplaces. There is no question about that, and the minister is quite right that we have consistently supported increased safety standards across a range of industries, particularly the mining industry, which did have a bad history. Nobody bemoans that bad history more than I. Nobody has been more vocal in recognising and congratulating the progress that has been made by the mining industry to improve that record. However, I would not suggest that there is not still more work to do in that area. That is a genuine and proper role for the state to play.

Once the state moves to play a completely different role and starts to say that within a family a child of a particular age can do this but cannot do that—they can undertake this activity but they cannot undertake that one—the state is creating a situation that exists nowhere else in the statutes that I am aware of. If the minister seeks to justify this, I challenge him to point to an example in the statutes of this state where the government has sought to regulate a similar activity within the family unit, whether it be in a commercial or non-commercial situation. That is the point. We are not talking about something that happens in the public arena; we are talking about something that happens in a situation that is controlled and monitored, and where the decisions are made by family members—indeed, by the family elders in most situations. That is not something that the state should be involved in. That responsibility should rest very firmly with the parents of the family, because it is their responsibility, it is their right and the state should not interfere.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I understand the point that the member for Callide is making. However, I need to point out to him that any number of regulations of safety and health requirements are applied currently more generally across circumstances that involve family businesses. It is not permitted for a family business to ignore the requirements of workplace health and safety. However, this circumstance does involve specific requirements of the mining and quarrying industries which, as the member has identified and agreed with, do require specific and separate levels of regulation because of the very dangerous nature of the activities carried out in them.

As I said in my summing-up in response to some matters that were raised by the member for Gladstone, a dangerous quarry site or a dangerous mine site is a dangerous quarry site or a dangerous mine site no matter its ownership structure or its operational structure. Those things do not change. The safety of people in those environments is paramount. The safety of other workers in those environments is paramount. The safety of workers who are not members of the family is paramount. That is what this amendment is about. It is about ensuring the proper standards of safety in those specific and very dangerous work sites.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** I seek clarification. We are debating clause 24, which, if passed, will mean that children under the age of 16 will be unable to operate or maintain plant in a coalmine, which to all intents and purposes is usually a fairly large enterprise. The other discussion of this preclusion is clause 113, which amends the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act. I believe that is the act that is changed. Clause 113 is more general, stating that the operator of an operating plant must not allow a person under the age of 16 to operate or maintain equipment or machinery at that plant.

Am I right in believing that clause 24 is a preclusion in a coalmine and clause 113 is a preclusion in a potentially smaller, family operated business? I know that we are dealing with clause 24, but those are the two places that I have seen this mentioned. I want to be sure that if we have a division we are clear about what the preclusion is. Clause 24 is for coalmines only. In Queensland, coalmines are major operations. I do not think the member for Callide envisages a situation where a 16-year-old, pimple faced kid can drive a dump truck in a coalmine. I do not think that is what any of us want. However, we are talking about a smaller enterprise where they may do a bit of gravel crushing. Dad is the only operator and he lets the 15-year-old boy, on a Saturday or after school—

**An honourable member:** Or sand.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** Yes, indeed, or any sort of enterprise that handles sand and gravel. Can't they put a 15-year-old boy who has been a petrolhead since he was seven on to the front-end loader or something? I need that clarification. Clause 24 appears to apply to coalmines. We interpret that to relate to major commercial coal extraction industries, and 16-year-old kids do not belong there.

**Mr SEENEY:** I can provide the member for Gladstone with the confidence that she requires. What she has presumed is exactly right. This clause does apply to coalmines. Clause 113 is the one that has more application. I think the arguments have been made. I have made my argument and the minister has made his. There is an obvious difference. I will not divide on clause 24. I will divide on clause 113 to make the point and to reinforce the arguments that we have made. As I indicated, I put the arguments at clause 24 because that is the first time the issue appears in the bill, and that is the normal procedure in this place.

To summarise the consideration of this clause and the whole concept—I do not intend to repeat the debate again when we consider clause 113—I do not accept that the arguments the minister has made justify the regulation that this government is placing on family activities. I will divide the House at the consideration of clause 113 to reinforce the fact that that argument has not been made and should not be accepted by the parliament.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I thank the member for Callide for making sure that we clarify this and have this discussion and debate at this point. I should point out that, while I do agree with the member for Callide that this clause does apply to mines and that clause 113 applies to a quarrying situation, the reference to plant in clause 113 would also apply to a wellhead in a gas or petroleum circumstance. So in clause 113 we are not talking about purely shifting around a bit of sand, as the member for Toowoomba South seemed to be suggesting from the bleachers.

I would encourage members of the House who have listened to the debate and the discussion we have had around clause 24, when we come to apply the decision making that is required at clause 113, to think about the safety of people involved in these very dangerous and very risky circumstances in mining and quarrying operations, including things like wellheads that are included in clause 113. I encourage members to continue the support that this parliament has had for a long time for separate and particular arrangements in terms of the safety of mining and quarrying operations.

Clause 24, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 25 to 92, as read, agreed to.

Clause 93—

 **Mr DOWLING** (5.52 pm): This is the second of three times that this issue comes up in the legislation. The clause states—

The site senior executive for a mine must not allow a person under the age of 16 to operate or maintain plant at the mine.

My understanding—and I ask the minister for clarification—is that, for the circumstances of my particular constituent in Mount Cotton, 'mine' actually includes 'quarry' as part of the overall family of legislation and that this is the part of the legislation that relates to a quarry. It certainly has been the argument mounted to me by my constituent. Now that clause 113 will be coming into play, it seems that there are a number of opportunities where this government, through this legislation, can actually stop young people from working on the family farm. While the intent may be that it is not to undermine family business, that it is not going to get into the farm community or those small home occupations and industries, it very much looks like it can because it just keeps coming up. It covers a multitude of sins. I would like some clarification on the proposed new section 250A relating to 'under-age' and whether or not it relates to 'quarry' as well as 'mine' in the sense of mining for sand and other such minerals. Then perhaps when we get to clause 113 the minister can explain how that clause differs from quarrying, mining and coalmining as we have already had in clause 24.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** By way of clarification, my advisers have confirmed to me that clause 93 does indeed refer to quarrying activities as well.

**Mr DOWLING:** I look forward to the answer on clause 113 as to what that includes as we have covered all of the issues.

Clause 93, as read, agreed to.

Clause 94—

 **Mr DOWLING** (5.55 pm): I draw a comparison and ask for some clarification. I refer to the clauses that have already been dealt with. The last line of the previous clause states in part 'under the age of 16 to operate or maintain plant at the mine' and prior to that it was 'at the quarry site', yet in the clause that I am addressing, clause 94, proposed new section 254C under 'Public statements',

paragraph (b) states 'investigations conducted under this act about serious accidents at a mine' rather than 'at the mine'. I am just wondering about the reason for the transition in language when you are talking in this legalistic regulatory framework, which is what we are doing here. Why is there a transition from 'the mine' to 'a mine'?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** In response to the member for Redlands, my advice is that it is a drafting inconsistency for that particular element of the legislation.

Clause 94, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 95 to 112, as read, agreed to.

Clause 113—

 **Mr SEENEY** (5.56 pm): As has been previously indicated in this debate, this is the clause that is probably most significant in relation to the difference that has been debated already in the House—in the second reading debate by a number of members, and by the minister and me and the member for Redlands in the consideration in detail of some of the earlier clauses.

This clause seeks to regulate the activities within a family unit, as I indicated earlier in my speech on the second reading debate. I do not intend to repeat the contribution I made then. However, we will oppose this clause. In doing so, we will oppose the concept of the state interfering in a family unit—interfering by regulation in what are appropriate activities within that family unit situation.

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** When responding to clause 24 the minister talked about clause 113, which is the clause we are dealing with now. I acknowledge your tolerance, Mr Deputy Speaker, in allowing us to bounce those two clauses around. There was significant relevance to being able to compare the two. In the minister's response to the earlier clause he talked about clause 113 dealing with quarries and we were discussing family owned businesses and small businesses. He also said that it would include things like wellheads and the appropriateness of children under the age of 16 being involved in activities at wellheads. My impression is that if you have a wellhead, you have a significant business. Those types of businesses would be appropriately governed by all of the workplace health and safety obligations and employment constraints in terms of the age of people who can be employed. They would do a risk assessment about the practicality and the wisdom of employing a very young person such as a 16-year-old. My concern and that of others in this chamber is that what is being bundled together is a business such as a coalmine—clause 24—and the business of a major mine, which was clause 93. It states—

The site senior executive for a mine must not allow a person under the age of 16 ...

In the context of Queensland industry, a mine is a significant place of employment. A wellhead is a significant place of employment. I do not think any of us would like to see too many 16-year-olds operating plant there.

What is captured by clause 113 appears to be the major places of employment where it is not only inappropriate but unlikely that a young person would be operating machinery or maintaining equipment. But the catch that appears to be in clause 113 is that a small family business will also be captured by this clause, and there is significant concern on the part of some members that those family businesses should be able to operate, yes, within workplace health and safety and, yes, within the realms of practicality and reasonableness but not with an overriding preclusion of a young person within that family who is a competent operator of machinery. That young person may have been operating machinery on the farm or at the family's extraction site down the back of the farm and has probably been operating a front-end loader or a drott of some sort since he or she could reach the pedals, and suddenly that will be illegal under this clause. I share those concerns. I do not want to see kids at wellheads. I do not want to see kids at coalmines. I do not want to see kids at mine sites. But I do not want to see families disadvantaged where as a family unit they have operated a small and over time innocuous business, and this clause will preclude them from doing that.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I need to reiterate the clarification I made earlier when questions were asked of me by the member for Redlands around clause 93. That was where I clarified that that was the clause that applied to the quarrying circumstance. Clause 113, if you look at part 10 of the bill, is an amendment to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act. The Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act is the legislation that regulates safety in relation to the petroleum and gas industry—for example, where wellheads would be on a petroleum lease. So this is the circumstance where those regulations of health and safety will apply in the same way that health and safety regulations apply generally at work sites and in the community. It relates to how they apply specifically to petroleum and gas and how they apply to, in this instance, coalmines and separately how they apply to mining and quarrying generally.

Clause 113, to be very clear, in terms of the reference to a plant, relates to, for instance, a wellhead on a petroleum lease—and a wellhead could mean a pumping station or a drill rig. That is why I wanted to make it very clear earlier that failing to support this amendment to this legislation would mean under-16-year-olds being potentially involved in this activity.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I would like to pose this question to the minister and get him to offer some clarification. This clause says that a person under the age of 16 is not 'to operate or maintain equipment or machinery at the plant'. It has been my personal experience that I was an apprentice at the age of 15. I am wondering if the minister could envisage or run through the scenario of a person who may be an apprentice, a vocational trainee, under supervision of a tradesperson. Does this clause prevent that under-16-year-old being supervised by a tradesperson to operate that equipment?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It does prevent them.

**Mr MESSENGER:** It does. So, taking the minister's reply, is the minister now telling this place that if an apprentice is under the age of 16 and they are being supervised by a senior tradesman that apprentice would not then be able to carry out supervised maintenance work on a pump or an engine or some other mechanical equipment on that site?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** Maintenance is quite different to operation. This refers to operating plant.

**Mr MESSENGER:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr O'Brien): Order! Sorry, member for Burnett. You have had your two lots of five minutes.

**Mr MESSENGER:** I rise on a matter of importance, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! No. You have had your two turns.

**Mr MESSENGER:** It says 'maintain' there in the clause.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Resume your seat. You have not got the call.

Division: Question put—That clause 113, as read, be agreed to.

**AYES, 47**—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Male, McLindon, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

**NOES, 37**—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 113, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 114 to 122, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (6.13 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (6.13 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 12 November 2009 (see p. 3361), on motion of Ms Jones—

That the bill be now read a second time.

**Mr DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (6.14 pm): Before moving to the main part of my speech in relation to the Environmental Protection and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2009 I will outline the time frames for this legislation and paint a picture of those involved with this legislation prior to it being presented to the House. We had a chief of staff by the name of Mike Kaiser, a minister for the environment by the name of Andrew McNamara and a person in charge of the climate department by the name of Greg Withers. This was coupled with the introduction of the Toward Q2 initiatives that seemed to mirror the policy direction taken by New South Wales. The new direction of New South Wales policy had striking similarities to the Q2 initiative. There are similar environmental initiatives in those policy directions. Whilst looking at this legislation we have to bear in mind the trusts and funds that have been put in place. Whether it is funds in New South Wales or elsewhere, there are similarities when it comes to the people involved with those funds and trusts and the formation of trusts and funds in Queensland.

As members of parliament we are entrusted by the people of Queensland to provide a government that is accountable and transparent. When the government presents legislation that enables the principles of accountability and transparency to be circumvented, it is a severe breach of the trust that the people of Queensland place in this parliament. The Bligh government is today presenting a bill that breaks the principles of accountability and transparency while hidden in the glorious spin of the environmental cause. This bill should be met with the cynicism it deserves as it legitimises taxpayers' dollars being placed into funds in the name of environmental initiatives that are not answerable to any government body. In the past NGOs were subject to accountability practices and checks and balances, but these funds will be administered by the Stock Exchange.

What this legislation needs is a provision for the Auditor-General, the CMC, the Ombudsman or even parliament to scrutinise these hard-earned tax dollars going into these funds and trusts. In other words, this bill flies in the face of any measure of accountability or transparency. The opposition has very few concerns about supporting legislation that strengthens and supports environmental offsets. Yet as the alternative government of Queensland we cannot let a bill pass this House that breaches public trust by denying the principles of accountability and transparency that are at the very heart of the Westminster system of government.

During the minister's second reading speech for this bill she said—

... by including express provisions about offsets, we are improving legal certainty and making the legislation more clear for state and local government decision makers, the development industry and the community.

The opposition supports any legislation that provides such an outcome for the government, development and community. We as the opposition certainly support actions that strengthen and legitimise environmental offset conditions on actions or developments that cause a negative impact on the environment. However, the government needs to clarify several points in the legislation and we would hope to be able to have an agreement in relation to amendments that provide accountability and transparency in order to increase the confidence of the Queensland community in relation to the initiatives of the trusts and the funds. The problem the opposition has with this bill can be found in what the minister mentioned in her second reading as—

One of the ways an environmental offset requirement can be met by developers is by making a financial contribution to the Balance the Earth Trust, administered by Ecofund to provide funds to increase our national parks estate.

I will now comment on funds going to the national parks estate. The stated goal is to increase the size of the land in our state's national parks by 50 per cent. The Beattie and Bligh governments have been playing games with environmental lobbyists through national parks policy throughout their terms in power. This 50 per cent goal is another example of using national parks as a way to once again fool the environmental lobby.

This is truly another piece of cynical spin by the Bligh Labor government, which seems to believe that by announcing more land it will hide the trust's lack of accountability as well as the management neglect of these valuable national parks. I also wonder whether the land increase will result in more park rangers. However, we do not have any confidence in this government increasing those numbers. I have my doubts, as the Bligh government's money does not back its rhetoric. When it comes to the environment, how can we expect these new national parks to have rangers when the Bligh government is cutting funding each financial year? In 2007-08 the government spent \$55.7 million on the environment, in 2008-09 that was reduced to \$44.7 million and in 2009-10 that figure was again reduced to \$22 million. In fact, the Bligh government's funding for the environment looks like a persian rug clearance sale: the funds are slashed, slashed and slashed.

The Bligh government may say the right thing when it comes to the environment, but it certainly does not put its money where its mouth is. I also wonder if the new national parks will be overgrown with pests and weeds, as we have seen in the past and as is happening currently. If Queensland's current mismanaged and underresourced national parks are used as evidence, then it is not likely. In its report to parliament No. 9 2010 titled *Sustainable management of national parks and protection areas*, the Auditor-General found that among the 576 national parks and protected areas only 98 of them even had a management plan. If these parks do not even have a management plan, it is little wonder that they are overgrown with introduced noxious weeds and overrun by pests and other animals.

The Bligh government is not interested in the environment. It is more interested in making plays for the green vote by appeasing the environmental lobby. Unfortunately, Queensland's beautiful natural environment is the poorer for this. While the green groups are controlled through the spin, it does not result in an actual gain for Queensland's precious environment. All it results in is underresourced, neglected and mismanaged national parks—underresourced, neglected and mismanaged national parks that then have to absorb more taxpayers' funds to pay for this government's lack of management of its natural resources.

The opposition's concerns about where the minister claims the money will go fade in comparison to concerns about the trust that is in charge of administering the offset funds. The Balance the Earth Trust was set up for DERM by Clayton Utz lawyers and included three EPA employees as trustees. The trust is controlled by the government through DERM but is not subject to any normal bodies under the Westminster system.

I will go through the time frame for the setting up of this fund. On 27 March 2008 the business name Ecofund Queensland was registered by the Environmental Protection Agency. On 28 March a press release by Ms Bligh and then Minister McNamara announced the establishment of Ecofund. The intention, as indicated by the press release, was to allow government companies to invest in Ecofund and secure appropriate offsets and the funds would then be invested in the purchase of national parks. They also announced that Ecofund would be up and running by 1 January 2009, with government arrangements to be finalised in the meantime. On 3 June 2008 Mr McNamara announced a budget increase for the Environmental Protection Agency, including the development of Ecofund Queensland, to meet environmental offset obligations and to meet the current demand for voluntary carbon offsets, and I will go into that later.

In June 2008 the environmental offset policy was announced by then Minister McNamara, and I know that the current minister has inherited all of this. Under this policy, it is announced that Ecofund is to provide carbon and environmental offsets in Queensland for government and non-government organisations. We were informed that these offset requirements are in accordance with the policy and will report in a transparent manner on fund expectations as well as offset performance. It also goes on to mention a number of other funds. It specifically refers to the fact that the Fisheries Research Management Fund, which was the Fisheries Research Fund managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, is a fund that accepts financial contributions for offsets under the marine habitat specific-issue offset policy. There are a number of funds and trusts that are currently administered by this department, but they have the scrutiny of this House. They have the necessary requirements to be audited and to be brought before this House so that the people of Queensland are able to know exactly where their funds are going.

In May 2009, in answer to a question to Minister Jones to provide funding details for projects that have benefited by more than \$1 million from the Queensland Climate Change Fund, Minister Jones advised in part that \$1.2 million was allocated to Ecofund which will provide environmental and carbon-offsetting services on a cost-recovery basis to government clients. So it is government money going into an organisation that is set up with certain principles and there is no government accountability in relation to those funds. In her introductory speech to Estimates Committee E, Minister Jones said—

Finally, one particular commitment I would like to highlight is our Q2—

here we go with Q2—

target to protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020.

So we are going to use the fund to gain that 50 per cent more national park whilst funding by this government in the environmental sector continues to go down and down. She continued—

I am pleased to inform the committee of a significant milestone in achieving this target. Ecofund has recently been established by our government to provide innovative solutions and expert advice to assist government, business and individuals meet their sustainability objectives through ethical sourcing and trading of carbon and environmental offsets. I am pleased to say that Ecofund is now effectively up and running with its first major contribution from electricity government owned corporation Powerlink. Powerlink has kick-started Ecofund with a \$750,000 contribution, of which \$350,000 will be used by my department to purchase more national park estate. With the Rudd government's two-for-one funding deal currently on the table—

we know what happened to Mr Rudd—

we expect that \$350,000 total to grow to up to \$1 million as specific locations to purchase are finalised.

Again in July 2009 Ms Jones issued another press release about the success of Powerlink offsetting its power generation and that Powerlink had purchased 4,835 megawatts of green power renewable energy certificates from Ecofund to offset 50 per cent of its electricity consumption. In answer to a question from Mrs Attwood, the member for Mount Ommaney, the Premier said—

In addition, those vehicles that do not comply with the minimum vehicle emission standards have their emissions offset through Ecofund.

This is going into a different paradigm as far as being able to use carbon offsets.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hopper, adjourned.

## MOTION

### Order of Business

 **Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (7.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That all business be postponed to enable the notice of motion—disallowance of statutory instrument—to be debated.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## FISHERIES AMENDMENT REGULATION (NO. 1) 2010

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (7.31 pm): I move—

That subordinate legislation No. 354, Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010, tabled in the House on 16 February 2011, be disallowed.

Before I begin, I congratulate the minister on taking on the fisheries portfolio. I move this motion to give the Queensland fishing community a voice in this House and so that the Labor members can get up and tell us exactly why they are imposing a six-week ban on snapper fishing. This snapper fishing ban has been brought in by this government with little consultation with the wreck fishermen and the commercial and charter fishing sectors. It has been brought in as a fait accompli. It is based on what we all know to be very dubious data with little or no regard for its impacts on individuals and families who like to catch a fish on the weekends, for charter boat operators—

**Mr Fraser** interjected.

**Mr HOPPER:** I would be doorknocking if I were you, cowboy—for commercial operators and for small business bait and tackle shops.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Members will go to their correct seats if they wish to interject.

**Mr HOPPER:** This ban has been brought in and now this government wants to consult. But at the same time it wants to bring in a \$90 boat licence fee for snapper fishers. I suppose that came from the Treasurer. In effect, the government wants Queensland fishers to pay not to fish. That sounds ludicrous, but that is the way it is.

In my role as shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries I have attended many fishing meetings, including most recently the Fisheries Queensland meeting at Victoria Point, which was attended by probably 150 local fishing enthusiasts as well as a couple of intelligent and practical fishing club members from Ipswich. I found the meeting interesting as well as frustrating—frustrating because, although I recognise the efforts of Fisheries Queensland staff who were there to answer many questions, there were a lot of questions that simply could not be given proper answers. That is the reason I have moved this disallowance motion in the House, so that the minister must get on his feet and give proper answers tonight—proper answers to the charter fishermen, the wreck fishermen, you name them.

The key issue is the data used by this government to justify this ban. On the admission of Fisheries Queensland staff, the data used is not ideal and based on old information—from 2005—which, again on their admission, has been extrapolated. Let me be absolutely crystal clear: the LNP agrees with the fishing community and groups, including Sunfish, that the snapper fishery must be protected. It must be preserved for future generations. All fishermen would agree with that. But the LNP does not agree with the use of dubious data, rushed lockups and bans, and unfair and unreasonable licence fees

for fishing boats, especially when the owners are already paying annual registration fees and levies and a range of over-permit fees. To highlight this point, I now table a simple flyer that details the current boat fees that are paid in South-East Queensland.

*Tabled paper:* Sunfish Queensland Inc. brochure in relation to recreational fishing in southern Queensland [\[4017\]](#).

**Mr Fraser:** Found it?

**Mr HOPPER:** Have a read of that. If the Treasurer wishes to interject, I would ask for a ruling to make him sit in his correct seat. He should have more sense in this chamber and grow up.

The overwhelming view of the recreational and commercial fishing sectors is that the snapper ban, which also includes two other species, pearl perch and teraglin, has been introduced without proper consultation with those who actually catch the fish and that the ban is based on guesstimates made from old data. This data has been cobbled together quickly to justify a ban that has more to do with the Labor Party garnering support from the Greens than it has to do with sound science.

A major problem with this whole issue is a lack of resources for Fisheries Queensland, which formerly came under the control of the department of primary industries and fisheries. Under this government, this once proud and service delivery focused department has suffered death by a thousand cuts. We know that fishery inspectors are rarely, if ever, seen during peak fishing periods simply because there are not enough of them and there is little if any money for overtime or inspection work on weekends. We know that, instead of properly resourcing a vital department, this government is now looking to gouge the Queensland fishing community with this additional \$90 boat licence fee to scrounge some more money for an underresourced fisheries department.

This government needs to stop its shameful waste and start directing taxpayers' money to properly resourcing service delivery—in this case Fisheries Queensland—so that its officers can undertake a proper and soundly based survey of those who are actually involved in the snapper fishery. I am talking about a proper survey of bag takes and commercial and charter catches so that sound decisions and policies can be put in place to ensure the future of the snapper fishery and, indeed, all fisheries. The great fear I hold is that this ill-conceived ban will become a much longer ban in the run-up to the next election to further shore up Greens support for Labor.

During my time as the shadow minister I have found that the Queensland fishing community is made up of practical people from all walks of life who share a passion for fishing, for boats and for the sea and that it is a passion that they want to pass on to their grandchildren. Above all, they want to be able to continue to fish and to continue to enjoy this great recreational activity and for commercial operators to provide Queenslanders with fresh, healthy seafood. They do not need this nonsense of a ban slapped on them based on dubious data gained from a five- to six-year-old phone call. These people do not need to be made to pay extra to fish less. That is exactly what has happened with this six-week ban that has been brought in by Minister Mulherin. These people do not need to have their recreational and family enjoyment dashed or their small business unfairly destroyed just to appease a small but vocal hardline environmental sector of this community.

As I mentioned, the LNP is firmly committed to protecting our fisheries, but it is committed to doing that through sound science and practical and common-sense rules that will not see fish that are caught unintentionally having to be released, only to have them die at a rate higher than 70 per cent. That is what is happening at the moment. People who are going out to fish during this six-week period and who happen to catch a snapper, which it is illegal to do, let it go and in 70 per cent of those cases the snapper dies. These people are not fishing for snapper but have gone out fishing and have unintentionally caught snapper. It is illegal to keep the snapper, so let us kill them by throwing them back into the ocean! This is an absolutely ludicrous regulation.

We need sound fish management plans based on sound data—that is, absolute scientific evidence. Our fishermen do not believe that the evidence is there. I simply do not believe that the evidence is there to bring in these harsh regulations. There needs to be data that is formulated with proper consultation with real people who fish—people who know what is being taken and where it is being taken from. Until that is the case we, the LNP, will remain opposed to this current ban.

I call on the new Minister for Fisheries, Mr Wallace, to take a positive step to rebuild some trust with the fishing community by scrapping the ban and allowing a full and open debate. The minister has the chance tonight to overturn this ban. He is a brand-new minister with the fisheries department. He has the opportunity to say, 'I am going to do it differently. I am going to overturn this ban. We will not have a ban until we get correct, scientific evidence.' That is what the people of Queensland are calling for tonight. I have put this before the House so that we can have a debate on this issue and be a voice for the people. In power, the Labor government is simply not the voice of the people. Indeed, I challenge the new minister to do the right thing. I challenge him to overturn this snapper ban, obtain the full scientific facts and allow them to be presented for public scrutiny.

There is a real and understandable fear in the fishing community that Labor will do another deal with the radical Greens and after the next election extend this six-week ban, currently running from 15 February to 31 March. We saw the deals with the Greens that got Labor the extra seats to win government at the last election. I spoke to a tackle shop owner this afternoon from Southport. It is the worst month he has had for 30 years. He is extremely concerned that he will go broke because of what is being imposed tonight by this Labor government. People are simply not buying the gear. They are too scared to go fishing. We saw a deal with the Greens that locked up Moreton Bay. People are scared to fish in Moreton Bay because they do not know where the green zones are. A friend of mine was on his boat and he rang me and said, 'Help me out.' They do not know where the green zones are in Moreton Bay.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HOPPER:** Listen to those opposite squawk now. They are very, very nervous. There are 750,000 recreational fishers in Queensland who vote. They know what is being imposed on them tonight by this government. They know that the LNP have brought this debate forward so people like those here in the gallery have a voice in this chamber. This is about fishing people wanting a voice in this chamber. That is what the LNP have presented tonight.

The minister has to explain why he is agreeing with what the previous minister has done. Those deals with the Greens before the last election did not only relate to fishing. We saw a million hectares of regrowth locked up. Then we saw the protection of the Great Barrier Reef. It absolutely destroyed what the farmers are doing up there. They were to blame. There was no mention of the towns on the coast. That was another deal with the Greens before the last election. We in the LNP are extremely concerned that this will extend to a deal with the Greens coming up to the next election and that this ban is 'breaking people in' to not fish for snapper and that next time it will be a four- to six-month ban. According to the data that this government has used, we will have an ocean full of fish that cannot be touched. It is false data. You need to get real scientific evidence. You need to be truthful and faithful—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Condamine, you will address your comments through the chair.

**Mr HOPPER:** The minister needs to get some real scientific evidence. We have good people in the department. I have met with some of these people. These are good people who want this to happen. Good people have told me what is going wrong. They are people who really believe they have had their hand forced. At those meetings there were good staff members there doing their best, sitting out the front taking questions from fishermen who were rightly upset and wild. These people had to do what they have been told to do even though I believe it was against their will. I believe that they believed they did not have the data to warrant imposing these bans.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (7.44 pm): I second the motion to stop Labor's current snapper ban. When it comes to fishing, this Labor government has more closures than Rugs a Million. This snapper ban is another closing-down sellout. When there is a fishing issue that needs addressing, Labor's first instinct is to ban someone, ban something or ban access to some area. Since real Labor fishing men like Tom Burns retired, and since Labor became dependent on the Greens to form government, this government has been invaded by a toxic green algal policy bloom. It has become ban mad and closure crazy. Their DNA has become to shut out, close, ban, lock up and deny access to marine areas. Closure has become Labor's default position on fisheries management, a one-solution-fits-all approach to fishing pressure. We saw it in Moreton Bay first where there has been the unpopular green zone closures and now today a new species-specific ban, a snapper ban.

Let me digress briefly and acknowledge recreational fishers in the gallery here tonight and also those who are watching online. They are the witnesses of Labor's sellout of Queensland's 750,000 recreational fishers and boaties. The government initially attempted to bring in the six-week snapper ban by stealth by introducing it just days before Christmas. It did this to avoid public scrutiny under the Christmas radar. Tonight Labor MPs cannot hide. They will have to stand for something: either for or against fishing.

Let me be clear: the LNP is committed to sustainable fishing, to protecting our precious fish stock and all marine life, but unlike this government we are also committed to protecting the rights of individuals to fish sustainably. The LNP opposes this ban for many reasons. Firstly, the science does not unequivocally conclude that snapper are overfished and that closures are required in Queensland waters. Dr Barry Pollock, a fisheries scientist and chairman of Sunfish Queensland, the peak recreational fishing body in Queensland, stated that the latest scientific review found that the exact status of snapper stocks is uncertain due to the limitations of available data and that it is misleading for the minister to state unequivocally that snapper stocks are severely depleted. While phone-polling the public may have given an indication of community views, it is not the hard evidence needed to make long-term and far-reaching environmental, economic and social decisions that impact on our coastal lifestyles, businesses and industries. Further, the government's claim is contradicted by the evidence of

good snapper catches by recreational fishers, a fact not given sufficient consideration by Fisheries Queensland. I call on the government tonight to commit to a more intensive program of recreational fishing data collection to better inform management decisions and thus to lift the current ban.

Secondly, Queensland's peak fishing bodies condemn the Labor snapper ban. The peak recreational fishing bodies—Sunfish, ECOfishers and the Charter Boat Association here in Queensland—do not support the government's snapper ban.

Thirdly, government departments contradict each other about the value of bans on snapper management. Of the previous marine park closures, DERM have stated that these park closures benefited the snapper, while at the same time DEEDI have said that they did not. So we see confusion and contradiction by government departments themselves about the status of the snapper stock.

Fourthly, the snapper ban itself will not produce any significant environmental benefit as snapper are out of season at this time of year. A ban will not have the government's aim of significantly reducing environmental impacts on snapper because they are not in season. This is a crazy time of the year to introduce a snapper ban if the government thinks a ban is going to somehow reduce the fishing pressure on snapper. It is crazy and makes no sense at all.

Fifthly, the current ban is causing great damage to tourism and marine-dependent small businesses in coastal Queensland areas. Recreational fishers consistently expend significant amounts of funds in fishing related tourism. But many of them have parked their boats in their backyards for the period of the ban. They are not buying the petrol, bait, tackle, rods, food and drinks that they would normally buy from the petrol stations, tackle stores and corner stores. Other Queensland snapper fishers are heading across the border to New South Wales where they can fish for snapper, spending their money in New South Wales instead of Queensland.

This is the wrong time to introduce another economically unsustainable fishing ban, when tourism and small business are trying to recover from the summer floods. It is like kicking Queenslanders when they are already down. Where have we heard that before? If the Premier can postpone implementing other actions to assist people getting over the floods, why can't she defer the pain for the fishing sector and marine industries devastated by the floods? The Labor snapper bans will not save fish, but fishing businesses in Queensland will be lost.

Sixthly, the current six-week ban is feared to be a precursor to bigger and more devastating bans. It is quite possible that this closure-addicted Labor government will impose a four-month ban on snapper fishing, starting as early as June 2011 and at the latest probably June 2012, and continuing every year while ever they hold the belief that the snapper stock is overfished. Of the current snapper RIS being considered, four-month snapper bans are one of the major elements being suggested in several of these options. I am sure it would be useful for Labor members who are concerned about this and my statements to read their own documents and learn about what their government is very likely to bring in, because they are voting on it tonight. Like the softening up of an artillery barrage before the main assault, this ban is the start of something much worse. It is politically motivated to display to the Greens in Queensland, in the lead-up to the next election, that the government is serious about putting closure capital on the table to earn the preference deal that the Bligh government cannot win without.

In conclusion, the current Labor snapper ban and future Labor snapper bans are not the bans that we had to have. I join with Dr Barry Pollack and urge the state government to reconsider the validity of this extreme and unwarranted management plan, as he calls it, and to instead use sensible management measures, not bans, so that the snapper stay sustainable. Through this motion the LNP calls on the government to stop the ban tonight. I second the shadow minister's motion.

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (7.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate. I commence by congratulating the shadow minister for bringing the motion before the House and for opening the debate on a very critical and important issue. There have been many untruths levelled against the LNP by this government, which has a pedigree of misleading the public on the petrol tax, asset sales, the carbon tax and increases in the cost of living. Tonight, in this regulation, Queenslanders are being hit again by another tax that is an attack on the working family.

Let us make no mistake: it is important to protect our environment. Yet laws in this area must be passed against a background of environmental and social obligations. There is no mandate for this government, by its actions, to destroy the livelihoods of Queenslanders with the financial and emotional consequences that follow.

A letter signed by Mr Troy Dixon of Custom Craft Marine (Qld) Pty Ltd of Caloundra states—

My wife and five children, my employees, and the thousands of others I have mentioned, all face potential hardship and suffering from the domino effect these proposals will create. I'm sure that all these businesses and individuals will want to know why a sensible government would want to jeopardise and disregard the livelihoods, and the basic Australian values that we, as Australians, have been promoting and protecting for generations. Our businesses, our livelihoods, our lifestyles, and our recreational activities are all impacted by these decisions.

In another letter, Mr Alan Dolan of Lively Lures states—

Now this 6 week closure ... that this Labor Government is hell bent on stopping the public fishing at all. I'm all for bag limits so that my kids and my grandchildren can enjoy the right to go and catch fresh fish for themselves in years to come, but closing down a fishery without proper science is outrageous. The impact across the whole industry has a devastating effect on everybody who is trying to make a living out of the fishing industry.

I table those letters by two men heavily involved in the industry, which is under threat as a consequence of the resolution before the House tonight.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 28 February 2011, from Troy Dixon, Custom Craft Marine (Qld) Pty Ltd and letter, dated 25 February 2011, from Alan Dolan, Director, Lively Lures to Mr Mark McArdle MP, in relation to proposed changes to snapper and other species fisheries [4024].

Messrs Dixon and Dolan are the social face of the impact of these changes. If a government claims it is compassionate then it cannot ignore the people its actions affect. The warning here is clear: let us protect the environment but let us understand the impact of what we do on Queensland families and move to protect the livelihood of those families.

As I said, tonight the shadow minister opened a debate on a very critical and important issue. He highlighted the fact that this is simply a gambit by the ALP to garner the support of the Greens in the forthcoming election campaign, as it did in the previous campaign. It is a fact that it was the Greens' preferences that got this government back into power in 2009. This is nothing more than another political grab for those preferences, against a background of destroying the livelihoods of Queensland families. I support the motion before the House.

 **Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (7.56 pm): Here we go again. In this House we have had a number of debates in which the LNP has started a fear campaign. Tonight we see that again. I rise to address the House on the disallowance motion concerning the Rocky Reef Finfish Fishery review, particularly relating to snapper. This issue is certainly of vital importance to my constituency. I represent the electorate of Pumicestone, which is almost surrounded by water as it includes the lovely Moreton Bay, the Caboolture River and other rivers and creeks.

**Mr Ryan:** It's a great place.

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** It is a great place, and I thank the member for Morayfield. He wishes he was the member for Pumicestone.

formal public consultation on the Rocky Reef Finfish Fishery review has been advertised. It commenced in December, it continues to this day and it will continue until about 8 April. This consultation has been conducted via a regulatory impact statement, RIS, which is something the state Labor government introduced. It has been seen by over 900 members of the community and public meetings have been held throughout South-East Queensland. Consultation on these measures is about the long-term stability of the snapper fishery so that people can fish snapper now and into the future. Concerns for the sustainability of snapper have been expressed by stakeholders, fishery managers and scientists over the past 30 years. This is nothing new. Over the years the government has implemented a range of measures to try to protect the snapper stock.

**Mr Hopper:** How many meetings did you go to? Were you going to stand and face the fishermen at one of those meetings? No!

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** This is a member from Dalby who I do not think would understand the difference between a bay and a creek. Over the years the government has implemented a range of measures to try to protect the snapper stock. As I said, this is not just happening today; this has been going on for some time. The measures that we have undertaken include introducing and maintaining minimum legal sizes. A size limit of 11 inches can be traced back as far as 1957. Limiting the licensing of commercial fishing boats dates back to 1984. Restricting recreational fishers from selling their surplus fish dates back to 1990. Increasing the minimum legal size of snapper from 25 centimetres to 30 centimetres and introducing a bag limit of 30 dates back to 1993. Increasing the minimum legal size for snapper from 30 centimetres to 35 centimetres and decreasing the bag limit from 30 to five fish per person dates back to 2003.

Of particular interest to my constituents are the four options contained in the RIS. These options have been the focus of much debate in the fishing community across all sectors. It is important to note the government has no preferred position on the four options outlined in the RIS. This is why we are consulting with commercial, recreation and charter sectors about the best management option for the future of snapper fisheries. I want to place on record tonight my support for those businesses which hire boats to be classed as commercial, not recreational.

I have listened to the concerns and the range of views from my constituents and I understand the importance of snapper fishing now and into the future. I did speak to the previous minister about a couple of issues that were raised and I did receive a good hearing. The new minister for fisheries, the honourable member for Thuringowa, also understands the concerns raised by members of the fishing

community. The first thing I said to the minister was, 'Congratulations on your new portfolio.' The second thing I said to him was, 'I'll be beating a path to your door, Minister, because my electorate is almost entirely surrounded by the waters of Moreton Bay and other rivers and creeks.' The minister has already met with key representative bodies in the two weeks since inheriting his new ministry. So I congratulate him on that. This says to me that the government is listening. That is what public consultation is all about, and we invented it.

I want to say to my constituents that the options contained in the RIS are open to the public till 8 April 2011. I am happy to talk to anybody regarding all aspects of fishing. Together there is an opportunity to help create a sustainable snapper fishery that benefits all sectors.

 **Ms van LITSENBURG** (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.00 pm): I rise to speak against the disallowance motion. Fisheries Queensland is currently reviewing management arrangements for our rocky reef fin fisheries. A six-week interim ban on taking snapper fish started in February to provide a degree of protection to snapper while longer term solutions are found. Formal public consultation via regulatory impact statement commenced on 14 December and will continue until 8 April. These issues, some of which have been politically motivated, have caused much heartache and consternation in my electorate. The regulatory impact statement is a consultation document only. Currently, there are four options to achieve long-term sustainability, but other ideas for further options are very welcome.

Because Redcliffe is a community of recreational fishers, charter fishers, commercial fishers and traders who depend on those who come to the Redcliffe peninsula to fish, I make no bones about my support for the fishers in my electorate. I am looking to get solutions for all of my stakeholders that will keep my charter and commercial fishers in business and will ensure recreational fishers can enjoy this pastime as they always have.

In saying this, I cannot support this motion. This motion is just posturing. Those opposite are not proposing a positive solution. There is no advantage in overturning the current interim snapper ban. Some of my fishing businesses have been hurt by this interim closure, but the business they have lost as a result cannot be regained by reversing this ban a couple of weeks earlier than originally planned. So it is of no value to reverse it. All fishing is not being banned, only the taking of snapper, pearl perch and teraglin. We are now looking for solutions that will reduce the snapper catch to 400 tonnes per year, enabling stock to rebuild over a 10-year period.

The important issue is the long-term management of our rocky reef fin fisheries and our consultation period gives all stakeholders their say on how we should manage this important resource for the long term. Every fisher or fishing organisation still has the opportunity to have their say. I want to stress that the Queensland government has no fixed position on how we can sustainably manage the snapper stock. We are looking for ideas from those who use the bay regularly. I attended my local consultation evening at the leagues club in my electorate a couple of weeks ago and several stakeholders have come to speak to me since then. I have heard their issues, I understand them and I have spoken to the minister. It is, however, vital that we take action to conserve our snapper stocks.

The minister understands that how the rocky reef finfish stock is managed is a matter of survival for charter and commercial fishers. He also understands the importance of the lifestyle issues for local Redcliffe people around recreational fishing. But overturning the current interim ban will not assist the long-term decisions to create sustainable snapper fisheries. Right now fishers need some certainty. Posturing about short-term issues will not provide certainty for their future. I recommend that all stakeholders have their say, use their expertise to put forward creative ideas, as some of the stakeholders have done in my electorate, and work actively towards positive solutions for all fishers. I oppose this motion.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (8.05 pm): May I premise my contribution to the debate tonight by welcoming the federal member for Longman, Wyatt Roy, to the public gallery and also Lisa France, the incoming member for Pumicestone. I rise in support of—

**Mr Hopper:** I second that!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We have a seconder. I rise in support of the motion before the House, the disallowance of a statutory instrument relating to subordinate legislation No. 354, Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2010 tabled in the House on 16 February 2011. I say thankyou to the shadow minister for sticking up for the fishing industry because if he did not do it and the LNP did not do it, no-one in this place would. The regulation as tabled amends the Fisheries Regulation 2008 to ban the fishing of snapper from all of Queensland's east coast waters from 15 February to 31 March this year. The ban also applies to the co-caught species of pearl perch. The ban is also extended to all recreational, charter and commercial fishers.

The ban on snapper during the six-week period is another blow to an industry which has suffered greatly through the recent turbulent weather events across Queensland and an industry that could least afford this ban. What is just as disappointing is the manner in which the ban was forced upon the

industry. On 14 December 2010 the former minister for fisheries announced the ban while releasing the rocky reef finfish fishery regulatory impact statement for public consultation. There were no discussions and no open dialogue, just a ban for six weeks in the middle of a period when the Queensland fishing industry and businesses could least afford it.

In addition to the six-week ban on snapper fishing, further changes to the regulation will introduce a 400-tonne cap on the total annual catch. The data surrounding two Fisheries Queensland audits in 2006 and 2009 found that snapper levels were less than 35 per cent of the unfished levels. However, a range of fishing experts, fishing groups and independent scientists have questioned the data collated by the department. This data is the foundation for not only the six-week ban on snapper fishing but also a 400-tonne cap on the annual catch of snapper stocks over 10 years.

On the government's own data, Queensland has approximately 1,500 licensed commercial fishing boats which contribute more than 10 per cent of the nation's seafood production. The commercial fishing industry is vital to the economy of coastal towns, particularly in the remote areas of the state. I have to say that I am disappointed that the member for Pumicestone does not share that view and does not share the view of the local economy that the fishing industry holds in her electorate.

**Mrs Sullivan:** I don't share any view with you.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection that the member for Pumicestone and I disagree on many matters—

**Mrs Sullivan:** Everything!

**Mr BLEIJIE:** But there is none more fundamental than this because she is clearly wrong. It is about time that this government supported the commercial fishing industry. It is about time it supported the commercial fishing industry in Queensland rather than implementing measures that will destroy it. We on this side are smart enough to know what is happening here.

**Ms Croft:** What are you going to do?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection and I will tell the member. They are clearly not smart enough to work it out on their own account, so I will tell the honourable member. We on this side know that this stems from a deal done with the Socialist Left Greens at the 2009 state election. It is a government desperate to hold on to office. It would do anything with the Greens and do anything to win an election, whenever that may be. The left-wing, loopy, socialist agenda will be to the detriment of this government. They only have to ask Prime Minister Gillard how much benefit the Greens deal has been to the federal government and ask what the Prime Minister's latest support rating is based on her radical green ideas.

This is another hit on the commercial fishing industry. It is a plan to slug boat owners \$90 to fish for snapper. It is hypocrisy. Those on the other side of the House argue against this disallowance motion, yet they are likely the ones who on Sunday drink their chardonnay, go down to the local shop and then whinge because there is no snapper for sale in the shop. Have they ever fished? Who knows? Do they know what a boat is or what a fishing rod is? Who knows?

The test is on this new minister, the member for Thuringowa—whether he is willing to debate this out of this chamber with the industry and in the public arena, whether he is willing to consult and listen to feedback from the industry stakeholders, whether he is willing to support the commercial fishing industry in Queensland. Feedback from commercial fishers in my own electorate has indicated that the government has not listened to the concerns they have raised in relation to many issues.

I can say to the shadow minister and to members of this parliament that I am not surprised. I am not surprised that the government forthwith hastily introduced a six-week ban on snapper fishing, because a lot of what this government does is not consult. I think I heard one of the government members interject that consultation is in their DNA or that they invented the word 'consultation'. It may have been the member for Pumicestone. Correct me if I am wrong. I think she said that the Labor Party invented the word 'consultation'. If I have heard any joke in my life, that would be the funniest I have ever heard: the Labor Party inventing consultation—what an absolute joke!

This government is more interested in political deals and agendas to ensure its survival than the interests of the commercial fishing industry in Queensland or indeed the long-term viability of the snapper stocks in our waters. I have a final word of caution or many words of wisdom to those opposite: Queenslanders fish and Queenslanders vote, and I look forward to the day they get the chance to place that vote in the member for Pumicestone's electorate.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (8.12 pm): It is with great pleasure that I support this disallowance motion. I thank the shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries, the member for Condamine. I also acknowledge the contribution of my colleague the member for Kawana and endorse his comments about the need to get rid of this toxic government and toxic MPs who continue to pander to the elite element to do backroom deals that are against the interests of ordinary Queenslanders. The sticky fingers of this government are in the pockets of Queenslanders, ripping out their last dollar and then telling them, 'You can't go fishing,' even though the science does not support this ban that this government has brought about.

The snapper ban is a kick in the guts for fishers and related small businesses. It is not about preserving the precious fishing resources; it is about preserving this Labor government's own political hide. The Greens tail is wagging the Labor dog, and ordinary Queenslanders who are already paying so much for these secret deals and broken Labor promises are being asked to pay yet again. The people paying the price are ordinary Queenslanders who believe in a fair go. They are ordinary Queenslanders who want conservation based on science and common sense. They are not part of the backroom elite who do the deals with this government on marginal seat preferences.

I have just heard tonight the Labor hacks defending their government's arrogance. Let me say this: consultation which does not result in people being listened to is a joke. Consultation which ignores those whom it most impacts is not real consultation. Consultation is about being able to influence the outcome, but there has been a predetermined outcome because that is the way this government does its form of Labor consultation.

Fishers want to have a sustainable resource, but they do not like draconian government decisions which do not make sense and they hate meetings which the government calls consultative meetings. It is not consultation when they are impacted but have no ability to change the outcome. This six-week closure of fishing for snapper and teraglin affects not only those who love their fishing but also the bait and tackle shops which supply those fishers and all of those related industries, particularly the boating industry and charter operators. The Mooloolaba port is in my area. I live on the Sunshine Coast and we have a lot of tourists come to our area as well. The feedback I am receiving from those small businesses is that they have never hurt so bad.

This six-week closure of fishing is a disaster for those who rely upon the fishing industry. They certainly were not consulted. Like many small businesses, they feel ripped off and ignored by a government that is out of touch with ordinary Queenslanders. We in the LNP are practical environmentalists who believe that science matters and we will listen to people and are concerned that the science has been ignored. Recreational fishers are being penalised for this government's arrogance and desperation to hold on to power no matter what it costs, but it is costing ordinary Queenslanders.

Before the natural disasters ripped through Queensland there was already another disaster taking place, and it was this government. That is exemplified by this ban, where the government has brought in a regulation which will have a huge impact upon people and will put people out of business. It will also impact upon those people who make a decision about coming to Queensland such as tourists who love to fish. They will find out that this government is anti people having a go and is unable to sustain a fishing resource with the appropriate enforcement, regulation and environment.

What we want to see is a sustainable fishery, where its management is not done with political intent in the way this government has done but is done in an open way which involves scientists from across the field being able to debate the issues openly, as my colleague has called for. That will ensure that, instead of those having the power that they do to wreak havoc upon people's lives, we truly have a resource about which people know where they stand. They know what is required in order to maintain its sustainability and they know that those fees that are being collected are in fact going to support the ongoing maintenance of that industry and are not unfair and are not in any way burdensome in the way they are applied. But we have not seen that to date with this government.

I support this disallowance motion. I support the ban on the ban. We want to see science brought back into the equation. We want to see accountability in the way that this fishery is managed and we want to see the government, once and for all, listen to industry experts—those credible voices who are beyond the government's own little bubble of self-belief—who are saying that the government has it wrong. The government needs to reconsider. It needs to have proper consultation. It needs to listen and then take into account those voices which are speaking not just with passion but with scientific credibility. They deserve to be heard. The people deserve to be heard. It is time we had a sustainable resource that had the accountability of a proper management program.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (8.18 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion. Gladstone is a fishing port as well as being a heavily industrialised area. Recreational fishing in particular is one of the major pastimes for people who live in the region, and I think we have one of the larger numbers of boat registrations as a result. We also have a diminishing but significant commercial fishery using Gladstone as a base. The sorts of fish that we are dealing with here to my knowledge are deep-sea fish. I have to declare an interest because I love pearl perch. I think it is a beautiful fish to eat. I am one of the catch-and-fillet club perhaps. They are a great fish.

The basis of my support for the disallowance motion is relatively simple. I do not think that there is any industry that has been regulated, controlled, banned from and made to modify their processes more than the fishing industry. In the time that I have been in this House we have had bans, we have had requirements for excluders, we have had requirements for certain net modifications, we have had requirements for fish sizes and fish catch numbers being reduced all to ensure the sustainability of the fishery.

There have not been many fishing people whom I have spoken to who do not want a sustainable fishing industry, whether that is commercial fishing or recreational fishing. But the problem is that over the years all of these control measures have been introduced but we have never given the fish stocks the time to respond to all of those bans, closures and changes. We have not paused, given it a few years and seen what happens to the fishery. We just keep adding more bans, making more changes, adding more closures and never actually quantifying the impact of all that has gone on in the past 15 years.

The fishers in my electorate, particularly those in the commercial fishing industry, echo that point of view. They have seen the improvement in fish stocks. They acknowledge that the changes, particularly in certain areas, are beneficial, but they say, 'Let us give it a go. Let us wait and see what all of this change is doing. Give it a couple of years and let us see whether more impost is required on us as fishers.'

I have also been involved in consultation processes in relation to fisheries changes. Often it is disappointing. Usually the advertising is poorly done. Fishermen may or may not know about the consultation meetings. At the last one I went to the officers outnumbered the fishing people—I got this feedback later—because they either did not know about the consultation or they were otherwise obligated and could not be at the meeting. Whilst members can say that there has been consultation and there have been public meetings, I would guarantee that if I asked fishing people in my electorate they would be feeling quite a level of frustration.

It could be argued that this is only a six-week closure from 15 February to 31 March. As I said, overwhelmingly the concern that is expressed to me is that this is another closure on top of all the others and why not give it some time to see how the fishery responds to all of the other changes.

Additionally, with the reduction in effort across the fishing industry my observation as well as my feeling after discussions with fishing families is that the small family set-ups have been bought out or have gone bust and the bigger boats have picked up the effort and they are the ones that are least constrained by the weather. Where the mum and dad fishing families would go out one in 10 times, a larger boat can go out nine in 10 times because they are not constrained by weather conditions.

From the fishing industry's point of view there are a lot of issues that have not been properly considered. Whilst I understand that the minister and the government are endeavouring to continue with a sustainable industry, the fishing people that I speak to want sustainability in the fish stocks but they also want sustainability for their businesses. On that basis I support the disallowance motion.

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (8.23 pm): I rise to speak to the disallowance motion. I will not be supporting the motion. The reason I will not be supporting the motion is not because I do not think legitimate issues have been raised—and I will also raise some of those issues on behalf of constituents in my electorate—but as usual what we have seen is members of the LNP come in here and try to make political mileage with simplistic answers to difficult and complex problems. This is the way they usually operate.

The member for Kawana, in his little rant a while ago, replied to interjections and said that he was going to tell us what the LNP would do about the problem. He then proceeded to go on about conspiracy theories amongst left-wing political parties which really said a lot about the member for Kawana.

We have heard over and over the little mantra from the LNP that this is a conspiracy theory, that no-one supports the closure and that it is not based on any science. However, I have not heard any science from the LNP members who have spoken so far to back up their position. All I have heard from them is that they are looking to make sure they do not upset anyone and they will not take any leadership on this issue whatsoever.

The statements made that no-one supports these closures are wrong. Bill Edwards from the Queensland Charter Vessel Association stated—

Snapper numbers had fallen so dramatically and were close to the 25 per cent level at which the entire fishery would be closed. The interim closure was made at this time of year because it had been asked for by recreational fishers. They wanted it now because it usually is not good weather for boating at this time of year. They have a lot of political clout.

I wonder who that clout is with? He continued—

The best time for a closure is August to September when the fish are spawning.

The Queensland Seafood Industry Association—the representative body of the commercial fishing industry—has recently written to the Premier urging the maintenance of measures to protect the snapper stock. According to members on the other side, there is no need to protect the snapper stock because there is no problem. The commercial fishers recognise that the snapper stock is in decline and must be protected. Of course they do. The science cannot be all wrong. They want the stock protected from all sectors—commercial, recreational and charter fishers.

One of the interesting things mentioned by LNP members who have spoken so far is that, according to them, everyone is saying that there is no need to do anything. That is the interest. I have a charter operator in my electorate—and I will mention a few points he has raised with me—who says that restrictions need to be put on commercial fishermen. So the charter fishermen want the commercial fishermen to have their catch cut back. The commercial fishermen say the recreational fishermen are taking too much. So on it goes. This is not just about a fisherman standing on the beach and throwing in a line; it is a complex series of events. It takes time to come up with answers and decisions, not simplistic jargon like that which we are hearing from those in the LNP. I do not think anyone, apart from those opposite, believes that the government does not have to play a role in ensuring that the future stocks of fisheries are protected.

I have fished all my life. I spent seven years floating around the ocean in a naval patrol boat and watching longline fishermen destroy the fisheries. I watched pair trawlers clear out the Gulf of Carpentaria. Two kilometres of netting at a time took fish out of the ocean. It is a great industry. I eat seafood; we all do. The idea that the industry can be left completely on its own with no regulation and without some sort of intervention to ensure that everyone gets a fair go and every sector of the industry is looked after is ridiculous.

We heard the statement before that there is not absolute science around the idea of a closure. There is not absolute science around anything. If we wait for absolute science, nothing would ever get done, which is exactly what would happen if those opposite ever got into power. Nothing will ever be done until it is too late. That is unfortunately the situation that we are in.

My constituent who owns a charter boat has raised a number of issues. I speak to people in my electorate about this regularly. There has been a lot of concern raised about the proposed \$90 fee. I have passed that on to the minister. I wrote to the previous minister, Minister Mulherin, on behalf of my constituents regarding the timing of the closure—it being so soon after an involuntary closure due to flood plumes and other things in Moreton Bay. My constituent with the charter boat raised concerns with me about how the quota will be decided. He has concerns that as a new licence holder he may not get a fair go.

This person is concerned that other licence holders and older licence holders are in fact having too much sway and are cutting new licence holders like him out of the ability to get a fair go. As I have said, it is not simple. We have not heard anything from members of the LNP about what they will do. They like making statements about sustainable fishing. However, as usual, there has been not one suggestion about how they would do it; not one recommendation about what they would do; not one idea about how they would balance the conflicting needs of recreational, charter and commercial fishermen; and not one idea about how they are going to ensure that the fisheries are sustainable into the future so that in 20 years from now when people want to go fishing there is still snapper there.

As I said, I have fished in the Northern Territory and lived in Cairns and used to fish up there. Fishing is a great sport. However, when I lived in Cairns 20 years ago roughly 20,000 people lived there and if 10 per cent of those people went fishing each weekend that would mean that 2,000 were out on the reef fishing. There are now 200,000 people in Cairns. If 10 per cent of them go fishing every weekend, that means that 20,000 people would be out fishing the reef every weekend. The fish do not sit around thinking, 'We need to up our production because the human population has taken off.' The fish are doing what they have always done. We are increasing in number. It is incumbent upon us to put in place sensible and reasonable rules to ensure that the fisheries are protected into the future. I will not be supporting this disallowance motion.

 **Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (8.30 pm): This disallowance motion is just another example of the waste of time of this House indulged in by the LNP.

**Mr Hopper:** Tell the fishermen that!

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** I take the member for Condamine's interjection. I would like to know what he knows about fishing in any respect, because I do not think Condamine is real close to the ocean. The effect of this Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1) was a six-week closure from 15 February to 31 March of regulated waters for the taking of pearl perch, snapper and teraglin—that is, regulated waters of the east coast of Queensland and not the gulf. I ask those people who have stood up so far and ranted to outline the number of fish species which exist on the east coast of Queensland. This is three. The rant by the member for Condamine brought to mind the words of 'Banjo' Paterson in *The Geebung Polo Club*—

It was somewhere up the country, in a land of rock and scrub,  
That they formed an institution called the Geebung Polo Club.  
They were long and wiry natives from the rugged mountainside,  
And the horse was never saddled that the Geebungs couldn't ride—

**Mr HOPPER:** I rise to a point of order. This is a disallowance motion on fisheries. What has that got to do with *The Geebung Polo Club*?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Ryan): I am listening to the member for Keppel. There is no point of order. I call the member for Keppel.

**Mr HOOLIHAN:** Perhaps if the member for Condamine sat there and kept quiet, he would understand. 'Banjo' Paterson continues—

But their style of playing polo was irregular and rash—

They had mighty little science, but a mighty lot of dash ...

Well may we ask what polo clubs and fisheries regulations have in common. It appears that the motion is based on the 'mighty little science' part of the above words. I would question the member's dash. I am not sure where he dashes to. Perhaps the amount of science which the LNP relies on is about the same level as it seems to apply to climate change.

This House needs to consider that the commercial catch of this fish has halved in weight since 2005 but the recreational estimate almost doubled from the 2002 to the 2005 survey. This regulation was preceded by a review of the department's stock assessment by external independent scientists. Representatives from all sectors have worked in partnership to address the issue of snapper sustainability. A public issues paper was released in 2008 and public meetings were held across Queensland and development of a recovery strategy for snapper is a condition of export approval granted under the EPBC Act. An export approval relates to our commercial fishers. This closure was canvassed during consultations in 2008—it was actually canvassed as going from 15 February to 31 March—and extensive consultation has been undertaken about the status of the snapper stock based on proper science, not a whim.

Fisheries management is about getting the best ecological, social and economic outcomes, including managing risk by the minimisation of adverse impacts on the fishery and of unacceptable ecological impacts. The Fisheries Strategy 2009-2014 identified the preparation of a recreational fishing development plan in recognition of the values, both social and economic, which the fishing experience brings to our state. When people talk about the number of fishers, my electorate has both commercial and recreational fishers, with the Rosslyn Bay boat harbour having 20,000 private launches every year. In managing the recreational fishing sector to allow the recovery of snapper stocks, we also protect the commercial industry to allow the continuation of that valuable input into our state. As I said, I have both a commercial industry and a large number of recreational fishers. Anecdotally, and I believe scientifically, there has been an increase in fish numbers in my area resulting from the green and yellow zones created in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. I listened to what the member for Gladstone indicated when she said we should give it some time. Those green, yellow and different coloured zones have been in effect since 2004 and there has been an increase in fish numbers. Those green and yellow zones resulted from the application of scientific assessment of environmental needs.

One thing I would commend to the LNP—all this rot we hear about the Greens—is the platform of the Labor Party. The platform of the Labor Party contains a substantial environmental and ecological outline of what will be done. I cannot find anything on the LNP website. Regulation of fisheries is, along with other industries and recreational pursuits, increasingly based on risk management and the use of precautionary principles. I have not heard anyone even mention precautionary principle, but if they look in the Environmental Protection Act they will find that that is a starting point for environmental matters. Governments also understand the importance of sharing risk and responsibility for fisheries management with industry and the community. A shared understanding and shared responsibility is essential to take account of the long-term future of resources, including fisheries, and for responsive management decisions and investments.

The aim of fisheries management and development in Queensland is to maximise the value of fisheries resources for all Queenslanders by, among other strategies, managing fisheries resources in an ecologically sustainable way. Managing fisheries sustainably means getting the best long-term benefits from the resource while ensuring that activities are carried out in a way that does not exceed environmental limits. I fully support the commercial and recreational fishers in my electorate and I do not think that some members who have stood up to speak in this debate have ever spoken to those people. Rather, they will pick a small number of people and say, 'We've spoken to these people.' They are usually the ones who make the most noise. This regulation supports those long-term benefits and should not be disallowed by this House. I do not support this motion.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (8.37 pm): In speaking to the snapper disallowance motion, the introduction of the six-week ban on snapper fishing is another nail in the coffin of Queensland's once thriving fishing industry. This ban is without consultation or debate and comes at a time when fishing and tourism operators are struggling to get back on their feet after disastrous events. It is a kick in the guts to impose another ban that will force operators and tackle shops to lay off staff. Australia is a massive island surrounded by water with an abundance of fish and fishing is a fundamental part of our history and economy, and Queensland has a reputation as being one of the most popular recreational fishing

destinations. The bans are a futile exercise that are nothing but a self-serving political stunt to shore up support from the conservation movement while implementing a dodgy plan to slug boat owners \$90 to fish for snapper—a tax on fishing. The fishing industry has become so overregulated and underfunded that many fishers are questioning why they pay boat and trailer registration other than financing the government's bureaucratic policing of the industry.

People are saying that the industry is besieged by regulations and that many recreational fishers are gripped with fear when they see approaching marine park or DPI fishing vessels, simply because it has reached the point that you need to have a Master of Laws to know about the invisible zones, regulations and bans. Fishers from my electorate are telling me that it is hard enough for someone on the coast who fishes regularly to keep up with these new regulations. However, for westerners who may come to the coast occasionally, fishing with family has become all too confusing.

Fishers do not need any more regulations; they are asking for a proactive approach to the industry by responsibly utilising boat and trailer fees and putting aside this money for funding and the implementation of the already successfully proven artificial reefs or value-added fish-stocking programs. Fishers are crying out for more tidal access points with quality boat ramps, toilets, wash-down areas, security cameras and better parking facilities, all shrouded in a more common-sense approach to the whole industry. It is not worth the risk of destabilising the recovering fishing industry in Queensland with a ban that will not have an effect on fish stocks.

Typically, this snapper ban was imposed by this state Labor government without consultation with fishing bodies and with no scientific evidence to justify such a ban and contradiction. There is no conclusive data to justify how this ban will ultimately improve the environment. This ban must be lifted in order to allow proper consultation, research and debate to identify whether current fishing practices are, in fact, depleting fish stocks. It is only through proper research and consultation that efficient regulatory principles can be put in place, not draconian prohibition and unjustified fees all in the name of paying off debt and appeasing a non-productive minority group.

I call on the government to commit to a democratic process rather than the blatantly heavy-handed authoritarian tactics of a ban that has massive economic and social impacts. I proudly support this disallowance motion moved by the shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (8.41 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate on the disallowance motion moved by the shadow minister for primary industries and fisheries. The previous fisheries minister had carriage of a telephone survey of about 900 people who were disturbed at dinner. Yes, these people were trying to enjoy their dinner and the phone rang. They were all thinking to themselves that a carpet sales or roof restoration telemarketer was on the blower. After all, it was a bit early for the lotto guy to be ringing. But who it was it? It was Tim Mulherin being channelled down the phone by a survey taker. Yes, Tim wanted to know a few things about snapper. All the punters wanted to do was get back to their dinner.

I suspect the questions would have gone along these lines: 'Do you go fishing?' Some would have said yes; some would have said no. 'Do you catch snapper?' would have been another question. Again, some would have said yes; others would have said no. 'Where do you catch the snapper?' The fishers would have answered, 'Here and there.' The cross-examination would have continued, 'How many snapper do you catch?' Some would have said, 'A few here, a few more there.' In the end, the minister said to himself, 'That's good enough for me. Let's introduce a ban on snapper fishing, and if it doesn't work we will charge them a fee.'

In all seriousness, there it was: a dodgy phone survey. But we need decisions based on sound science and not on Labor deals to try to win Greens support in marginal Moreton Bay and coastal seats. While I am talking about the Greens and their position on all of this, I want to quote a member of the Greens. On 27 July, four weeks before the federal election, the Greens candidate for Moreton, Elissa Jenkins, posted a media release on the Queensland Greens website—[www.qld.greens.org.au](http://www.qld.greens.org.au). I ask members to go and have a look at it. It is a fabulous media release. Elissa was beside herself regarding marine parks and the spectre of overfishing.

Do members know what the Greens candidate and politically aligned with those opposite Elissa Jenkins used as the basis for her argument for overfishing? In her media release Elissa Jenkins states—

Anyone's who's seen the animated children's film Happy Feet would know that overfishing is the biggest threat facing our fishing and tourism industries.

That was it. It is truly magnificent stuff. In mounting the argument regarding her claim that overfishing occurred in places like Mackay and Moreton Bay, Elissa Jenkins used the pinnacle of forensic and scientific data, an animated children's movie, as a matter of fact. It is a bit like Tim Mulherin's phone survey. The ban extends from 15 February until 31 March. The DPI website states—

During this time snapper, pearl perch or teraglin cannot be taken by recreational, charter and commercial fishers and should not be targetted.

If a snapper, pearl perch or teraglin is inadvertently caught it should be immediately returned to the water with care.

This is where it gets tricky. I am advised that pearl perch and teraglin are deepwater species and, once dragged from the bottom to the surface, suffer internal injuries and often do not recover. That means they are dead.

We will challenge the new minister to do what is right by scrapping this ban and allowing a debate and the full scientific facts to be presented for public scrutiny. If that does not work, there is another message for the new minister: recreational fishing is the most popular sporting pastime across the globe. What am I hearing from these fishers? 'I love to fish. But I love to vote better.'

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (8.45 pm): I rise to speak to this disallowance motion moved by my colleague the member for Condamine, Ray Hopper. Hervey Bay is known for its great fishing experience. The frustration in the Hervey Bay fishing community can be explained by the way in which the snapper ban was introduced. It was introduced without proper consultation and scientific research. That is typical of the Labor machine appeasing the Greens. There was barely no public consultation—just imposed closures and bans.

The then minister for fisheries, Mr Mulherin, said that he had proven that snapper stocks in Queensland were reduced by 35 per cent of their unfished levels. But had he proved that? If the minister had the scientific research to back that up, it may be believable. I have spoken to the recreational and commercial fishermen on the Fraser Coast. It is hard to explain this garbage, especially when there has been no published, reliable catch data for the Fraser Coast region since 2005 for the commercial harvest and 2002 for the recreational take.

So what is going on here? What is the basis of this decision? An independent review of the minister's claims shows that there was insufficient research carried out to make the statements that he has made. The minister failed to mention that, out of the 2003 management review, strategies were already in place to reduce the snapper recreational bag limit to five per person and also to increase the minimum size of the snapper to 35 centimetres. That strategy allowed the snapper to spawn for two years before it was taken.

To say that snapper is overfished paints both recreational and commercial fishermen in a bad light. That statement is clearly not backed up by scientific evidence. It is beyond belief that the government should make such claims. To add insult to injury, the fishers in Hervey Bay are suffering—all because of the rip-off of fishing licences. This government is gouging money from our fishing industry. My electorate and its wonderful fishing industry cannot afford this, especially some of the pensioners who go out fishing. This ban has absolutely nothing to do with sustainable fishing management. I believe that if we are going to put a ban on snapper we should put a ban on when they are spawning, not when they are not.

I am totally opposed to any further closures, lockups or bans that are not fully supported by independent scientific facts. I would like to thank my colleague Ray Hopper for standing up and defending both the commercial and the recreational Fraser Coast fishing industry.

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (8.48 pm): I rise tonight to oppose this disallowance motion and I do so because it is based on nothing more than irresponsible scaremongering and misleading statements from those opposite. When I entered this House, there were many things that I came in to achieve and one of them would have to be sustainability in all its forms. One of my favourite authors is Jared Diamond. He recently wrote a book called *Collapse*. It is one of the books that I recommend those opposite take a chance to read. In that book Jared Diamond writes about the Australian mining industry. He says that there is nothing wrong with fishing, that there is nothing wrong with exploiting renewable resources such as forests, fish and topsoil and that those resources can be exploited indefinitely provided that one removes them at a rate less than the rate at which they regenerate. However, if one exploits forests, fish or topsoil at rates exceeding their renewable rates, they will eventually be depleted to extinction.

Unfortunately, Australia, and indeed Queensland, has been and still is mining its renewable resources as if they were mined minerals—that is, they are being overexploited at rates faster than their renewable rates, with the result that they are declining. At present rates, Australia's forests and fisheries will disappear long before its coal and iron reserves, which is ironic in view of the fact that the former are renewable but the latter are not.

Australia, unfortunately, has a history of marine overfishing—mining one stock until it is depleted to uneconomically low levels, then discovering a new fishery and switching to it until it, too, collapses within a short time, just like a gold rush. For example, Australia's largest freshwater fish species is the Murray cod, which grows up to three feet long and is confined to the Murray-Darling river system. It is good eating, highly valued and formerly so abundant that it used to be caught and shipped to markets by the truckload. Now the Murray cod fishery has been closed because of the decline and collapse of the catch. Among the causes of that collapse is the overharvesting of a slow-growing fish species.

We talk about regulating businesses and there is a need to do that because the imperative for businesses, particularly those in the fishing market, commercial fishers, is to make money to the extent that government regulations, laws and public attitudes permit. And then, of course, we have recreational fishing. There is a conflict of interest in this. There is a particular form of this clash of interest that has become well known under the name 'tragedy of the commons'—not the tragedy of those opposite, but the 'tragedy of the commons'. Consumers are harvesting a communally owned resource such as fish, the attitude being, 'If I don't take it, someone else will.' The rational behaviour is then to harvest before the next consumer can, even though the eventual result may be the destruction of the commons and thus harm for all consumers.

So how do you prevent this tragedy of the commons from occurring? One obvious solution is for the government to enforce laws and bring in regulation for the common and long-term good. That is exactly what this government is doing. However, misleading statements from those opposite, such as the member for Maroochydore, would have people think that we have banned fishing totally, not just one of 62 stocks. A person can go fishing; nothing is stopping them from doing so. However, for a period of six weeks they cannot take snapper because there is evidence that it is being overfished. To be honest with members, this time I am on the snapper's side. Let us give them a go. I do not believe in a free rein for a few years—go for it and let us see what happens. I am on the side of the snapper for six weeks and I make no bones about it.

But let us put some facts on the table and not the misleading statements. The government has no fixed position other than the need to ensure that snapper is fished sustainably. The regulatory impact study is a consultation document only. It outlines four variable options to achieve long-term sustainability and it welcomes further options to achieve that long-term sustainability. It is based on fish stock assessments conducted in 2006-07. There is no definitive science. The assessments can be done for 10 years and we will never get the definitive science. We have to act accordingly and responsibly, and that is what we are doing.

The stock assessments have been reviewed by independent experts on three occasions and all have agreed the methods used were appropriate and have broadly agreed with the conclusions. Like I said, we are not banning fishing. A person can go and catch any other fish, except one of 62 stocks. That is what this is all about. Those opposite are being misleading by saying that the whole industry is going to collapse when just one stock is being banned, not every other fish.

There is a six-week ban to take snapper. It has started and I support it. There is also a ban on the taking of those fish that go around with snapper. I believe that includes pearl perch, which is one of the favourite eating fish of the member for Gladstone. Pearl perch is probably there because of the regulations that have been in place over the years. Had they not been in place the member for Gladstone would not be enjoying pearl perch today. It is an interim closure. Let me state categorically once again that it does not stop people fishing, only from taking snapper. Any snapper caught incidentally needs to be returned to the water. Anything else the other side says is misleading and not correct. Whether the interim closures continue in the future will be decided as part of long-term arrangements. That is what sensible governments do. That is what governments that care for the environment do. That is what governments that wish to ensure sustainability do.

I share the concern of the member for Chatsworth about the introduction of fees. I think it is something that the minister is taking on board and I too add my support for that consideration. I categorically will not support this disallowance motion. I believe that it is a sensible step in the right direction and I support the minister in what he is trying to achieve.

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (8.55 pm): I rise to support the disallowance motion. This ban has adversely affected and really upset many recreational and commercial fishers in the Burnett. There is unprecedented anger in my community over these snapper bans. Quite honestly, I have never seen fishermen so upset. I fear for the wellbeing of government officers whose job it is to enforce this unjust law. People know that it is not based on science. People know that this is just a political bribe to the ever high-taxing green communists.

I congratulate the shadow minister, but it must be acknowledged that the LNP stumbled on this issue as well. There was a period of 24 hours when the ban was announced and the LNP, when asked if it would reverse this ban, equivocated. I acknowledge that the shadow minister spread his unique brand of yeeha in the party room. There was 24 hours when no-one from the LNP was coming out saying that they would overturn this ban. I acknowledge that the shadow minister spread his brand of yeeha mainly amongst the ex-Liberals of the LNP who are a little bit scared of the Greens. Congratulations to the ex-National member, the shadow minister. I heard him commit to overturning the ban on radio 4BC, because I was lined up straight after to smack him over the you-know-what if he did not. Just for the record, I invite following LNP speakers to commit to overturning this ban in this place should they be in power. Certainly, as a conservative Independent, if I were ever in the position of deciding in a hung parliament if this ban was lifted, I would vote, as I vote tonight, unequivocally in the affirmative.

The fact that this government has a six-week ban on fishing for snapper is further proof that the high-taxing green communists control Labor. We have seen it federally where the Prime Minister is pandering to and doing the bidding of the high-taxing green communists—the followers of the kooky cult of carbon who believe that they can stop the world's climate from changing by charging more Queensland pensioners, farmers, Indigenous peoples, workers and small business owners more tax and giving it to politicians in Canberra. That is a fair enough proposition, is it not. We can stop the world's climate from changing just by paying more tax to politicians in Canberra!

**Mr Cripps:** Save the fish, pay more tax!

**Mr MESSENGER:** That is right. I take the interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. I only have a short amount of time but in that very short amount of time I want to reiterate that I have never seen that much anger in my community over these unfair bans. These bans were made on kooky science. They were based, as other members have said, on telephone calls to fishermen to find out how many snapper they were catching.

The member for Keppel mentioned fish in the green zone. The science around the bans did not take into account the build-up of fish stocks in the green zones. They completely ignored that and I know that because I asked the scientists. Where is the science there? Once again, gone are the days when a bloke could take his kids down to the jetty to throw in a line, because we have Green political bribes for the high-taxing green communists.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (8.59 pm): Tonight I rise to speak to the motion to disallow subordinate legislation No. 354, Fisheries Amendment Regulation (No. 1). I point out to the previous speaker that tonight we are proposing that this regulation be thrown out and this ban be stopped immediately. We cannot get any clearer than that. I applaud the member for Burnett for his support and I acknowledge the shadow minister for moving the motion, which I am very pleased to support.

Victoria Point and Redland Bay in my electorate are avenues through which most fishermen depart for the southern part of Moreton Bay. I am a paddler and I paddle around Coochiemudlo Island occasionally. I get to talk to a lot of fishermen down at the boat ramp. I talk to families who launch their boats so that they can wet a line on the weekend. I get a chance to meet the commercial fishermen who have been out overnight or through the early hours to dawn and have come in with their catch. I also get a chance to talk to the people who wander along the foreshore to wet a line such as grandparents, grandchildren, mums and dads. No matter how many of those people I talk to, I find that they are all very conservation minded. They are all very passionate about preserving the lifestyle and the environment that we enjoy down in the Redlands. However, what Labor does to fisherpeople is not conservation; it is payback. There is no science. There is no research. When did a phone survey become a substitute for research and scientific data? When did it become a basis for decision making? I have never known such a thing to be used. It is such a random kind of operation.

The bay is home to a number of fishing clubs such as the Redland Bay Amateur Fishing Club and a group of fellows who call themselves the Ramp Rats. They were all in attendance at the rally held at Victoria Point one week night. Coincidentally, it was Valentine's Day, yet mums and dads and couples were there. I knew they were going to get into a world of hurt when they got home because they were out on Valentine's Day night; however, 100 or more people turned out. I did not count them, but it was in excess of 100. When you talk to those people you find out that they are very conservation minded. They give you logic, reason and a sense of how these things should be done. In no way does that reflect what Labor has been doing. They are completely at odds.

Earlier I heard the member for Pumicestone insist that Labor had invented the consultation process, yet I can tell the House that those fishermen have not been consulted with. They have been told that the fishing ban is on. There was no consultation whatsoever. Perhaps all of the meetings and the rallies that have been held are meant to pass for consultation, but that is not what consultation is about. Consultation is about being upfront and asking your community to guide your mindset, to guide your thinking and to move you to good policy positions. Of course, that is then backed up with science and research.

At the rally I attended, the officers were trying to defend a decision that is nothing short of a Greens deal. They could not defend the government's position. They had no real science. They had fuzzy science, or warm and cuddly science, but it was not real science. While you are never going to get 100 per cent science, in this case the fishermen would like 20 or 30 per cent science. However, even that was non-existent.

I spoke to a fisherman named Brian from Gatton. He is an Energex worker. He loves fishing. He reckons he gets out about 10 times a year and he is a mad keen fisherman. He goes right out to the deep water, fishing for snapper. He said, 'If you go out there and drop your line, you do not know what you are going to get until you bring it to the top.' That is where the lack of science around this whole regulation lets it down.

As we heard from the member for Buderim, when you drop a line you have no idea what is down there. It is not until you bring the fish to the surface that you know whether you have a meal or something you have to throw away. You cannot pick and choose what gets onto your line. That is why this whole thing is ludicrous. There is a knock-on effect. No-one will want to catch a snapper because of the ban so they will not drop a line, full stop. It is as simple as that. To think there is no knock-on effect within the industry for the retailers, the fuel suppliers, the boat industry and the bait and tackle shops is nothing short of a complete joke. There is no science here; there is no wisdom.

Brian is quite passionate, as fishermen can be. He was quite colourful and assertive in the way that he made his argument. He leaves Gatton at two o'clock in the morning to get a couple of miles out to sea to get amongst the snapper. If you are not there at dusk or dawn, you are not in the hunt. That shows how seriously those guys take it. They want consultation and science. They do not want phone polls. They do not want Greens deals. They want proper science and they will back it. Fishermen are conservation minded. They do not mind the bag limits and they do not mind the size limits. They will work within those regulations.

Another ludicrous thing that Brian pointed out to me is that right now—today—you can go down to New South Wales and buy yourself a fishing licence. You can launch your boat from Southport and head out about 20 miles, where you actually cross into New South Wales waters. Out there you can pull in 10 snapper. That is the limit in New South Wales. Our limit is five but in New South Wales it is 10. You can catch yourself 10 snapper, and guess what? Not only can you catch more snapper in New South Wales waters; you can catch smaller ones. In New South Wales you can catch 30-centimetre snapper, whereas in Queensland the regulation states that they must be 35 centimetres. That is where things are going awry. There are opportunities to marry up our legislation with that of our southern cousins. That is where you can start to see some real impact.

Not for one minute should we think that Labor has a stakehold on wisdom, because clearly it has no wisdom on this. It has had a knee-jerk reaction as a result of its desire to remain in power. The only way they can do that is through a Greens deal. That is it, plain and simple. Between the green zones, the yellow zones, the closures and the six-week ban, things are becoming ludicrous. Fishing is about families. Around Victoria Point I see families out fishing. We need research and science, not guesstimation or phone polls. It is none of that. We need real wisdom and consultation. We need the big C—the thing Labor allegedly invented. Perhaps they invented it but, a bit like the first version of the wheel, it did not work real well. I do not believe Labor has consultation down pat yet. They might claim to own it, but clearly they have not done it.

What happens at the end of the six-week ban? How will we know whether anything has been achieved? How will we know anything has been done? There is no baseline data. There is nothing to measure it on. There is nothing to say that we have made it better or that there has been a step forward or an improvement. What is needed is science, research and consultation—not phone polls, not guesstimates, not Greens preference deals and not Labor spin.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! I call the member for Clayfield for two minutes.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (9.09 pm): There can be few more popular pastimes in Queensland than recreational fishing. There are few industries in Queensland that produce something as iconic as our famed fresh seafood. There are few tourism operations as popular and valuable as charter fishing. There are few governments anywhere in the world as hell-bent on destroying these three proud Queensland activities as this long-term Labor government. That is why we are moving this motion tonight to get rid of this regulation.

Other speakers have been through all the detail of the reasons why this is wrong, why the science is shonky and wonky, why the actions that have been taken from Mackay to Southport have indicated every time that there is no support amongst the fishing industry for this particular ban, why people are concerned that this is just the thin end of the wedge, why this is just the beginning of what we will see: a tax on fishing, a snapper tax in Queensland. The truth is that this Labor government never saw a tax they could not impose, a fee they could not levy, a charge they could not raise and a piece of red tape they could not impose on the poor people of Queensland. They are doing it again and this is just the thin end of the wedge.

This regulation stinks like a slimy mackerel rotting in the moonlight. That is the reason why this regulation should be sent away so that the poor people of Queensland who are burdened with this Labor government do not have taken away from them one of the simple pastimes and pleasures that has been available to them since time immemorial. Tom Burns would turn in his grave if he knew that his party was abandoning the working people of Queensland in this way. That is what this long-term, lazy Labor government is doing. This regulation should be overturned. It is bad news for Queenslanders.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (9.11 pm): I thank the minister for allowing me the chance to speak for one minute. However, the minister knows that I will not be supporting the government's position. I will be supporting the opposition in this disallowance motion. I cannot believe that the Liberal National Party believe the Greens have so much influence with the government. The Greens do not need to have a candidate in this parliament. The opposition is blaming the Greens for everything that this government has done. The opposition should be saying that it is the Labor government of Queensland that is opposing this disallowance motion. It is jolly well not the Greens. They do not have a candidate in the state election. I think it is high time we give credit to the party that is introducing this ban, and that is the Labor Party. The government should be held accountable for that.

As some opposition members and Independents on the crossbenches have said, we are talking about deep water fish. Once they come out of the water, you cannot throw them back because they will die. Thank you, Minister, for allowing me to put my comments on the record.

**Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure) (9.12 pm): I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his comments. I will be consulting with him further in due course. Of course, the government will be opposing the opposition's motion tonight. Indeed, during my first two weeks as fisheries minister I have been out talking to the fishing industry from recreational fishers to commercial and charter operators. Of particular concern to all have been matters relating to the regulatory impact statement on the rocky reef finfish fishery. All agreed that we need to look after our snapper numbers for current and future generations of Queenslanders.

The government issued the RIS as a consultation document with four options outlined and no preferred option indicated precisely because we were seeking feedback from the fishing community. That is why the government has sent Fisheries Queensland officials to public meetings to discuss these options. To date, 900 people have attended these meetings.

Many in our fishing community do not believe that a fee should be charged for a recreational permit to fish for snapper. Many in the fishing community also do not support fishery closures. This is particularly the case for those whose business and, hence, livelihood depends on fishing such as the charter industry and bait and tackle stores. I have listened to those concerns. Tonight I can announce to the House that the government will not go ahead with a proposal in the RIS to charge recreational fishers a fee for catching snapper.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr WALLACE:** I take those interjections, especially from those honourable members who spoke in the debate tonight. They know that this will be welcomed across the sector.

Recreational fishers have expressed strong concerns about this proposal, and it will not proceed. Indeed, excessive focus on this one issue has perverted wider discussion about managing Queensland's snapper fishery effectively, and that is a real pity. It has dominated the agenda and nothing else has really had a look-in. This government has heard what the fishing community is saying and we have listened.

We will continue to conduct consultation about the best way to protect the snapper fishery in Queensland, but it will be without a fee for a fishing permit. The end result of our consultation may be a combination of the remaining proposals in the regulatory impact statement or it may be none of these proposals. Whatever it is, it must be a plan that is acceptable to our fishing community.

I also want to announce tonight that I will personally be overseeing consultation on the RIS. I am aware that the consultation process has generated much concern. As fisheries minister, I intend to take a hands-on role with further public consultation. I will meet with all the people affected and try to get some common ground. Indeed, just this afternoon I met again with the Chairman of Sunfish, Dr Barry Pollack, regarding this matter.

The temporary ban placed on recreational fishers catching snapper will run to the end of this month as planned. A six-week closure was recommended by a stakeholder networking group as part of a package of measures, which appears as option 1 of the RIS. The government has decided to implement this closure separately in order to take early action to protect the stock. I stress that this closure is an interim measure only and it will be in place until we can finalise appropriate management arrangements. It has been a difficult issue and it has also substantially raised the temperature within the fishing industry. Many recreational fishers object to this temporary ban on snapper. However, they have genuinely cooperated with the temporary ban, and I thank them for it. This is a tribute to our recreational fishers and their genuine desire to find the best way to manage the snapper fishery.

The one thing that I have heard in my consultation with recreational fishers, charter fishers, commercial fishers and members in this place over the past two weeks is that people want our snapper fishery to continue. People want it to continue so they can go and catch a fish, so that their children can catch a fish and so that their grandchildren can catch a fish, and I am committed to that approach. I want to assure people that I am listening to all comments and that all options will be considered. I make special mention of the member for Nicklin. I invite him to come and have a chat with me and tell me what he is thinking, tell me what his fishers are thinking. I say the same to the member for Gladstone, who gave a considered speech tonight. Come and have a chat.

**Mr Johnson:** That is the only way you will find out. You don't know.

**Mr WALLACE:** And the member for Gregory. Come and have a chat with me, as he regularly does, and I appreciate that approach.

**Mr Wellington:** I will bring a delegation from Mooloolaba, Minister.

**Mr WALLACE:** I will take any delegation. The member for Nicklin should come and have a chat. He should know that he will always get an ear from me. I reiterate that the government has no preferred option. The proposals I will take back to cabinet will be based on the feedback I receive from the community and the advice we receive—

**Mr O'Brien:** Will you take Clayfield fishing?

**Mr WALLACE:** If the member for Clayfield wants to go fishing with me, if he deems himself fit to go fishing with me, I would love to. The proposals that I will take to cabinet will be based on feedback I receive from the community and the advice we receive from our professionals and fisheries managers.

I was very pleased to be appointed fisheries minister. As a proud North Queenslander, I grew up fishing and crabbing. Both my grandfather and my great-grandfather before me were very keen fishers supporting their families through the craft. I hope to pass on enjoyment of the outdoors and fishing to my children.

I have a passionate commitment to our natural environment, and Fisheries and I would like to help ensure that our magnificent resources are enjoyed by many generations of Queenslanders to come. It is an ideal that I think we all share in this place, and that was enlivened tonight in this debate. I do not think anyone in this place wants to see our snapper stocks eroded to such an extent that they, their children and generations to come cannot catch a fish.

Queensland's fish stocks are in a relatively healthy position. We have some of the world's most well-managed, sustainable fisheries. Why is that so? It is because for the last 20 years the Queensland government has closely monitored our fish stocks and has acted when necessary to protect those stocks. That is something of which I and everyone on this side of the government is very proud.

In 2006 and again in 2008 Fisheries Queensland and the government received detailed stock assessments of snapper. These stock assessments are based on sophisticated data and modelling techniques. Indeed, Queensland has some of the most reliable data on recreational catches.

I would like to now address some of the issues raised by members opposite. Over the years the government has implemented a range of measures to try to protect the snapper stock. This action is not something new. Since 1957 it has been recognised that the snapper fishery has been under some pressure. What are some of those changes that we have seen? A minimum size for snapper was introduced in 1957 at 11 inches. It was taken to 30 centimetres in 1993 and 35 centimetres in 2003. As with other fisheries, commercial fishing licence numbers were limited in 1984, and recreational fishers were restricted from selling surplus fish in 1990. An in-possession limit, the so-called bag limit, of 30 was introduced in 1993 and reduced to five fish per person in 2003.

So we can see that since 1957 there has been a recognition that our snapper fishery has been under some pressure and successive governments have taken action to ensure that this fish has been protected. The stock assessments captured the effect of these measures. Models show that these management measures have helped. Without them the fishery would be in much greater trouble.

As I have said, the regulatory impact statement outlines four broad options for the future management of the fishery. I have ruled out one of those options tonight. The final outcome might be a combination of the remaining options or it might be a completely new option drawn from our continuing consultation. As we consider these options, we will be applying a number of principles. I have already discussed the principle of sustainability, of making sure that future generations can enjoy fishing and enjoy local seafood as much as people do today. But we must also ensure fair access for all—for recreational, charter and commercial sectors.

To conclude, the government is listening to feedback from the fishing community on the long-term management arrangements. I stress that nothing is set in stone at the moment. The end result may be a combination of proposals contained in the RIS or may be some other proposal. I want to reiterate that I will personally take over the consultation process, as I have done for the last fortnight. I will be giving these issues my top priority and my close and personal attention. From what I have seen, the industry—indeed everyone in this place—is keen to get a resolution to these difficult but crucial issues. Again, I oppose this motion from the opposition.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

**AYES, 38**—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Rickuss, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Horan, Sorensen

**NOES, 45**—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Male, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Darling

Resolved in the negative.

## ADJOURNMENT



**Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.32 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### TransLink, Fares



**Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (9.33 pm): I rise to address an issue that has been of tremendous concern to the commuting public and one that has generated considerable media attention in recent weeks. I refer to the inflexible fare structure that has accompanied this Labor government's introduction of the go card. Brisbane's public transport ranks among the most expensive in the world. We are now paying more than commuters in New York, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Los Angeles and Tokyo, and the hikes are set to continue until 2014. The Bligh government will more than double go card fares in just five years. Just when Queenslanders are facing escalating cost of living pressures, this government has slapped commuters with fare increases running at more than five times CPI. As it stands, only in London will commuters pay more for a single adult fare, yet their smart card—the Oyster card—still offers capped fare options.

This was an issue generating considerable concern amongst commuters before I was appointed shadow minister for public transport. In the last couple of months I have been actively listening to public transport users who feel they are being steamrolled by this government. They want to see a discernible improvement in service provision. They expect reliability and comfort. They demand value for their dollar. With congestion increasing on our roads, it is important that we aim to have a public transport system that not only encourages more commuters but also ensures that those who currently use public transport continue to do so.

In October 2009 the government announced that it would be increasing TransLink fares with a view to reducing the subsidy per trip from 75 per cent to 70 per cent. The reality is that this was a manoeuvre glossed over with Labor government rhetoric for months prior to its implementation. Shortly after the 15 per cent increase was implemented following the devastation of the January floods, the government stated that the fare increases would help build and restore the public transport network. The fare increases were never intended as revenue raising for flood recovery, given that they had been mapped out a considerable time before.

Devastating circumstances were being manipulated for political gain at a time when Queenslanders needed compassion and assistance from their government. In question time this morning the minister failed to outline how the federal government's carbon tax would further impact on fares. Commuters are wanting improved frequency of services, more effective timetabling and extended operating hours to justify the fare increases and make public transport a workable option for them.

The Leader of the Opposition and the LNP understand the importance of public transport. We understand that, above all, when Queenslanders are struggling with increased power bills and increased water bills they do not need another burden of increased public transport fares—increased fares created by Labor ineptness. We will make delivering flexible public transport which delivers real value for commuters a real priority.

### International Women's Day; BPW Caboolture

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.36 pm): As all members of this House are aware, today, 8 March 2011, is the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Over 100 years ago, women attending the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen agreed that a day of celebration—a women's day—should be held on the same day every year in every country around the world to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women and to call on governments to do more to further the status of women around the world.

In recent times the celebration of International Women's Day has spread around the world and is now even an official holiday in some countries including, among others, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Russia and Zambia. In some other countries it has become a tradition for men to honour the special women in their lives with small gifts like flowers or chocolates. I hope all honourable gentlemen of this House have today sent chocolates to the special women in their lives.

Despite the progress that has been made in respect of women's equality and status, including our nation's proud moment of electing our first ever female Prime Minister last year, there is clear evidence that, even in our country, women in some industries are not paid the same as their male counterparts, that women are not represented in equal numbers in business and politics and that globally access to education and health services and protection from violence is worse for women than for men.

As someone who is interested in the courage of political leadership, I take this opportunity to acknowledge my mother, who, as a young woman employed by the then Landsborough city council, was the first woman to take maternity leave rather than be forced to resign, as was the usual expectation at that time. She was one of the few people to participate in industrial action in the early 1980s for better pay for council employees, especially female council employees. I pay tribute to all women today on International Women's Day.

Tonight in Caboolture, the Business and Professional Women club of Caboolture is holding their annual candle-lighting ceremony. This ceremony is held every year on the same day by every BPW club in the world. Obviously, due to parliamentary commitments I was unable to attend the BPW Caboolture candle-lighting ceremony tonight. Nonetheless, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Robyn Lachmund, club president Kimberly James and all the BPW Caboolture ladies in organising this year's candle-lighting ceremony. I know that a lot of work goes into organising these ceremonies. So from Parliament House, I say thank you and well done to BPW Caboolture for their contribution to International Women's Day and to the advancement of the status of women in our region, our nation and our world.

### Gold Coast, Public Transport

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (9.39 pm): Residents continue to tell me there is a lack of east-west transport on the Gold Coast. So why has the government ignored western Gold Coast residents and proposed to build light rail beginning at Parklands and terminating at Broadbeach? Residents of Gaven have been completely excluded, with no heavy rail link at either Nerang or Helensvale. Is the reason that they live in the most beautiful part of Australia? It is also one of the fastest growth corridors in Australia. Does TransLink know this?

Light rail is slow, dangerous and an unacceptable risk to the safety of tourists and residents alike. I table the following three documents: (1) a document stating that light rail has twice as many fatalities as comparable bus travel; (2) the most recent review of light rail having three times the fatality rate of urban vehicles per kilometre rate of travel; and, (3) details of the fatalities of a 25-year survey in the USA, which is a most authoritative article on the issue.

*Tabled paper:* Document by John Semmens, Arizona Transportation Research Center, titled 'Transit's Safety Challenges' [\[4018\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Extract from webpage titled 'Sound Transit Design for Link Initial Segment Light Rail Expected to Cause Eight Fatalities in Ten Years of Operation' [\[4019\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Extract from webpage titled 'Summary of MAX Fatalities' [\[4020\]](#).

It is not too late for common sense to prevail here. We need busways like Brisbane has. We do not want anyone being killed unnecessarily on non-gated on-grade light rail crossings. Light rail on the Gold Coast in its current state will be neither rapid nor mass transit nor safe. Interestingly enough, the surveys with regard to the users need to be studied in close detail after what has happened in Brisbane with regard to tunnels. Further punches from the government have hit consumers in the cost of paper tickets, which are 30 per cent higher than go cards, and, worse still, the government has just abolished daily travel and return tickets. The Gold Coast has had the most expensive public transport in Australia. Rail fares have gone up by 15 per cent and in some cases by up to 75 per cent, with an annual ticket previously costing \$2,340 but now costing \$4,000.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported today that over 3,000 Gold Coasters lost their jobs in January this year, but we are still being hit with higher transport charges and 15-year-old east-west bus routes largely across the Gold Coast. To clear up all of this mess, the government has implemented mobile customer service officers at our railway stations which is a fancy term for on-the-ground Brisbane spin doctors. It has been reported that these doctors frequently seek advice from experienced local station staff when faced with a query requiring local knowledge.

We do not need a flawed strategy being imposed upon us, but we ought to have an inquiry into TransLink on the total costs of the ticketing system and why this has resulted in inflated costs to the end consumer. Commuters are so desperate for change that they are boycotting the trains on Thursday, 17 March, literally in just under two weeks time. They are calling for three main changes: (1) bring back periodic tickets, and that is the six- and 12-month tickets; (2) introduce a rolling discount system; and, (3) introduce off-peak fares for travel prior to 7 am. Minister, expect a few phone calls on 17 March 2011 because commuters are not happy, and I am with them!

### International Women's Day

 **Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (9.42 pm): Today we, like millions of people throughout the world, celebrate the achievements of women and the historic 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. The day acknowledges the great advances that have been made by women, and in Queensland it is quite significant. We have the first female Premier and the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce, is a Queensland woman. Women make up 49 per cent of our elected ALP parliamentary representatives and women throughout Australia are making giant leaps forward. But in reflecting on our great achievements over the last 100 years, it is still painfully evident that participation by women is sadly wanting. Political empowerment for women and engagement at all levels of decision making leaves a lot to be desired, just as protection and security for women and children and prosecution of acts of gender based violence persists at unacceptable levels. Economic and financial support of women is so necessary to break gender inequality and yet it is not prioritised.

Children and young people, women living in rural and regional communities, Indigenous women and pregnant women are the ones at risk and the cost borne by these groups, as well as the cost to government, is immeasurable. Of course this is not specific only to Queensland or Australia but is a problem worldwide. This week in Townsville International Women's Day is a week long event, with various activities being held each day. The week opened with an International Women's Day breakfast on Monday morning with Unity Dow as our guest speaker. The struggles for equality and justice in Botswana are another example of modern conflict and political transition, and this once again brings me back to participation. In Botswana it is nonexistent due to political and ethnic tensions. But as in Botswana, we in Australia need to achieve real political transformation by not continually excluding women from the decision-making process.

Today affirmative action was again a subject of conjecture on the airwaves. The abysmal number of women on boards was discussed using that tired old merit based argument—people are selected for board positions based on merit, not gender. Oh, please! I implore women to join a political party as a first step in having a say. Whilst I suggest joining a political party with policies and ideals closest to one's own, be warned: 49 per cent of ALP members in the Queensland parliament are women while it is only 15 per cent in the LNP, and it is worse in the federal parliament with no female members represented in the National Party and only 20 per cent in the Liberal Party. What a clear case of gender inequality in winnable seats. Yes, the belief that women are best left to scone making and standing by their man is very much alive and well on the conservative side of politics. On International Women's Day 2011 I urge women to join a political party to have a voice. And please, keep chipping away for those board positions. We need and must have this balance.

### Mudgeeraba Electorate, Springbrook

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (9.45 pm): Tonight I rise in support of residents in Springbrook who have been misled on the demolition of properties obtained by the government in the \$40 million buy-up of land and homes in Springbrook. This week saw tragedy strike at the heart of Springbrook history and heritage as one of 13 properties earmarked for demolition was destroyed by dozers. 'Kanimbla' was one of the oldest homes in Springbrook and, although the minister stated on local radio there were no homes older than 30 years on the mountain, local historian Graham Hardy knows better. Graham is 80 years of age and his family were one of the founding families to settle Springbrook in 1904. He remembers playing at 'Kanimbla' when he was seven, so, if my math is correct, the home is at least 73 years old. The Minister for Environment makes statements that she knows to be false and does this with the express intent to deceive residents in Springbrook and continues habitually on her merry way to make such statements in order to give a false impression of the truth.

Time after time I have asked the minister one simple question: tell us the addresses of the properties to be demolished. Nowhere in print or in *Hansard* has the minister ever answered this question. This week the Bligh government descended on the mountain with its dozers and wrecking balls and no amount of embellishment designed to elude, evade and falsify the facts can alter the truth that this question had never been answered. The minister's spin doctors falsely advised local television that the minister 'had extensive community consultation and has personally met with members of the local community'. Minister, one meeting with four locals is not extensive and one meeting with the demolition company which refused to tell residents the addresses of properties is also not extensive.

The minister's principal media advisor also emailed local news media that the minister had had a 'face-to-face meeting with the local MP'. If that is the case, Minister, tell me the date, time and place of this meeting and when it occurred. This government has concocted, deceived, distorted, duped, misled and misrepresented the truth in its quest to continue the facade of delusion with such magnificent hyperbole and subterfuge, all designed to stall and trick the residents of Springbrook about what is really occurring on their mountain and whom this government continues to defraud with absolute deception.

To add insult to injury, the minister tried to attribute her own words to me in a blatant swindle of epic proportions. In an attempt to cast aspersions on my integrity, the minister's staff in an email to a local news reporter stated that I had spruiked the benefits of secret demolitions. The quote 'Salvageable items will be sold at a weekly market to be held while the works are being carried out,' actually comes word for word from the minister's own press release, which I now table, and which were incorrectly attributed to me in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on 7 February, a copy of which I also table.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland government media statement, dated 4 February 2011, titled 'Removal of structures the next step in Springbrook National Park expansion' [4021].

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 7 February 2011, titled 'Recycle sell-up begins' [4022].

The minister also stated the company that was awarded the contract—

... have a proven capacity ... as well as undertaking work to highest environmental and workplace health and safety standards.

Can the minister confirm that the equipment trucked up the mountain was transported by the same company that damaged a heritage listed bridge and guard rails on its way up to the mountain to smash 100 years of Springbrook culture?

*Tabled paper:* Photographs of a bridge [4023].

I table photographs of the damaged bridge. The ambiguity and the duplicity perpetrated on the residents of Springbrook are nothing short of grandiose, and to continue concealing and circumventing the truth from residents is a slap in the face to over 100 years of history that is Springbrook. Springbrook is more than trees, Minister, and it is more than Aila Keto. It is people too.

### Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal, Multicultural Community

 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.48 pm): I rise to speak in appreciation of many of the multicultural communities in Brisbane for the work they have done to raise substantial funds for the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal. These funds go directly to families and households who have been flood affected in Queensland.

On 12 February I attended the Taiwan New Year's celebration at MacGregor State School at Sunnybank. I congratulate Anthony Lee, president of the Taiwan Friendship Association, for organising this successful event. The proceeds from this event were also to go to the appeal. On 10 February at Parliament House the Royal Brisbane Institute of Technology held a graduation ceremony for their students from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. At the end of the ceremony they presented me with a cheque for \$5,000 from teachers and staff at the academy towards the Premier's Disaster Relief Appeal. A number of weeks ago Nick Dmyterko, president of ethnic radio station 4EB, contacted me to say that, along with their national networks, they had pledges from their listeners for donations of up to \$87,000 towards the disaster relief fund. They hope to present the final amount of donated funds to the Premier in the next few weeks to assist financially in the relief effort.

On Saturday night 26 February I attended a fundraiser at the Marymac Community Centre at Annerley which was organised by the Sri Lankan community in Brisbane to financially assist Queenslanders to get back on their feet again after the January floods. Considering that Sri Lanka was also recovering from a massive flood, with over 100,000 people displaced, I was taken aback by their thoughtfulness, selflessness and generosity. Some of the greatest cricket players in the modern era have come from Sri Lanka and one of them, Muttiah Muralitharan, is regarded by many as the greatest bowler of all time. For the fundraising event's auction he donated a signed ball, and there were two bats signed by members of the Sri Lankan squad.

These items were highly sought after on the night. These are wonderful contributions and I would like to say on behalf of all Queenslanders how fantastic it is that floods and a cyclone in a faraway place should be thought of by these great athletes. The Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka, Anton Swan, and Nimal De Silva and his family and many other Sri Lankan Australians passionately worked hard behind the scenes to put together this function. Thousands of dollars have been raised towards this great cause for their new homeland and the people who have been so badly affected by the disasters.

On Saturday evening 6 March the Queensland multicultural council held the Shoulder to Shoulder fundraising event at the Queensland Police Academy at Oxley. Many cultural groups in Brisbane belong to this council. It is very moving and gratifying to see the overwhelmingly positive response to appeals for help for those victims, especially since that response has come from just about every multicultural group in the state and beyond. So far more than \$230 million has been raised. We remember those who died and those who suffered so much, but we will recover and restructure our economy and our society. Support like this from our multicultural communities makes the task so much easier.

*(Time expired)*

### **Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum, Long Tan Display**

 **Mr FOLEY** (Maryborough—Ind) (9.51 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a very significant event that is happening tomorrow in Maryborough which celebrates the heroism of Long Tan. There will be 1,000 people, including top military brass. Keith Payne, who is a Victoria Cross recipient, will also be present, along with the most recent awardee who, compared to Keith Payne, is a newbie. But we have all heard of VC Corporal Benjamin Roberts-Smith, who has just been awarded the Victoria Cross. There will also be 31 of the Long Tan veterans at the function, with wives as well as the next of kin of the soldiers who have passed away. The Star of Gallantry is being presented to Vietnam veteran Harry Smith, who will be the VIP guest. That is something that people in my area, including Paul Neville, one of the federal members for my area, has been pushing for for a long time. The battle of Long Tan took place on 18 August 1966. The Star of Gallantry is Australia's second highest military award and the highest award ever presented in the Fraser Coast area.

The opening of the Long Tan display that the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum has dedicated to the veterans of Long Tan will also take place. The museum has on display three of the four Imperial awards given for the battle of Long Tan. The battle of Long Tan occurred on 18 August 1966, and a local artist has painted a magnificent 2.4-metre by 1.2-metre painting from a photo of the memorial service held at Long Tan on 18 August 1969 which now hangs in the museum. I had the distinct pleasure of seeing that painting last week. John Meyers is a legend in my community. He established the museum, as he is a great believer in supporting military history. He sees this museum as some way to repay those who have fought for our country. I invite all honourable members to attend my area and have a look at the Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum, because it is just absolutely fantastic.

The Fraser Coast Regional Council is also holding a morning tea tomorrow and the Maryborough RSL is holding a dinner tonight for the veterans. It is just fantastic. That dinner is actually going on as we speak here. The Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum is all about expecting the unexpected—the unusual, the quirky and the eclectic—among 4,000 items of military and colonial memorabilia which form displays of exceptional quality. When I was there the other day I saw this fantastic, very old Harley. The museum provides a testament to not only those heroes who fought in distant lands to ensure our way of life and prosperity but also those courageous and determined people who pioneered and progressed the Maryborough area for almost two centuries. Again, I invite all honourable members to get up and see that fantastic museum and honour the veterans as soon as they can.

### **Natural Disasters, Recovery Assistance**

 **Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (9.54 pm): The Gold Coast is one of the areas in Queensland that was not affected by the recent floods or cyclones. It should mean that we would be grateful—and we are—but I have noticed an air of what I might call guilt: people apologising for enjoying their holidays, for being safe in their homes, for not being able to help out our fellow citizens whose homes had been flooded or washed away. To overcome their feelings, Gold Coasters quickly swung into action and volunteered to help. Innovation is what we do best on the Gold Coast and my office was inundated with people offering to help. Everyone I spoke to wanted to do something.

When the member for Broadwater suggested that I might seek donations for school stationery, I thought it would be a way to offer people a way to feel useful. I could never have imagined the outcome. The response was overwhelming: hundreds of backpacks, lunch boxes, drink bottles, diaries, exercise books, pencils, pens, dictionaries. You name it, we had it. Children came with donations and notes of encouragement to other children in schools far away. Elderly constituents added school stationery to their shopping list—many telling me how they enjoyed buying items they had not had need of for many,

many years. Local businesses took up collections among their staff. The car park outside my office became as busy as a shopping centre with people dropping off donations, most without leaving their names, indicating that they were glad that they could do something useful.

Early one morning I was surprised to see a truck pull up in the car park and its driver start unloading boxes onto his trolley, which he then wheeled in to my office. It was the first of three deliveries from the Stationery Warehouse at Tweed Heads—a great company with a big heart and wonderful staff. Kerin and Matt from Storage King Miami donated as many boxes as I needed to pack the goods received. The ladies Probus Club of Mermaid Beach passed the hat around at their meeting and bought stationery. Ladies from St John's Anglican Church and the Uniting Church of Burleigh Heads were on our doorstep with goods.

It is often difficult enough for parents at the start of a school year, but organising school supplies following a disaster such as this must have been unimaginable. The fact that we could ease that burden makes me incredibly proud of my fellow Gold Coasters. Our first collection was sent off for the children of the Lockyer Valley. A week later we had another 100 boxes of goods and these were sent to the Ipswich area for distribution. In addition to these efforts many Gold Coasters organised fundraisers and travelled to Brisbane, the Lockyer Valley and beyond to help with the clean-up. Businesses contributed goods, services and staff to the effort and we all worked tirelessly to get our state back on track.

The passion with which people joined together was an inspiration and a reminder that in our darkest hours it is ordinary people who walk out front with a lantern and seek the path forward. I have never been more proud of my electorate, my city or my state.

### Queensland Country Credit Union

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.57 pm): How vulnerable are the vulnerable people in our community? A recent situation brought to my notice by Brian Hildebrandt of Bowen has left me extremely concerned. Mr Hildebrandt has been acting on behalf of a man who was previously a coalminer but who now has an acquired brain injury, with intellectual and physical disability and who suffers severe epilepsy as a result of a motorcycle accident. He is on a disability pension, cannot hold a driver's licence and rides a pushbike.

This man had a dream of owning a boat and to that end approached the Queensland Country Credit Union to gain a loan to attain this boat. In 2008 he was granted a \$65,000 loan to buy a 45-foot sailing ketch which is not even seaworthy. The bank has taken a mortgage over his only asset—a small, very shabby home that he owns—and he is left to try to meet payments for this loan from a disability pension. This man cannot live on the boat because of his severe epilepsy. In fact, after one seizure he fell in the water unconscious and his life was saved only because of the quick actions of another boat owner. In fact, while in the bank negotiating the loan he suffered a seizure and the bank staff called an ambulance and he was admitted to hospital.

The boat is uninsured because he cannot afford to pay for it and, despite Mr Hildebrandt's efforts, seems to be unsaleable because it is unseaworthy. Documentation from the man's doctor states—

This gentleman has a very complicated and severe form of epilepsy which is associated with a psychiatric condition ... I do believe that it is my opinion that he was certainly mentally unstable to make any financial decision or any major lifestyle decisions ... Thus I write this letter of grave concern of this gentleman's mental capacity to understand and carry out any financial dealings of major life changes.

The seriousness of the situation has now become evident to this gentleman who I am told has become extremely depressed and even suicidal. He faces the loss of his dream, a monthly repayment that he cannot possibly meet, the probability that he could lose his house and any independence that he has ever had. It would appear that this vulnerable man has been preyed upon by not only the previous owner of the boat but by the bank. Perhaps staff granted his request in good faith, but how, I ask, can a person on a disability pension of \$658 per fortnight service a loan of \$65,000? I question whether this is within the lending guidelines of any banking facility. Queensland Country Credit Union had granted him a six-month amnesty from payments while quite a lot of discussion was going on, but that has now expired and it is now requesting interest-only payments of \$420 per month forever. He will no doubt be required to make such repayments for the rest of his life. This man is only 49 years old. How cruel can this be? In a heartfelt letter his mother sent me she believes that—

*(Time expired)*

### Whites Hill State College; Camp Hill State School

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (10.00 pm): I rise to speak about the great work being done by two schools in my electorate, namely Whites Hill State College and Camp Hill State School. First of all I would like to commend the principal of Whites Hill State College, Karl Shrubsole, for an innovative joint venture he has formed with the local Rotary Club of Carindale and an organisation known as the Green Infrastructure Network Australia. The school is working to provide learning outcomes based around sustainability and has recently had a donation from the Rotary Club and the Green Infrastructure

Network of an aquaponics unit which will be set up in the middle school to further educate the children of the school about sustainability. Whites Hill State College is a P-12 school. It has 'grubby gardeners' starting off in the prep and year 1 area. They then move on to the aquaponics set-up in the middle school. The aim is to develop this further, right up into the senior school heading towards developing some urban agriculture on the school grounds. I congratulate them on that great innovation.

I would also like to talk about the Camp Hill State School and in particular the great work done there by the principal Debbie Driver and also the special education unit at the school. The special education unit at Camp Hill is renowned throughout the area. In fact, I have recently been approached by a number of parents who have moved from other suburbs across Brisbane specifically to live in the catchment area of the Camp Hill State School simply because of the fantastic support provided there by the special education unit.

I want to read from an email I have recently received from a parent about the Camp Hill State School—

The work done at Camp Hill has been incredibly beneficial for my son and I know for the other children of that school. In a lot of ways this school should be used as a beacon for the assistance of the children. We have seen tremendous gains as a result of the efforts of the staff.

They go on to say that this school should be used as a template for other schools. Another parent has written to me saying that her son was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and since receiving assistance from the Camp Hill SEU her son is much happier and progressing well. He receives assistance from the special education teacher to ensure he understands his academic requirements and the support he receives has reduced the stress for both her son and their family.

The member for Greenslopes, the member for Bulimba and I would like to pass on our congratulations in regard to the fantastic work done by the special education staff at Camp Hill State School.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.03 pm.

## ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Farmer, Finn, Flegg, Foley, Fraser, Gibson, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hobbs, Hoolihan, Hopper, Horan, Jarratt, Johnson, Johnstone, Jones, Keech, Kiernan, Kilburn, Knuth, Langbroek, Lawlor, Lucas, McArdle, McLindon, Male, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson