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THURSDAY, 4 AUGUST 2011



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Report on the Register of Members' Interests

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I table the 24th report on the Register of Members' Interests.

Tabled paper: Twenty-Fourth Report on the Register of Members' Interests [\[4992\]](#).

Smith, Mr A



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have some sad news. I advise you of the tragic passing of a young volunteer from the Queensland parliament's recent Mackay regional sitting. As members are aware, during that regional sitting we asked for and received student volunteers from the Central Queensland University who assisted the parliamentary staff in conducting the successful student visit program. As you all know, more than 2,500 students visited the regional sitting. The educational program was only possible because of 55 local volunteers, including the very capable assistance of Adrian Smith, a Central Queensland University education student. Unfortunately, I have recently been advised that Adrian at just 17 years of age was tragically killed in a car accident on 12 July on his way to work at his former school St Patrick's College in Mackay where he was employed part time in the information technology section. I know that the thoughts of all honourable members, particularly the local member, Ted Malone, the member for Mirani, will be with Adrian's family. The member's family knows the family very well and I know our thoughts and our prayers will go out to Adrian's parents, Allan and Sharon, and his brother, Jake. On behalf of the House, I offer them our sincere condolences.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

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

Kawana Way, Speed Limit

Mr Bleijie, from 210 petitioners, requesting the House to consider reducing the speed limit from 80 km/h to 60 km/h on the section of Kawana Way between the roundabouts at Brightwater Boulevard and Jamaica Way, Parrearra to provide a safer entrance/exit point to the Island Point Villas [\[4993\]](#).

Ardentallen Road-Lloyd Street, Enoggera

Ms Jones, a paper and an petition, from 93 petitioners in total, requesting the House to temporarily close the T-intersection of Ardentallen Road and Lloyd Street, Enoggera until the construction work at Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera is completed in 2014, at which time the re-opening of the street could be considered after local consultation [\[4994\]](#) [\[4995\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

Public Transport, Non-Designated Stops

Mr McLindon, from 59 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate the definition of roads which require designated pick-up and drop-off points and the introduction of flashing lights which require both sides of traffic to stop when a bus is making a pick-up or drop-off in a non-designated stop [\[4996\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MEMBERS' PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Nanango (Mrs Pratt)—

[4997](#) Non-conforming petition regarding the preservation of the heritage listed Acland Number 2 Colliery, the Tom Doherty Park, the Acland War Memorial and key attributes of the Acland town site

Member for Gympie (Mr Gibson)—

[4998](#) Non-conforming petition, from 467 petitioners, requesting the size and weight of trucks that are able to use the Kin Kin Pomona Road and Dr Pages Road be restricted until an urgent assessment of the impact of B-double trucks on the roads and safety is completed and any and all necessary upgrades are performed

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gibbs, Hon. IJ

Mr SPEAKER: I know we have taken this out of order this morning. We are now moving onto matters of condolence. I would ask all honourable members to respect the motion that is about to be before the House.

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.35 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Hon. Ivan James Gibbs, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland and Minister of the Crown.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Ivan James Gibbs was born in Whittlesea, Victoria, on 22 November 1927. He was educated at the Whittlesea Public School and The Southport School on Queensland's Gold Coast. Following his schooling, Mr Gibbs became involved in the automotive spare parts and wrecking business and started his own business in this field on the Gold Coast. As someone who grew up on the Gold Coast, I grew up with the name Ivan Gibbs as a very familiar household name. In 1967 Mr Gibbs was elected as an alderman on the Gold Coast City Council and he served two terms on that council from 1967 to 1970 and from 1973 to 1976. During his second term on the council he was also the deputy mayor. He was a very active councillor at a time when the Gold Coast was expanding very rapidly, and anybody who was around in those days will know that Ivan Gibbs was a name you heard on the radio as always having an idea and always out there as part of the public debate of the time—sometimes on the controversial side of those debates but never fearful of being in the public arena.

At the 1972 state election Mr Gibbs contested the seat of Albert. However, his first bid was unsuccessful. Not to be deterred, he again contested the seat of Albert at the 1974 state election and on this occasion his bid for election to this place proved to be successful. Mr Gibbs was then to go on to represent the electorate of Albert until the state election of December 1989 when he was defeated by the ALP's candidate as part of the election which ended the conservative's unbroken 32-year rule in Queensland. During his time in this parliament Mr Gibbs served as a minister of the Crown for more than 10 years. He held a variety of ministries in the Bjelke-Petersen, Ahern and Cooper governments. He served as Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation, Minister for Mines and Energy, Minister for Works and Housing, and Minister for Works, Housing and Industry. He was also Minister for Transport and Minister for Health and he also served as the Attorney-General of Queensland.

He was also someone who took an interest in the national affairs of our country and the affairs of our region. During his time in the parliament, Mr Gibbs was a delegate to the Australian Constitutional Convention in 1978 and a member of a parliamentary delegation to the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Japan and South-East Asia in 1979 and was the leader of a parliamentary delegation to Japan and Korea in 1984. Apart from his service as a council and parliamentary representative, Mr Gibbs was also an active member of numerous community organisations. He was a member of the Lions Club, including as president of the Southport Lions Club, founder and chairman of the Labrador Senior Citizens Centre, chairman of the Red Shield committee and at various times was patron of numerous sporting and community organisations in Labrador and Beenleigh.

As I have noted, I grew up on the Gold Coast and Ivan Gibbs was a very well-known name on the coast; I cannot claim though to have known him personally. I did want to note one time though when I particularly noticed Mr Gibbs and his devotion to his family. The 1989 election, as many will recall, was a red-hot election and there was a lot of controversy surrounding it in the lead-up to it.

Many people at the time were advertising in ways different from sometimes the way their party had chosen. I recall Ivan Gibbs taking out very large advertisements in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* with a picture of himself and his wife. I apologise if I have the wording slightly wrong but my recollection was that the headline was something to the effect of 'Behind every great man is a Doris'. It really struck me that that was a very personal way of saying a very public thankyou to someone who had obviously shared his public life and to recognise her in a way that is rarely done in politics. That was more than 20 years ago, so it was also obviously a catchy headline. I want to recognise Doris and Ivan's family and to send them our deepest sympathies on their loss.

Ivan James Gibbs passed away peacefully on 19 May this year and a service to celebrate and remember his life was held at St Peter's Anglican Church, Southport on 27 May. I want to place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that Mr Gibbs gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Gibbs's family and his friends.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.40 am): I rise to speak in support of the condolence motion for Mr Ivan Gibbs, a member of this parliament from 1974 to 1989 and a cabinet minister for 10 years. Ivan Gibbs ran a successful auto wrecking business in his earlier days. He was a

Gold Coast councillor for two terms, including as deputy mayor, and won the seat of Albert for the National Party in 1974. For many years the electorate of Albert was one of Australia's fastest growing areas—something that its local member at the time was very proud of. Ivan Gibbs was born in Whittlesea, Victoria, in 1927. His parents, John and Ethel, ran a post office and store. As the Premier indicated, Ivan married Doris and the couple moved to Queensland in 1956, starting a truck and car wrecking business. Eventually, it was very successful.

The success of the business, his strong community links and church links led Ivan to run for local government. He served two terms on the Gold Coast City Council from 1967 to 1970 and from 1973 to 1976, when he served as the deputy mayor. But it was in this House, in this parliament, that Ivan Gibbs made his real mark and his real contribution to the community of Queensland. His diligence, his hard work and his good nature saw him rise quickly through the political ranks and his appointment as Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation in 1979 was the beginning of a long ministerial career. He was a cabinet minister for 10 years, mostly under Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen, but later under Premier Mike Ahern. He was, as I have said, initially Minister for Culture, National Parks and Recreation. He then served as Minister for Mines and Energy, Minister for Works and Housing, then Minister for Works, Housing and Industry, and then Minister for Transport, Minister for Health and also Attorney-General. It was a long list of very important portfolios over a 10-year ministerial career. But in my mind at least, and in the minds of many in regional Queensland, Ivan Gibbs's ministerial career is most remembered for the years that he spent as Minister for Mines and Energy. He played an important role in the development of the resources industry through so much of Queensland that still contributes so much today to the economy of Queensland and to the wellbeing of every Queenslanders.

Ivan Gibbs was also integral in the push to abolish death duties in Queensland—a move that led to a huge influx of retirees and investment from the southern states, a move that helped build the Gold Coast into Australia's sixth largest city. Although Ivan and Doris Gibbs enjoyed business and political success, their lives were also hit by tragedy, including the road death of their teenage son as well as some other setbacks. But through this time they were helped by their strong Anglican faith and their many loyal and supportive friends.

Ivan Gibbs was regarded universally as a gentleman and a person who made a strong contribution to this state. As a minister of the Crown for 10 years in government, that contribution can never be fully encapsulated and put into words. I was a young member of what was then the National Party of Queensland and I respected and admired Ivan Gibbs for all of the years that I knew him. He died at the Pindara Hospice on 19 May after a decade-long battle with cancer. His funeral, held at the Southport Anglican Church, was very well attended. I know that all LNP members join with me in passing on our deepest sympathies to Doris Gibbs and her family and to all the relatives and friends of Ivan Gibbs. The contribution that he made to this parliament and to the state of Queensland will be long remembered.

 **Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (9.44 am): As the member for Albert, I am pleased to speak in support of the Premier's condolence motion for the Hon. Ivan James Gibbs, who was the member for Albert and a minister of the Crown from 1974 to 1989. When my husband and I bought our first home in Beenleigh in 1980, Ivan Gibbs was well known as the local National Party member who had helped plan and build two of Queensland's iconic community services, the Beenleigh Senior Citizens Centre and the Beenleigh PCYC. But it was more than two decades later—in 2001—when I became the member for Albert that I had the opportunity to personally meet Ivan and his lovely wife, Doris, and I acknowledge Doris and her family in the public gallery today.

Not surprisingly, the location of our first meeting and all subsequent meetings was Ivan's beloved Coomera Anglican College, of which he was the founder. Our one and only discussion about politics was during that first meeting. I remember that Ivan was very keen to clarify the facts about his final days as a minister in the Bjelke-Petersen government and to particularly note that all charges against him had been dropped. I sensed that he was deeply saddened by the Liberal Party's decision to direct preferences away from him and to give them to Labor in the December 1989 election—a decision that saw Ivan lose and the Labor candidate, John Szczerbanik, elected. Yet despite that, he held no grudges whatsoever towards those who had made that decision. It was, in fact, his courage in handling defeat from such a blow from those who had formerly been his coalition partners that earned him the respect of friends and foe alike.

After they have left politics many members look forward to a sea change—moving away from their electorates, taking up new interests and enjoying a well deserved slower pace of life. But not Ivan. For a man who had left state politics more than a decade earlier, whenever I met Ivan he was genuinely interested in all that was happening in what he called his Albert. I will always remember and appreciate the courtesy and kindness he showed to me as a brand-new member of parliament and in encouraging me to continue to deliver state government infrastructure for the growing area.

In their retirement, many people dream about making their community a better place. Ivan turned his vision for an Anglican college on the northern Gold Coast into a reality. Fourteen years later, with an active board and the insightful and committed leadership of its foundation principal, Dr Mark Sly, Coomera Anglican College has grown to surpass even Ivan's dream for educational excellence.

Richard Nixon once said—

You must never be satisfied with success and you should never be discouraged by failure. Failure can be sad. But the greatest sadness is not to try and fail, but to fail to try.

Ivan Gibbs in every sense of the word was a trier and a doer. In the very long list of his parliamentary and community achievements, I feel that it is especially at Coomera Anglican College that he leaves his greatest legacy. The only sadness is that, after 61 years of marriage, his wife, Doris, has lost her husband, partner and best friend. However, I know that Doris is strengthened in her time of loss by knowing that Ivan always recognised that his achievements, both publicly and privately, were also her achievements. I know she is also comforted by her wonderful children and their families, her friends and their faith and trust in knowing that Ivan is resting in peace now with his Lord and Saviour. On behalf of the people of Albert, I recognise Ivan Gibbs's dedication to his public service as the member for Albert, as a minister of the Crown and his great passion for service to the residents of Albert. In doing so, I send my sincere condolences to Doris and their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.48 am): Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Doris and her extended family, friends, and indeed also my darling wife, Pauline, who is here in support of Doris today. The Hon. Ivan James Gibbs was born on 22 November 1927 and passed away on 19 May 2011. He was born and bred in Whittlesea, Victoria, before moving to the Gold Coast in 1956 with his wife, Doris, and their two children at the time. Ivan and Doris were married for just one day short of 61 years on the day of his passing—a marriage that had been without doubt a near perfect one.

Ivan and Doris had five children: sons Chris, Paul, Andrew, Matthew and daughter Megan. Ivan's working life commenced with work on local farms after school at the age of 10, more for fun than money. He then took on a country mail run that he completed before school each morning and continued to do so after completing his schooling, having achieved a merit certificate at the age of 14. He also worked as a farm labourer in his early years and learned a great deal from those he worked for and with. He attributed much of his later success to listening to and learning from those he respected. His early work also saw him as a rabbit trapper, a farm hand, a drover, a horse trainer and even a jockey. Eventually Ivan followed family into the grocery and shopkeeping business.

Ivan's community involvement also started in those early days. True testament to the man was his involvement in the rural fire brigade and the encouragement of youth in the area through a training program with the National Fitness Council and hosted by the Whittlesea Rural Fire Brigade. Those early years in the rural fire brigade were an ideal training ground for the man who would one day become national parks minister in the Queensland government.

Ivan's commitment to his church, the Church of England, now the Anglican Church, was also forged in those early years in Whittlesea. When Ivan brought his family to the Gold Coast in 1956 he saw the opportunities in what was to become the sixth largest city in Australia. He is regarded as one of the pioneers who made that fact a reality. Shortly after arriving on the Gold Coast, Ivan developed his business interests, as well as becoming an alderman in the local council where he took on the role of health chairman and deputy mayor. In 1974 Ivan won the seat of Albert which at the time included Springwood in the north down to Southport. He spent 15 years in this place diligently representing the people of the seat of Albert, the last 10 as a minister of the Crown.

I remember fondly the times that our lives crossed in the early to mid 1980s when he as a busy minister took time out to visit Beenleigh Little Athletics and Beenleigh High School on the annual awards night to present the prestigious Ivan Gibbs award to the outstanding male and female athletes. I am proud to say that my son Michael was one of the recipients of the award on four of those occasions. Michael still has those awards in his home and we have a beautiful certificate on parchment that was given with the award.

Diligence and loyalty were the cornerstones of Ivan's life from when he was a young man in Whittlesea through his life in business, local government, state politics and all of the years that he continued to work in and for the community in his later years. Indeed, Ivan continued to guide local community groups as a mentor until just a few days before his passing. One of Ivan's many involvements was with the Coomera Anglican College. Ivan was chair of the college steering committee and the main driver for the school. The principal of Coomera Anglican College, Mark Sly, remembered at Ivan's memorial service his first meeting with Ivan regarding the new college. As he said on that day, what was immediately evident was Ivan's passion, belief and commitment in getting Coomera Anglican College up and running despite the odds. He had gathered a dedicated team around him and together they were absolutely determined to succeed. When listening to Ivan speak about his vision for the college, it was impossible not to be caught up in the excitement of it all. Mark went on to say that Ivan oozed passion, enthusiasm and great confidence and they became hallmark traits of those working with Ivan to establish and develop the college. He often said, 'There is no such thing as can't. With effort and persistence we can achieve anything.' Those words epitomise the man Ivan Gibbs.

In every aspect of his life, whether it be family, business, community, his church or just helping someone, his passion and enthusiasm were apparent. I can attest to his determination and commitment as witnessed by me in the way Ivan supported me in my quest to represent the people of the Coomera electorate in this place. His support for me and my family was a cornerstone of my campaign in 2009. His advice and wise counsel over the years were so important to me and I shall miss our chats over a cup of coffee. There is no doubt that Queensland is a much better place because he was here with quiet but dedicated commitment. His legacy lives on.

Ivan's funeral was held at St Peter's Anglican Church Southport, the parish where he and Doris have worshipped since their arrival in Queensland more than half a century ago. He leaves behind his beloved wife Doris, surviving children Chris, Paul, Andrew and Megan, daughters- and sons-in-law, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. The Hon. Ivan Gibbs, Queensland's quiet achiever, may he rest in peace.

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (9.54 am): In rising to speak to the condolence motion, I wish to speak of a gentleman whose achievements in community service were equal to those in his parliamentary and public service. Local businessman Ivan Gibbs lived in what is today part of my electorate. His contribution to the local community has benefits still felt to this very day, and not just in the Labrador area but throughout Queensland. Time does not permit me to canvass all of Ivan's achievements, but I would like to touch on just some of the lasting ones.

Three of his five children, Andrew, Matthew and Megan, were born at Southport Hospital. This began a connection with the area for Ivan and his wife Doris which eventuated in Ivan serving on the hospital board as council representative. As his children grew, Ivan joined the Labrador Kindergarten Association, soon becoming the chair of the building committee. From 1958 to 1961 as president Ivan began building a new kindergarten. Engaging local service clubs and every father he could find, Ivan set to work, explaining that they had land but no money and were planning to build a kindergarten with volunteer labour in one weekend. Ivan managed to secure eight creditors and convince local ANZ manager, Mr Carseldine, to agree to loan £2,000. On 21 November volunteer tradesmen, parents, members of Apex and the Jaycees, Mayor Ern Harley, and even Mr Carseldine from the bank, turned up and the 22-square Labrador kindergarten was built in one weekend. Labrador C&K continues to provide exceptional kindergarten services to this day. 'You don't go far clock watching,' Ivan apparently said, and by the 1970s he had another major project on the agenda. Requiring investment greater than that of any club, Lion Ivan formed the first Combined Services Club. Five thousand service hours later, the Labrador Senior Citizens Centre was built and operating. This first senior citizens centre became the model and was copied, eventuating in further centres being established at Coolangatta, Broadbeach, Townsville, Kingaroy, Toowoomba and Beenleigh.

In public life Ivan Gibbs was a councillor, an MP and a minister. In community life Ivan Gibbs was, amongst other things, the past president of the Labrador Kindergarten Association, chair of the coordinating committee for the Cooina Subnormal School fete and first vice president and president of Southport Lions Club. Ivan had an active association with the Labrador Boy Scouts and served on the Gold Coast AFL judiciary. As Ivan said, 'You don't go far clock watching.' In closing, on behalf of the Broadwater community I extend our collective condolences to Doris and her family for their loss. Ivan was a true gentleman, an active MP, a community worker and an adoring family man.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (9.57 am): Ivan Gibbs was a gentleman, a good businessman, a fine politician and will be sadly missed by his wife Doris, family and many, many friends. When I was first elected to state parliament Ivan was a senior minister. He took his job seriously, was competent and was someone you could turn to for advice, which I did regularly. His background as a businessman made him a valuable team member of the government during those years when Queensland was really developing.

Ivan had a great sense of humour. I will not forget the time we were in Barcaldine for the turning on of the power grid, or something similar. Just on dark, Ivan, as the minister responsible, was to push the button and turn the lights on. Well, he pushed the hell out of that button and no lights. They came on eventually to great applause and to Ivan's great relief. Another time he was given an instruction that he had to tidy up around his wrecking yard at the coast. So he made a slip of the tongue and said he was going to plant native fauna around the yard. Of course, he meant to say native flora. Well, the cartoon the next day in the paper had kangaroos buried upside down all around the yard with their legs sticking up in the air. He took it in great spirit with his trademark chuckle. Those who knew Ivan know that little chuckle. That was Ivan. Ivan Gibbs will be sadly missed but his contribution to this state will live on.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, in the presence of the late Ivan Gibbs's family, would you please show your respects.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, in accordance with sessional order No. 4, the order of business will now resume. Question time will commence at 10.30 am.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Crime and Misconduct Commission Report, Government Response

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.00 am): I am pleased to table the *Government response to the Crime and Misconduct Commission's report on an investigation into the alleged misuse of public moneys, and a former ministerial adviser*. I am pleased to advise the House that all of the proposals contained in the government response have been either completed or are in the process of being completed.

Tabled paper: Government response to the Crime and Misconduct Commission report on an investigation into the alleged misuse of public moneys, and a former ministerial adviser, August 2011 [[4999](#)].

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Monthly Report

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.00 am): When the Queensland Reconstruction Authority was established, I made a commitment to keep people updated on the rebuilding and reconstruction effort across our state. Therefore, I am pleased to table the fifth of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's monthly progress reports.

Tabled paper: Queensland Reconstruction Authority, Monthly Report, July 2011 [[5000](#)].

It is heartening to see that, while there are still many months of hard work ahead of us, we are well on our way to a full recovery and a more resilient Queensland. Since the last report, an extra 1,548 kilometres of the affected state road network has been made trafficable. As I have said before, permanent repairs will take many months yet. We want resilient roads and the work occurring at places like Cunningham's Gap, where some 985 soil nails are stabilising the road for the long-term, will achieve such resilience.

The monthly report shows that, in addition to the 411 schools that are all open, a total of 68 per cent of all government owned buildings and assets that were affected had all the necessary repairs completed by 30 June this year. Further, the report notes that there has been the payment of an additional \$478.8 million in grant advances to local government authorities, and state departments and agencies, while the number of Personal Hardship Assistance Scheme grants has risen by 500, bringing the total to over 65,000. The report also shows that in June eight more national parks re-opened, meaning that 247 of the state's 279 national parks are open to visitors. All the 84 sewerage schemes and 104 water schemes affected by the natural disasters are now operating at pre disaster capacity.

The devastated communities of Grantham and the Lockyer Valley are slowly getting back on their feet. The report records that construction continues apace, with some residents expecting to be in their homes by Christmas. The Join Forces program, which matches not-for-profit groups with corporate sponsors, received another 63 donations, including \$143,000 from IGA through its flood relief program—

Mr Lucas: Isn't there an IGA in Ashgrove?

Ms BLIGH: Apparently so—and another 14 vehicles from Nissan Australia. The generosity of those corporate sponsors is matched by the thousands of businesses and individuals who have contributed to the disaster relief fund. To date, the government has made payments totalling \$225.3 million of the \$274.7 million donated. A sum of \$215.3 million has been paid to more than 30,000 applicants, benefiting over 40,000 individuals.

In May, we announced \$10 million for St Vincent de Paul to distribute to people who may not meet the eligibility criteria for appeal funds or who are waiting on insurance payouts. The funding is available through St Vincent de Paul for flexible payments to households, individuals or families, who were directly impacted by the floods or cyclones. St Vincent de Paul has now allocated all of the \$10 million it received three months ago. Today I can advise that yesterday the appeal committee approved a further \$3 million in funding for St Vincent de Paul, to continue to deal with those very needy hardship cases.

In another sign that the recovery effort is streaking ahead, I am pleased to announce that Brisbane's CityCat and ferry network will be built back better with a winning design that will see commuters literally walking on water. After the floods, the Commonwealth and state governments allocated \$70 million to replace five CityCat and two city ferry terminals. We launched an international design competition and had an overwhelming response with 65 entrants. Three finalists were announced in early July and were then asked to submit a concept design to the selection panel, which included former and current government architects, Philip Follent and Malcolm Middleton, and a representative of the Brisbane City Council. Later today I will join the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, Wayne Swan, to reveal the winning design and to announce that the winner selected by the panel is the design by consortium Cox Rayner Architects, Derlot and Aurecon.

The winning scheme integrates the work of two design firms with a specialist marine engineering consultancy. It offers a highly innovative maritime approach that replaces the previous traditional fully piled structure with a floating pontoon structure tethered to a single upstream pier. Besides anchoring the pontoon, the single pier also protects it by deflecting any debris floating down the river away from the pontoon. The gangway that connects the floating pontoon to the riverbank pier will stabilise these pontoons so Brisbane commuters will be safely walking on water.

In the event of a flood, the gangway detaches from the riverbank pier and rotates around to be parallel and secured to the pontoon. This avoids any floating debris being trapped by the gangway, which would happen if left in its original position. This innovative but simple approach provides a highly flood-resistant solution. As I have said, it means that Brisbane commuters will be walking on water and it also means these new CityCat terminals will have much more than nine lives. The CityCat terminals are to be located at UQ, Regatta, North Quay, QUT and Sydney Street and the city ferry terminals are at Holman Street and River Plaza. The new terminals will be both beautiful and practical and they will become an iconic part of Brisbane life.

Building Certification Codes, Discussion Paper

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (10.07 am): This government is committed to modernising Queensland as our industries continue to advance. With five per cent economic growth expected this financial year and the Queensland government's \$10,000 building boost in full swing, the construction industry will soon start to see an increase in activity. An estimated 236,000 Queenslanders are employed in the construction industry in this state and it generated \$20 billion worth of benefits to our economy in the 2009-10 financial year. That is why we want to get building activity underway as quickly as possible, so we can see more workers on more projects sooner.

It is building certifiers who will assess, independently check and approve many of the projects expected to be delivered this financial year as business investment grows to \$24.7 billion. I am pleased to announce today that we are launching a one-month consultation into Queensland's building certification codes with a view to modernising them. While current codes have served us well since 1998, the building industry is constantly transforming and we need to ensure our laws respond to those changes. Building a property can be the most important transaction in many people's lives. That is why we need to make sure rules prevent any rogue elements from cutting corners to put personal profit ahead of proper certification.

The building certification in Queensland discussion paper, released today, outlines a range of measures proposed to improve the efficiency, transparency and reliability of the system. The changes under consideration are aimed at: making sure Queensland's buildings are compliant, while still being affordable; supporting and strengthening the building certifier's role; improving building certifiers' ability to perform their important role within the building system; ensuring that the building regulatory system is effective in deterring conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest or may not be in the public interest; and improving the enforcement of building regulations. The Department of Local Government and Planning will be conducting a range of stakeholder forums to ensure we can capture feedback from industry.

This government is committed to strengthening consumer and industry confidence in the building sector, because we know this will have significant benefits for our state as it enters a new phase of prosperity. Building certifiers have played a very important role in the construction industry and it is important they continue to do that. I table a copy of the discussion paper.

Tabled paper: Improving building certification in Queensland, Discussion paper, August 2011 [\[5001\]](#).

Suncorp Stadium

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (10.09 am): When the government proposed to redevelop the existing Lang Park Stadium to what is now known—and loved—as Suncorp Stadium, there were many who said it would be a disaster. For all the nay-sayers back then, there is now no contesting that Suncorp Stadium is a world-class venue. Crowd surveys have identified that up to 90 per cent of patrons travel to the stadium by public transport. The public transport services operate efficiently and effectively—as good as anywhere in the world.

Last year there were 40 sporting events at Suncorp Stadium, including 17 rugby league, 15 soccer and eight rugby union matches. Included in this total were two test matches, one State of Origin match, and one Asian Cup qualifier. In addition, there were three concerts. This year the current schedule features 42 possible events, including 19 rugby league, 12 soccer and 11 rugby matches. No major concerts are planned for this year. However, consideration is being given to the conduct of two performances of a Christmas pageant on a day in early December 2011.

As local residents know, whenever an event takes place—regardless of the final crowd number—parking restrictions are put in place to avoid patrons driving to the stadium and parking out local streets. Under the existing conditions approved by the government for the stadium, there is a maximum of 24 events with a crowd of 25,000 people or above. In practice, there is of course little difference between an event which draws a crowd of 24,500 and a crowd of 25,500. For instance, the parking scheme will be operational for both games.

In 2010, of the 43 events there were 23 events which exceeded a crowd of 25,000 people. This year so far, 19 events have exceeded a crowd of 25,000 people. Because of the extraordinary success this year of the Queensland Roar, the Queensland Reds and the Brisbane Broncos, it is likely that the already scheduled games could be capped at 25,000 people without a change to the existing conditions. Should the Broncos make the finals, for instance—and they should and will—then we would risk losing the right to host a home semi-final by having to tell the NRL that we would artificially cap a crowd to 25,000.

Commencing in October, the seven games that the Roar has scheduled for the start of its season will similarly be capped at less than half the actual capacity of the stadium. The Minister for Sport has approached me on behalf of Stadiums Queensland to consider raising this limit. It is my view, both as the local member and as the Minister for State Development, that we should revisit the original condition. Suncorp Stadium is a world-class venue and we should utilise it.

The government, therefore, announces that it is proposing to bring forward legislation to lift the current limit. Local residents will be consulted about the proposed change to ensure that their concerns and any local impacts are properly incorporated into a changed limit. To avoid the possibility of foregoing a home NRL semifinal, this legislation will need to be passed through the parliament in early September.

There are some local residents who do not enjoy living close to the stadium. For some, it does impact on the quiet enjoyment of their homes. Many others—the vast majority in my view—consider it not only part and parcel of living in the vibrancy of the inner-city but, in fact, a plus. Some local businesses are inconvenienced by traffic management plans and parking restrictions, while others very definitely enjoy the huge uplift of activity on a game day.

Of course, Suncorp Stadium does have more events than Lang Park hosted. However, I well remember, as do many others in my electorate, that events at the old Lang Park had a much larger impact on the local community. Streets were parked out and traffic gridlock ensued whenever a crowd was at Lang Park. These days, the traffic and public transport system ensures the stadium operates with minimal impact on the local community.

A separate requirement restricts music concerts to three nights a year, with one religious event also permitted. Most major bands look to have two consecutive nights on a concert tour, given the costs of constructing sets. As the local MP, I am also prepared to consider supporting allowing concerts to be held for four nights a year to cater for the possibility that two global acts would be on tour in the one calendar year.

It is the government's intention to bring forward legislation at the next sitting to deal with this matter ahead of the possibility of hitting the event ceiling. In all these matters, a balance must be struck. It is my view that we can ensure the balance between the impact on the local community and the desirability of utilising Suncorp Stadium—a world-class venue—for the benefit of the broader community can be struck.

Gold Coast, Police Resources

 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.13 am): I rise to update the House on initiatives implemented by the Queensland Police Service to enhance policing and community safety on the Gold Coast. As honourable members would be aware, there has been a recent spate of serious crime on the coast including the tragic death of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding. I thank the members for Southport, Broadwater, Albert and Burleigh for keeping me informed of the community's very genuine concerns about these issues. The government and the Police Service share and understand the community's concerns about these recent developments.

Of the 203 additional police positions funded by the government in 2010-11, the Police Commissioner allocated a total of 45 of the positions—almost one-quarter—to the South East Police Region, including 22 to the Gold Coast. The Police Commissioner also established Task Force Resolve, a group of 18 detectives who are working with local detectives on solving serious and violent crime on the Gold Coast. Since it was established on 6 June, Task Force Resolve has arrested 14 people on a total of 62 charges.

Locally, the Police Service also recently actioned Task Force Apollo, a proactive four-week high-visibility policing initiative in the Coomera district utilising resources from State Crime Operations Command, Public Safety Response Team, State Traffic Support Branch, Railway Squad, Mounted Unit, Coomera District Traffic Branch, Gold Coast District Traffic Branch and the Gold Coast District LEAPS unit. Apollo resulted in a total of 136 charges being laid as well as 540 street checks being conducted, more than 2,000 random breath tests administered and close to 200 visits to licensed premises.

The Police Service has now also established Operation Seymour, a 50-officer, month-long blitz on crime and antisocial behaviour from Beenleigh to the Queensland-New South Wales border. The operation started on Saturday night and has already resulted in the arrest of 126 individuals on a total of 211 charges—an impressive result. These arrests are over and above the work of local police officers from the Gold Coast and Coomera district. When combined with Task Force Resolve, there have been 423 people arrested on a total of 605 charges over this period.

Operation Seymour is about providing a highly visible policing presence on the coast as a way to deter crime and antisocial behaviour in the area. The government is giving the Police Service the support and resources it needs to fight crime in Queensland wherever it occurs. I commend the efforts of local uniformed officers and detectives on the Gold Coast as well as the officers who make up Task Force Resolve and Operation Seymour in responding to community concerns about local crime. They are all working hard and getting results for the people of the Gold Coast.

Non-Government Organisations, Pay Equity

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (10.16 am): Tomorrow the Commonwealth government is due to sign industrial regulations that will strengthen pay equity for 316 Queensland non-government organisations. The Queensland government has actively supported pay equity in wages for community service workers, a traditionally female dominated industry with a legacy of pay inequity.

Our government's support was demonstrated in 2009-10 when the Bligh government provided a prompt and significant funding boost of \$414 million to non-government organisations to help them respond to wage increases that resulted from the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission pay equity case. To date, we have provided over \$165 million in supplementing funding as a result of the pay equity case, with \$124 million to be paid in 2011-12 and \$125 million recurrently from 2012-13.

The regulations are the result of a heads of agreement negotiated between the Commonwealth government and the Australian Services Union in 2009. Queensland was not a party to the heads of agreement. However, the Queensland government is mindful that organisations will need practical assistance to assess their obligations under the Commonwealth regulations. Therefore, today I announce that we are providing \$313,000 in funding to the Queensland Council of Social Services to work with the National Disability Services and others to provide advice and support for organisations as well as tools and technical advice on an organisation-by-organisation basis and provide information seminars for effective organisations across the state on their obligations.

While not a party to the heads of agreement, the Queensland government has worked cooperatively with the Australian Services Union and Australian Workers Union to negotiate for the back pay requirement in the regulations to be staggered. These negotiations have resulted in the back pay obligation now being met over a period of three years. This will ease the back pay burden on these 316 organisations and allow them to better plan how payment obligations will be met.

The Bligh government has a proven record in supporting pay equity in the community services sector. In contrast, services in other jurisdictions like Victoria are not getting the backing they need from their state government.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Membership

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.19 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That the Member for Callide (Mr Seeney) be discharged from the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee and the Member for Buderim (Mr Dickson) be appointed to the Committee;
- (2) That the Member for Clayfield (Mr Nicholls) be discharged from the Finance and Administration Committee and the Member for Coomera (Mr Crandon) be appointed to the Committee;
- (3) That the Member for Buderim (Mr Dickson) be discharged from the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee and the Member for Glass House (Mr Powell) be appointed to the Committee; and
- (4) That the Member for Glass House (Mr Powell) be discharged from the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and the Member for Gregory (Mr Johnson) be appointed to the Committee.
- (5) That the Member for Glass House (Mr Powell) be discharged from the Ethics Committee and the Member for Gregory (Mr Johnson) be appointed to the Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Authorisation to Table Reports

 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.20 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House authorise the Chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to table, on behalf of the Committee, the reports of the scrutiny of legislation secretariat advising of their examination of the following three bills:

- Local Government Electoral Bill;
- Health and Hospitals Network Bill; and
- Electricity Price Reform Bill.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Tabled paper: Reports prepared by the Scrutiny of Legislation Secretariat regarding the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011; the Health and Hospitals Network Bill 2011; and the Local Government Electoral Bill 2011 tabled on behalf of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly [\[5002\]](#) [\[5033\]](#) [\[5034\]](#).

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

ClimateSmart Home Service, Advertising Campaign

 **Hon. AM Blich** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (10.21 am): Mr Speaker, I have a matter involving my family that I wish to put on the public record. In late June this year I was travelling overseas on a trade mission. While I was out of the country, my 18-year-old son, Oliver, was encouraged by a friend to join him in accepting work as an extra in a crowd scene in the production of an advertisement. These two young friends joined the filming of the ad over the weekend of 25 and 26 June. At the same time, my husband was in Sydney visiting relatives.

Our son enjoyed his time on this job and gave Greg an enthusiastic account of his filming experiences. It became immediately clear that Oliver had been an extra in the filming of advertisements for the ClimateSmart Home Service, commissioned by the Office of Climate Change of which, as you know, my husband is the director.

Mr Speaker, my husband immediately took the view that it would be inappropriate for Oliver to be paid for his involvement in the filming of this advertisement and for him to appear in any ad produced for the filming. He took immediate steps to ensure that our son was not paid for his work on this weekend and Oliver has not received any payment for his involvement. Further, Greg took the view—and I agree with this wholeheartedly—that any footage of Oliver should not appear in the final ad.

Our concern was simple: while Oliver's involvement was completely innocent, and frankly unbelievably coincidental, it could nevertheless give rise in a reasonable person to the view that the procurement processes of government were somehow tainted by nepotism. Greg therefore asked for any footage of Oliver to be edited out of the final advertisement and was advised that this could be done and that it could be done without any cost to the production. On Tuesday evening of this week I was advised that in fact the production had incurred further costs for editing, including some of the edits needed to remove Oliver from the final product.

Mr Speaker, these ads have been undertaken by Local Government Infrastructure Services as the contracted provider of the ClimateSmart Home Service. LGIS is part-owned by the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which receives the service invoices on behalf of LGIS. I therefore met with the chair of the QTC, Stephen Rochester, at the first opportunity yesterday—Wednesday morning—and asked him to ascertain on my behalf what part of the additional editing costs were attributable to the removal of Oliver's image from the final advertisement. I was advised by Mr Rochester last night that the amount was \$1,880 and I have made arrangements to pay this amount to QTC on receipt of an invoice from them.

I think the facts I have outlined speak for themselves. However, I want to conclude with the following points. Firstly, I want to assure the public that the procurement processes of government are fair, open and transparent, and I believe it would be impossible for a senior public servant or minister to somehow demand or require a benefit for a family member. Secondly, both my husband and I love our son too much to even contemplate exposing him to any imputations of wrongdoing that such an attempt would entail. Thirdly, our son, as this episode illustrates, is eager to earn his own money, is keen to have a go at anything, enjoys his emerging independence and the joy of spreading his wings, and he has no need of any leg-up from his parents. He is studying full time. He is working two days a week. He is volunteering as a soccer coach at his old high school. He is growing up and enjoying life—and we are very proud to be his parents.

We deeply regret that our positions in the public eye sometimes infringe on his ability to just be young. But, as he has already noted, on this occasion we are paying the price, not him.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Documents

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (10.25 am): I seek leave to table the combined reports of the PCMC and various correspondence from the CMC back and forth between the PCMC and the CMC. It is a combined series of reports over a period of time.

Leave granted.

Tabled paper: Office of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commissioner: Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Misconduct Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, dated June 2011 [\[5003\]](#).

Tabled paper: Certified copy of the Register of Reports and Recommendations to the Police Minister, Ministerial Directions and Tabled Ministerial Reasons 2010, together with a covering letter, dated 18 January 2011, from Mr Robert Atkinson, Commissioner, Queensland Police Service to Ms Ann Gummow, Acting Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission, and a covering letter, dated 21 January 2011, from the Acting Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission to Mr Paul Hoolihan MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee [\[5004\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 8 July 2011, from Mr Martin Moynihan AO QC, Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission, to Dr Alex Douglas MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, and attachment titled 'Schedule of Controlled Operations Applications for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011' [\[5005\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 21 July 2011, from Mr Martin Moynihan AO QC, Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission, to Dr Alex Douglas MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, and attachment titled 'Annual Report to the Chairman, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011—Compliance Requirements under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (PPRA) for Assumed Identities' [\[5006\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 12 July 2011, from Mr Martin Moynihan AO QC, Chairperson, Crime and Misconduct Commission, to Dr Alex Douglas MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee, and attachment titled 'Annual Report to the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011—Compliance Requirements under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for Surveillance Devices' [\[5007\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Before I call question time, today visiting Parliament House will be Kings Christian College in the electorate of Mudgeeraba; Noosa Pengari Steiner School in the electorate of Noosa; and Bribie Island State High School, Caboolture State High School, Tullawong State High School and Grace Lutheran College, Caboolture—all within the electorate of Pumicestone. Also visiting us will be the advanced Public Service seminar attendees and the QPIP induction group.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Brisbane City Council, Flood Mitigation

 **Mr SEENEY** (10.26 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. I initially table for the benefit of the House a copy of the Lord Mayor's Taskforce on Suburban Flooding prepared for the Brisbane City Council in August 2005. I also table for the benefit of the House three letters written by the then lord mayor, Campbell Newman, to the then Premier, Premier Beattie, from September 2005 to January 2006, seeking cooperation and funding for the flood mitigation works identified in that report. I will quote just one sentence from the third of those letters after the lord mayor had been fobbed off twice. Campbell Newman wrote—

When calculating the costs of mitigation, it is worthwhile considering the potential costs of disaster relief towards which all levels of government will inevitably contribute.

Mr Speaker, I also table the two replies from the Premier—the fob-off replies. I also table three other letters—

Mr SPEAKER: You will have to get to your question.

Mr SEENEY:—to Ministers Bligh, Lucas and Robertson similarly seeking cooperation and funding, and I table a fob-off reply from Minister Bligh and note that there were no replies from Mr Lucas or Mr Robertson.

Mr SPEAKER: You are starting to use argument in terms of the words 'fob off'.

Mr SEENEY: I ask the Premier: why has the Premier and a parade of ministers consistently refused to give any consideration to Campbell Newman's requests for cooperation and funding to address flood issues in Brisbane since 2005?

Tabled paper: Lord Mayor's Taskforce on suburban flooding—Strategies to reduce the effect of significant rain events on areas of Brisbane prone to flooding, prepared for Brisbane City Council—August 2005 [\[5008\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letters, dated 12 September 2005, 7 October 2005, and 16 January 2006, to former Premier Peter Beattie from former lord mayor Campbell Newman regarding the Suburban Flooding Taskforce Report [\[5009\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter to Hon. Anna Bligh dated 7 October 2005, Hon. Stephen Robertson dated 7 October 2005, and Hon. Paul Lucas dated 7 October 2005, from former lord mayor Campbell Newman, regarding the Suburban Flooding Taskforce Report [5010].

Tabled paper: Responses, dated 10 October 2005 and 10 November 2005, from former Premier Peter Beattie regarding the Suburban Flooding Taskforce Report [5011].

Tabled paper: Copy of letter, dated 8 November 2005, from Hon. Anna Bligh MP to former lord mayor Campbell Newman regarding the Suburban Flooding Taskforce [5014].

Mr SPEAKER: There was a lot of documentation there. I will wait until the Premier is ready.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for the question. I am familiar with these requests from the Brisbane City Council, just as I am familiar with requests from other councils across the state. Parts of our city are prone to regular flooding even in times of relatively low rainfall due to the way that creeks can sometimes experience flash flooding. That is equally true of cities, towns and small communities right across the state.

As I have made clear in a number of my responses to the former lord mayor of Brisbane, it would not be reasonable or fair for us to dedicate state resources to the capital city if we were unable to do similar for those councils that, frankly, are in greater financial need that had also made applications. For example, we have been working with the council in relation to the town of Charleville. The town of Charleville, as members would know, has had extensive flooding on a number of occasions and has some serious issues that, if addressed, may—with joint state, Commonwealth and local funding—mean the entire community of Queensland would be saved significant expenditure in the future from having to carry out repairs caused by damage from more and future flooding.

I believe that we have attempted at all times to work with the Brisbane City Council, regardless of who is the mayor or which side of politics is in charge of the council at the time. We have been working to ensure that where we could assist we did, but we are not in a position to fund things like buyback schemes, frankly, for suburbs in which people are living because they have been approved by council planning schemes. I do appreciate that if funds ever become available then that would be a potentially worthy purpose, but if there was such funding available it would not be specifically dedicated to the capital city; it would be available on a state-wide basis. I would have thought that most members of this House, including the majority of the LNP, would agree with a proposition that should such funds be available they should be applied to those councils most in financial need that have a lower capacity to fund these things themselves.

Let us be very clear about what is happening with this today. This is nothing more than revisionism. Can you imagine the efforts last night about restoring the reputation on flood warnings? I know that the former lord mayor of Brisbane was aware that we might get flooding over the summer. The whole world was aware that we might get flooding over summer. In fact, it was the Bureau of Meteorology that warned us of that, so there is no need to come in here and try to restore the reputation of your friend 'Captain Hindsight'.

Brisbane City Council, Flood Mitigation

Mr SEENEY: My second question is to the Premier. I will table another letter from former lord mayor Campbell Newman to Premier Anna Bligh, this time after the flood, on 2 March 2011—

Mr Fraser interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Allow me to hear the question.

Mr SEENEY: This is another letter to the Premier—after the flood, on 2 March 2011—pointing out that the Brisbane City Council had invested \$453 million in works to limit the effects of flood in Brisbane and, once again, asking the state government for cooperation and funding for the flood mitigation works in Brisbane. I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 March 2011, to the Hon. Anna Bligh MP from former lord mayor Campbell Newman regarding the buyback of flood prone land in Brisbane [5012].

I table a reply from the Premier on 17 March 2011, once again fobbing off the approach from the then lord mayor of Brisbane.

Tabled paper: Response, dated 17 March 2011, from the Hon. Anna Bligh MP regarding the buyback of flood prone land in Brisbane [5013].

I ask the Premier: how much money has the state government allocated to flood mitigation works in Brisbane since the report was done in 2005? Now that Brisbane has flooded, will the state government give better consideration to Campbell Newman's requests for cooperation and funding, requests that he has been making since 2005-06?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question, which bears a striking resemblance to the previous question, and I am very happy to answer it again. The Queensland state government has worked with councils right across Queensland on these issues.

Mr Seeney: How much money? How much money?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has asked the Premier a question and I have taken note of it. It is in a number of parts. Certainly money is one part of it but there are several other parts, so I am allowing the Premier to give her reply as you have asked.

Ms BLIGH: I am very happy to put on the record what my response actually was to the then lord mayor of Brisbane. In response to his request, my letter said—

In principle, the Queensland Government considers there may be certain circumstances where it is in the long-term strategic interests of the State to participate in a scheme which buys back land which is flood prone.

I would welcome further, detailed information about the ... Scheme ... I would encourage you to discuss this proposal with ... Chief Executive Officer, QldRA.

This letter from the former lord mayor is in fact dated 2 March. So concerned was he about this issue it must have been the last letter he signed before he left the city in the lurch. He was so interested in the long-term flood mitigation of Brisbane that he signed it and then left the city. In my view, the credibility of the former lord mayor of Brisbane on this issue is in tatters. It was in tatters from the moment he walked away from this city after the greatest disaster it had ever experienced. The member for Callide has come in here trying to rescue the reputation of the former lord mayor after his ridiculous proclamations this week. This has reduced the member for Callide to little more than a cheerleader for a man who is not a representative in this parliament. He is a cheerleader for someone who has a thin skin and a glass jaw and who pretends he has eyes in the back of his head.

Queensland Building Boost

Ms O'NEILL: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please explain how the government intends to attract investment from other states of Australia into Queensland under its Building Boost initiative?

Ms BLIGH: I am very pleased to advise the House that the \$140 million boost that this year's budget gives to the building industry of Queensland started on Monday. Right now, we are printing over \$4 trillion in notes for delivery to Queensland, Sydney and Melbourne letterboxes on Saturday, 13 August. These \$10,000 notes are designed to catch potential investors' attention. We do not care if the investors come from interstate; if they want to buy an investment property, we want them buying it in Queensland. We want them buying it on the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast; we want them buying it in places like Cairns and the Whitsundays. We want people to think about investment in holiday homes and we do not care where the money comes from if it is coming into the Queensland economy.

We are already seeing a buzz in the industry with the emergence of this new boost program. Suncorp Bank yesterday issued a public statement that they had recorded a 20 per cent increase in home loan applications off the back of the Building Boost—a 20 per cent increase in home loan applications. We all know that it has been a long time since we have seen that kind of spike in the home-building industry. On the back of this, Suncorp has launched a competition that will see six winners receive an extra \$20,000 from Suncorp, on top of the government's grant. And they are not the only ones offering to top up the grant. We have seen a number of builders offering to match the government's grant. Delfin Lend Lease is offering to triple the Building Boost—to \$30,000—for anyone who signed up in July.

Mr Schwarten: A lot of work for chippies in that.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the member for Rockhampton; there is a lot of work for tradespeople, a lot of work for people in the building industry. Of course, there is also a lot of work for retailers who supply into those trades, who supply home furnishings and home fit-outs. This has created a real buzz in the industry. When our \$10,000 notes start landing in letterboxes, we expect to see another big surge. These notes will go to 1.4 million households in Queensland, 1.53 million households in Sydney and 1.45 million households in Melbourne. If just one of the millions of people who receive these \$10,000 notes makes an investment in Queensland then that advertising campaign will have paid for itself.

I encourage every member of this House to make sure homebuyers in their area know about these schemes. For example, if you are a first home buyer and you access the Delfin Lend Lease boost and our boost, that is a \$37,000 addition to your own financial ability to get into the housing market for the first time. We want to see these initiatives pumping a stimulus into the economy where it is needed most.

Howard Smith Wharves

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Deputy Premier. I refer to yesterday's capricious decision to refuse the BCC plan for the development of the Howard Smith Wharves, a portion of which remain—

Mr Fraser: Today's question time brought to you by the Brisbane City Council.

Mr NICHOLLS: Just hold your horses. Your time will come.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I want you to start again and take out the argument that is in the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thought it was a statement of fact, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: And you were being interjected on. Start again.

Mr NICHOLLS: I refer to yesterday's decision by the Deputy Premier to refuse the BCC plan for the Howard Smith Wharves, a portion of which remain flood free, whereas the government established its water grid emergency management room, proposes a cross-river rail station on Albert Street and approved the convention centre redevelopment and the ABC building in known flood zones. Isn't the Deputy Premier now applying politics rather than planning to his approval process?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me the opportunity to speak in a little more detail about the issues that were the subject of my ministerial statement yesterday. If anyone is going to be playing politics with this, it is the Brisbane City Council. Is it not funny that the Brisbane City Council made great fanfare only a few months or so ago post the floods when it acquired a Mirvac site at Tennyson that was totally inundated by floods? That is what it wanted to do and that is what it did. In fact, it also acquired some time earlier a Milton site that had flood issues with respect to it. I make sure that, with the Brisbane City Council and indeed any other local governments, I deal with them in an appropriate and straight fashion. I have approved a number of local area plans in areas that had flood affects on them—for example, Bulimba and South Brisbane. What was the difference? Those areas were essentially partially affected by flood and not totally inundated, which is essentially what the Howard Smith Wharves site was. If anyone cannot see the difference in that, then there is something that is very wrong.

Who would think it would be appropriate to build a hotel in an area that was cut off by floodwaters? I would have thought the Brisbane City Council would have seen it fit to take that into account. After all, it seems to have a lot of hindsight about floods now but only when it suits it! Why is it so upset about this project? Because it owns the land. Let us have a look at the history of what it did on this block of land. When it acquired it, do members know what it did first off? It applied to itself to change the zoning so it could have a hotel on it. It applied to itself!

Mr Schwarten: Who was the mayor?

Mr LUCAS: Under Campbell Newman. What happened then after it applied to itself to rezone it? Council members said to themselves, 'Gee, that's a good idea. We're going to up zone it for a hotel.' People then took it to court. So what did the council do as a result of being taken to court?

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order. Those on my right will cease interjecting.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my right will cease interjecting. I will hear the point of order.

Mr NICHOLLS: I ask that the Deputy Premier respond to the question, particularly in relation to the development, because there is a letter which I table which says that the Department of Public Works formally consents to the council's proposal to allow development to occur on the Howard Smith Wharves site.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 25 September 2007, from the Director-General of the Department of Public Works to the former CEO of the Brisbane City Council regarding commercial development on the Howard Smith Wharf site [\[5015\]](#).

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, before you resume—

Mr LUCAS: I—

Mr SPEAKER: Let me rule on the point of order.

Mr LUCAS: But—

Mr SPEAKER: No, just resume your seat. Let me rule on the point of order. The point of order was, I think, directed at relevance of the Deputy Premier's answer. As I wrote down the question, it mentioned politics and planning in relation to a particular—

Mr LUCAS: Mr Speaker, I am happy to answer it.

Mr SPEAKER: I have been listening to the answer and the definition of politics would be quite wide. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman has therefore been given a licence to talk about politics in relation to this issue. I cannot find that the Deputy Premier is not relevant, so I will hear the Deputy Premier.

Mr LUCAS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am glad the honourable member tabled a letter from the Department of Public Works, director-general dated 25 September 2007! We all know that the only person who knew there was going to be flooding then apparently was Campbell Newman! He knew that the dam level had to be reduced then! That is precisely the point. We have had the worst floods in 40 years in Brisbane and of course you look at it in that light. You are the only people in this chamber who learn nothing from history and the fact that you have been in opposition for so long demonstrates that.

Of course after you have had those sorts of floods you look at these issues again. The difference is that what the council wanted the state to do was approve this local area plan so it would be code assessable so no-one would have the right to challenge it because it owned the land. It was money in its hip pocket. It is happy to trade its hip pocket for flood safety any day of the week and at the same time it is complaining about not getting money for flood resumption of houses.

(Time expired)

Ekka

Mrs ATTWOOD: My question is to the Premier. With the Ekka fast approaching, can the Premier update the House on the theme this year for the government precinct?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am sure that she, like others, can sense the excitement that is mounting as the annual city meets the country event approaches. This year the Ekka will run from next Thursday, 11 August, until Saturday, 20 August. The Ekka, as everyone knows, is undergoing a massive \$2.9 billion overhaul to secure its long-term future. This overhaul will see new shops, apartments, a hotel, a fresh food market, commercial space, parks, walkways and bikeways and it will ensure that this wonderful inner-city site can be used every day and not just the 10 days of the show.

Because of the revamp, the Queensland government precinct this year will be temporarily relocated from the Frank Nicklin Pavilion to the nearby Commerce Building. This year the government precinct is themed appropriately 'Reconstructing Queensland'. It will showcase our initiatives and programs helping Queenslanders get back on their feet after the floods and after Tropical Cyclone Yasi. Staff will step visitors through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's interactive flood mapping and they will be able to see where areas near where they live in all parts of Queensland experienced flooding. There is also the Build Back Navigator, an online tool to assist those who are still needing help to work their way through the various opportunities for assistance. There will also be opportunities for young people and children to have their photos taken in one of the cut-outs of three recovery heroes. As we all know, these disasters gave birth to new heroes in our communities and people can line up to be one of the roadworkers who is repairing Queensland, a flood recovery volunteer or a soldier. Cabinet ministers will also be on hand when cabinet conducts its traditional cabinet meeting, the Ekka community cabinet, on Monday, 15 August.

The Brisbane exhibition is one of the biggest events on the Queensland calendar. It is 10 days of fun and of bringing a taste of the country to the city. I encourage everyone to come along this year to the Ekka. There will be a number of changes because of the revamp that is happening and there will be some parts of the traditional parts of the Ekka that people may not recognise, but I am sure that with a little patience everybody will be able to have the same good time that they have always relied on in the past.

Mr LUCAS: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, the honourable member for Clayfield tabled a letter earlier dated 2007 from the director-general of the Department of Public Works to the then CEO of the Brisbane City Council. I have sought a copy of that letter from the Clerk and have now been advised by the Clerk that the honourable member is purporting to claim that he only tabled the first page of the letter and not the second page. That is not my recollection of any statement he made to the House in relation to this. I would ask that the full document as referred to by the honourable member, including the end of it signed by the person purported to have signed it, be tabled in the House.

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. In fact, the Deputy Premier has got the story wrong.

Mr SPEAKER: It is hard to rule on that first point of order until I hear the honourable member for Clayfield.

Mr NICHOLLS: The Deputy Premier has the story wrong. I handed over a piece of paper that had something attached to it that was not part of it and the letter is still there. The second page was not attached and I am happy to include it.

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: You can have the whole lot.

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is just paranoia.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I thank the member for Clayfield. I think that has answered the point of order from the Deputy Premier.

Howard Smith Wharves

Mr EMERSON: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Special Minister of State.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr EMERSON: On the basis of yesterday's decision to refuse the Howard—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! No, stop. Those on my right will cease interjecting. The honourable member has the call. I call the honourable member for Indooroopilly.

Mr EMERSON: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. On the basis of yesterday's decision to refuse the Howard Smith Wharves plan, will the Deputy Premier inform the House why the government has been planning since 2007 to build a railway station at Albert Street in a clearly identified flood zone?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I thank him for giving me the opportunity to address a number of issues. First of all, I am happy to answer in relation to the cross-river rail link, although it is not within my area of responsibility. But I will indicate that the cross-river rail team insisted, as part of the design process, that specifically designed floodgates would protect the Albert Street entrance and the southern portal at Yeerongpilly. That is part of that project. But that is only a small part of that project. In fact, it actually goes under a river, too. We are not suggesting that because it goes under a river it might be a problem. It is a question of what can appropriately be designed. What can be designed as part of that process are floodgates. The problem is that when you have people in a hotel and the floodwaters are rising around them, you cannot put in flood windows for them.

Mr Nicholls: What about the temporary planning instrument that you approved?

Mr LUCAS: Which clearly demonstrates the fact that I am prepared to work with the Brisbane City Council in an appropriate and sensible fashion when it comes to dealing with flood issues. As we have made it repeatedly clear, there was never a suggestion that you cannot develop or redevelop areas of Brisbane that are potentially impacted by flooding; it is what is appropriate in the circumstances. This site was essentially almost totally inundated by floodwaters.

Mr Seeney: No, almost. There's a difference.

Mr LUCAS: No. Have a look at what I said yesterday—essentially totally inundated by floodwaters. In those circumstances, how could you in all conscience allow the matter to proceed at this point in time? I make this point: what the council wanted to do through the local area plan—it could have done all of this themselves—is make that development code assessable. The party that purports to represent the rights of people was wanting to make it code assessable so that people could not object to it. If the council thinks that it is such a good idea, it can still work with the proponent for a preliminary approval there and subject itself to the court process in the cold light of day. This government is more than appropriately happy to work with the council in terms of approval of projects, and we have done many of them. But that will not take away the importance of this matter.

The Premier was asked two questions by the Leader of the Opposition this morning about flood buybacks, yet now they are after us in relation to building properties in flood zones. That just shows you how desperate they are. This is like the Brisbane City Council Campbell Newman question time—nothing to do with an opposition.

Supreme Court, 150th Anniversary

Ms MALE: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House of any special events to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Supreme Court of Queensland?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. The next few days—off the top of my head it is 6 August—will mark the sesquicentenary, or the 150th anniversary, of the first sitting of the Supreme Court of Queensland. I will be attending the ceremonial sitting of the court tomorrow at the Supreme Court's banco court in George Street. The Supreme Court first sat in an old chapel in Queen Street in the CBD—such as the CBD was then—when Queensland had a population of 30,059 people. That is about the population of my electorate. Justice Lutwyche was the first judge of the Supreme Court who sat there.

Today in Queensland, there are 4.6 million people and the Supreme Court has 26 judges. The difference is that now there are federal courts, magistrates courts—many other courts—that now exist in addition to the Supreme Court. But the thread that has come through over that period with our Supreme Court has been the wonderful diligence, hard work and objectivity of the Supreme Court bench. The Supreme Court is quite different now from what it was then. It is far more diverse. Many of its 26 judges are women and the judges of the Supreme Court represent a far different ethnic composition than the courts of the old days of, frankly, Anglo Celts.

The Banco Court—the full court—will sit tomorrow. In addition to the judges in Brisbane sitting in that court, judges from the Far North, North and Central Queensland will also sit. I think it is the first time that the court has sat as a whole. I welcome Justice North, who was recently sworn in in Townsville, and Jim Henry SC, who will be sworn in in early September, as the new far northern judges. I also acknowledge the role of Justice Cullinane in Townsville and Justice Jones in Cairns, who will shortly retire.

If one has a look at the report on government services, one sees that in 2009-10 the combined results for the Supreme and District Courts clearance rates in the criminal jurisdiction was 97.3 per cent. In the civil and Supreme Court jurisdiction, in 2009-10 the clearance rate was 94.6 per cent. Not only that, we can see rising from the ground the \$570 million Supreme and District Court building—approximately 60,000 square metres of floor space, 45 courtrooms and separate elevators for prisoners, judges, the public and juries. There are also end-of-trip facilities. The building will have facilities for people who want to ride bikes. We now know that, given the Leader of the Opposition has taken the bird for Mr Newman, he probably was the person who invented that wonderful bike riding scheme of the Brisbane City Council. There are 44 bike racks, 40 lockers, two male showers and two female showers and facilities for people with disabilities.

The Supreme Court—the institution and the building—has served the state well for the past 150 years. It is an institution that will service Queensland for another 150 years and even more again into the future.

Carbon Tax

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. I table a letter from the Maroochy RSL Club, which outlines how it faces an additional \$71,000 in electricity costs with the implementation of Labor's carbon tax in Queensland.

Tabled paper: Memo from the general manager of the Maroochy RSL to Ms Fiona Simpson MP regarding power supply calculations [5016].

Tabled paper: Email, dated 28 July 2011, from Launa McGrath, Corporate Sales, Energy Action regarding First Avenue, Maroochy RSL [5017].

As this will cost jobs for this club and for thousands of other Queensland businesses and community organisations, why can the Premier not come clean on the real impact of Labor's job-destroying tax?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question and I am happy to look at the correspondence that she tabled. I will make a couple of points in relation to her question. A number of members opposite sought to use the estimates committee as a way of prosecuting political arguments about what is essentially a federal government issue, but one which will have impacts on every Australian. This government repeats what it has said from day one on this issue: firstly, we believe in action on climate change; secondly, we understand that a carbon price, properly applied with the correct parameters, is the most effective way of dealing with climate change and its impacts; and, thirdly, we will make sure that we do everything possible to protect Queensland's interests in the design of that framework.

To that end, I am meeting with the Prime Minister next week. The Treasurer has had a number of discussions with the federal Treasurer. We are determined to make sure that Queensland gets the best possible deal in these arrangements.

Census

Ms STONE: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade. Can the Treasurer advise the House of an event of national significance planned for next Tuesday and advise of its importance to the Queensland budget?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Springwood for her question. I can, in fact, advise the House of an event of national significance next Tuesday night. It is an event of national significance and it is particularly important for statisticians, retired schoolteachers and former accountants and those people who are excited by such matters, because, of course, next Tuesday night is census night. It is a time that we take a snapshot of the nation. It is vitally important for the public policy settings for all levels of governments around the nation that every single person out there does the right thing and makes sure that their voice and their circumstances are counted on Tuesday night, census night.

It is particularly important and that is why the budget papers detailed a campaign to ensure that Queenslanders are counted, because we have seen estimations that we have had an undercount in parts of Queensland in the past. That, of course, goes directly to the sort of federal funding that the state receives into the future. It is particularly important in regional Queensland, where the undercount has been as high as five per cent in the past, or in discrete Indigenous communities where the undercount can be up to 12 per cent, which is particularly important for the way in which many federal funding models work. So it is important that all Queenslanders heed the call from both the nation and indeed the campaign that we are running separately. It is important to Queensland to make sure that people are counted next Tuesday night on census night.

There is, however, one person in Queensland at the moment who is in danger of not being counted and that is someone who has gone to ground since Monday. 'Captain Hindsight' has been a wishin' and a hopin' that in hindsight he did not do that press conference on Monday, because he has not been seen since Monday. I just want to put a shout-out to Campbell Newman that it is important that he, too, is counted on Tuesday night next week.

What we have seen this week is he has gone to ground, but he sent the shadow Treasurer out, one of his cheerleaders, to say that he did not really say that he should lower the dam by 25 per cent. It is clear that if Campbell Newman is contemplating being counted next Tuesday night that he is about to join the 105 Australians who at the last census were speaking an invented language.

What we want to see, of course, is Campbell Newman and everybody else standing up next Tuesday night, coming out from beneath the desk, and going in front of people and making sure their voices are counted. I did not think, after the former Leader of the Opposition redefined squibbing it, with his regular scuttling away from here to avoid the media and hiding under the desk up on level 6 with the teddy bear, that we would see the likes, of course, of someone who has so far this week run away from the media and left it to others to go out there and explain his little ego explosion on Monday.

Mr ELMES: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Could I ask you to rule on standing order 118(b) on relevance? This has no relevance to the question at all.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, you will round up your answer.

Mr FRASER: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I appreciate the opportunity to remind each and every one of the 89 members of this parliament of the importance of the census; to say to all Queenslanders, up to and including those who aspire to be in this place, that they should come out of their hidey-holes and make sure that they are counted on Tuesday, 9 August.

Carbon Tax

Mrs STUCKEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business. During estimates the minister said that the government had known for years of an impending carbon tax and that her department had been working with businesses for years to prepare for the negative impacts. Will the minister now advise the House why she told businesses earlier this year to wait and see what the effects of Labor's carbon tax would be when clearly this job-destroying tax has been on her agenda for years?

Ms JARRATT: I welcome another question on climate change and carbon tax from the shadow minister for tourism.

Ms Bligh: She never talks about tourism.

Ms JARRATT: That is the puzzling thing. We do not seem to get to talk about tourism. But let us address this issue. Late one night recently I saw on the television a very good interview with Malcolm Turnbull. It was most informative, actually.

Ms Bligh: He is from the Liberal Party, isn't he?

Ms JARRATT: That would be the Liberal Party, Premier; you are right. It seems to me that we have a situation in this country where, according at least to Malcolm Turnbull, we have two sides of politics who believe the science of climate change. So, if we indeed do believe the science of climate change then surely we believe the threat that is implied in climate change. That includes devastating impacts for the tourism industry should climate change be allowed to progress unabated: things like the death of the Great Barrier Reef—surely fairly central to the tourism industry in Queensland—and increasingly severe weather impacts like cyclones, which we already know are absolutely devastating to our industry.

If we believe the science and we believe the threats that are implied by climate change then surely we must act. I do not think it is rocket science that the world has turned its attention to the impacts of climate change and collectively, each in their own way perhaps, the world is beginning to act on the global issue of climate change. I do not walk away from supporting action on climate change that will go to prevent the death of the Great Barrier Reef and will protect the tourism industry in an area like the Whitsundays.

But the one thing we do not know is what is the policy of those opposite. You were in my electorate recently. We waited with bated breath to hear what you would do, how you would act on the issue.

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

Ms JARRATT: We waited with bated breath to see what the opposition's plan to act on climate change would be. There was deathly silence. I am on the record about this issue, but we have just a vacant space when it comes to a policy from those opposite.

Strategic Cropping Land

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts. Can the minister please update the House on how the Queensland government's nation-leading strategic cropping land policy is continuing to progress?

Ms NOLAN: I can. The question of how it is that we appropriately balance agricultural interests and the protection of our best quality agricultural land with an increasing desire to mine on some of that land is one of the most important long-term questions facing our country right now. It is a debate that is not just going on in Queensland; it is a debate that is happening on the Liverpool Plains in New South Wales, where the conservative government has failed to develop a comprehensive policy response, and it is a debate that recently happened in Margaret River in Western Australia, where there was, similarly, no major or comprehensive policy response.

In Queensland, in contrast, this Labor government is leading the nation and, indeed, the world by developing a well thought through and comprehensive policy response to this complex but critical question. Last year this government announced that we would legislate to find a new legal balance for these issues. On 31 May this year the previous minister announced a comprehensive policy framework. The framework provided guidance to all sectors and it provided an answer on a critical and very controversial project in the golden triangle region up around Emerald. While the government has provided certainty, putting out a regulatory assessment statement around that and tomorrow releasing a state planning policy which will provide further detail for consultation, and while the government has led the nation, where do the opposition stand on this matter?

All of us know that it is the former National Party who claim at their heart to be the protectors of farmers and farming interests, so when government made its first announcement the LNP said that it had called for it and Mr Seeney said that the Queensland Labor government was behind the game again. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Queensland Country Life article, dated 4 August 2011, titled 'Seeney: LNP won't release policy until election announced' [5018].

In April he provided a little more detail, saying, in relation to the golden triangle, that legislation would first encompass only the Darling Downs before moving to other areas of the state such as the golden triangle. I table the document.

Tabled paper: Queensland Country Life article, dated 21 April 2011, titled "'Drip-fed" land plan pleases no one' [5020].

Then in July Campbell Newman went to the golden triangle, which he said he would protect in contrast. The Golden Triangle Action Group spokesman said—

We're quite buoyed by Campbell's support—he gave an ironclad promise to protect Golden Triangle from mining if he gets in power.

It is a stark contradiction.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I was with Campbell Newman at the golden triangle meeting and he did not give that at all. It is up to the minister to correct that statement. I find it offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn. How about you go and visit the people in the golden triangle.

Mr SPEAKER: On this occasion there is no point of order. I have been listening to the minister. The minister has not reflected upon you personally. She is, as I understand it, quoting from a newspaper article. I cannot find any offence to the member for Gregory so there is no point of order.

Ms NOLAN: I was quoting the member's constituent. I table the document. He needs to take that up with him. Now the LNP has said that it will not release a policy at all until the election is called.

Tabled paper: ABC News online article, dated 20 July 2011, titled 'Push for mining regions to get bigger royalties slice' [5019].

Tabled paper: Media release by Mr Jeff Seeney MP, dated 24 August 2010, titled 'Labor adopts LNP policy to protect prime farm land' [5021].

South-East Queensland Floods, Ministerial Responsibility

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Premier. I refer to last summer's floods, up until which time the Deputy Premier and then health minister was still attempting to resolve the Health payroll debacle for routine salary payments. Will the Premier now admit the Deputy Premier and Queensland Health were never the appropriate people to be determining helicopter tasking during the flood crisis?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. It is actually very hard to determine what on earth the question was about, but I am happy to—

Mr Wallace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Main Roads, the Premier has the call.

Ms BLIGH: I am happy to make some comments in relation to the tasking of helicopters. This matter was considered by the commission of inquiry. Evidence was provided to the inquiry from some of our helicopter pilots, who rightly deserve to be recognised as some of the greatest heroes of our recent disasters.

Under no system that this government runs will politicians be tasking helicopters. That will not be happening. That task will be left to those people with expertise in those efforts. Further, as a result of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry, now it will be a single-point tasking arrangement. The development of that program is already underway, under the leadership of the Minister for Emergency Services.

I say again what I have said in relation to this disaster a couple of times this week, because I think it is important to understand why we commissioned the inquiry and why it is so important not only to us now but for generations of Queenslanders to come. What happened in December and January this year was unprecedented in the history not only of Queensland but also of our nation. That means that every single part of our system at local government level, at state government level, at federal government level, in the non-government sector, at the community level and at household level was stretched beyond all previously known limits. When you stretch a system to its limits, you find its weak points. It would be remiss of us not to identify those weak points and ensure that they are strengthened for future events. That is what this commission of inquiry is about. That is the blueprint it has given us and that is what the government will be implementing.

I look forward to the second report of the inquiry and fully expect that it will be just as practical, just as rigorous and just as important as the interim one that we have received this week. I can assure the member that ministers in this government will not be tasking helicopters. That is an absurd suggestion. Frankly, I have no idea of the basis of his question.

Public Transport

Ms GRACE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs. Minister, what is being done to encourage commuters back to using CityCats and ferries post the January floods?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Brisbane Central for her question. As a government, we are always looking at ways to encourage people to give our public transport system a go. We have introduced quiet carriages on our rail network, yesterday I announced the introduction of Wi-Fi and, of course, we will be trialling GPS on Logan buses in the near future. However, it is not secret that CityCat patronage has been fluctuating over a number of years. Some of the dips occurred prior to 2010 and we believe that that was because we were phasing out the daily tickets and introducing the go card. In addition, bus patronage has been increasing dramatically as this state government, through TransLink, has been putting on services like the 412 bus from UQ to the CBD and the CityGlider service. The CityGlider was a Newman promise but was funded 50 per cent by the state government to a tune of \$2 million. Of course, the CityCat network has suffered from the impacts of the January floods as well.

Today I can announce that go cards will soon be offered for sale on board all CityCat and city ferry services. We want to encourage more people to use our iconic CityCat services right across this great river. This initiative will add 27 outlets to the 570-strong go card retail network. Customers are already able to top up their go cards on board all river services and this will allow those visiting the region to purchase preloaded cards when they are on board. This state government is delivering and encouraging more people to use our public transport network.

However, when it comes to public transport on the river, yet another Campbell Newman broken promise has come to light. Members might want to know that on 19 February 2008 Campbell Newman made some comments. What were they? He said, 'I am promising six CityCats and I am aiming for up to eight ferries, and I will be calling for expressions of interest from the private sector if re-elected.' The former lord mayor promised new CityCats. However, members might be surprised to learn that recently I received a letter from the LNP administration, asking the state government to fund those new CityCats. Newman has promised 17, 18 and 19 CityCats. They have asked us to fund 17 and 18.

We will consider the business case arising from this, but it just goes to show that you cannot trust Campbell Newman when it comes to public transport in this state, especially in South-East Queensland. He promised 500 buses. Who delivered the 500 buses? This Labor state government! We are paying for it. He promised new CityCats. Who is going to be delivering those CityCats? This state Labor government! It just goes to show that you cannot trust Campbell Newman on public transport.

(Time expired)

Fire and Rescue Service, Personnel

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. The flood inquiry has found that flood rescues in Dalby were seriously delayed because local rescue staff were untrained and trained officers had to be sent from Toowoomba. Given that the number of full-time QFRS officers at Toowoomba is the same now as in 1974, will the minister finally admit being wrong and acknowledge that more trained officers, including swift water rescue officers, are needed?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. The issue of swift water rescue is a significant and important one for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. As members might be aware, currently in Queensland there are a little over 200 fully trained swift water rescue technicians, as they are called. One of the key models that the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service uses through its planning is to have those people stationed in areas where the call for swift water rescue skills are required. Those people are stationed in those areas.

Because of the nature of flooding, particularly in areas such as the member's electorate—and I do concede that flash flooding occurs everywhere, but particularly in terms of the need for swift water rescue crews and those skills in places like the Condamine and others—the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service works on a model of pre-deploying people from those areas that do not need them into those areas that do. Members of this House would be aware of many instances where both I and the Premier have publicly announced prior to an event taking place the pre-deployment of swift water rescue crews. I would contrast the situation in Queensland with that, for example, in New Zealand. In New Zealand, flash flooding and major flooding occurs within a matter of hours. In most Queensland communities, in many instances you will have a number of days to plan and pre-deploy staff. That is what the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service does.

The commission raised an issue about the need for more swift water rescue crews. That has been accepted by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. On Tuesday the Premier announced the figures in a ministerial statement and I encourage the member to read that statement. I think I repeated those figures yesterday. To the best of my recollection, an additional 12 staff have already been trained and, to my understanding, by November there will be around 242 trained staff in place. Following the floods, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service conducted a thorough review. In addition to the additional training and boosting of numbers, we are also looking at those auxiliary firefighters who will need full training, getting information to rural fire service volunteers to ensure that they are fully aware, et cetera.

Whether it is in the member's electorate or, indeed, any other part of Queensland, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is doing two things. Firstly, it is responding to the commission of inquiry and it is increasing the numbers and will have increased numbers by the flood and storm season. In addition, it is looking to see how the skills can be expanded into other areas that may not, at this point, have full-time swift water rescue technicians.

Samford Road-Wardell Street Intersection Upgrade

Ms JONES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Main Roads. I refer the minister to plans to upgrade the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection in my electorate and I ask him whether he is aware of any other alternative plans to solve the traffic congestion at this intersection?

Mr WALLACE: The answer is yes, I am aware of alternative plans for this particular intersection. Thanks to the hard work for the western suburbs of the member for Ashgrove we will see \$90 million invested to upgrade the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection. In a letter to the residents of Enoggera, I notice that one Campbell Newman has put forward an alternative plan for an overpass, and I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Flyer from Campbell Newman, LNP candidate for Ashgrove, regarding the intersection of Wardell Street and Samford Road [\[5022\]](#).

I thought, 'This Campbell Newman, he is an engineer. He must know what he is talking about. After all, he said he could have stopped the floods earlier this year. That is a great idea, Campbell. Let's have a good look at it.' So I asked for some expert advice on Campbell Newman's plans. Unfortunately, my hopes have been dashed. Mr Newman was referring to 20-year-old plans for an overpass that are so out of date they would not keep up with today's level of traffic, let alone the level in 20 years time. Indeed, I am advised that Mr Newman's overpass would cost taxpayers around \$100 million more but for what?

Ms Struthers interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I am told on the matter of resumptions, member for Algester, that every business at that intersection and many, many more properties would be taken by Campbell Newman's grand plan for an overpass. So it will cost \$100 million more and there would be many more property resumptions. Not only that, this edifice to his ego would tower some 10 metres high in that urban setting when the structure and the floodlights on top of it are taken into account.

The people of Enoggera do not want to be left swinging in the breeze in Campbell Newman's concrete jungle. Has Campbell Newman doorknocked the people of Norman Terrace to tell them of the impending cacophony of cars travelling across that overpass, blasting noise into their living rooms? Has he told the people about his grand plan? Has Newman told the people of Audrey Street about the floodlights high above Samford Road that would stream down through their curtains in the middle of the night, keeping them awake.

Back to Mr Newman's letter, he says in a meeting that they have organised—

Unfortunately, I cannot come to the meeting arranged by residents ... I have arranged for ... Mark Robinson ... to be there.

We heard today that he will not front the media. Now he will not front the people of Ashgrove. He will not front them. If Campbell Newman gets his way, he will turn Enoggera into an LA style urban wasteland. His plan will cost \$100 million more. It will be 10 metres above the ground; lights will be streaming into local residents' houses; noise will be coming off of it and it will not even keep pace with the traffic growth in the area. He claims he is an engineer, but he has no clue about what is happening in Ashgrove.

Maryborough, Road Infrastructure

Mr FOLEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Main Roads. Over the last couple of months there has been a double fatality truck accident at the entrance to Maryborough and, sadly, on Sunday night there was another fatal road accident on the southern outskirts of Maryborough. Will the minister's department and the Premier advocate for emergency funding to be made available for the upgrade of the Bruce Highway, particularly on the section at the entrance to Maryborough?

Mr WALLACE: I thank the member for Maryborough for his question. Indeed, he and I have spoken about this issue previously. He does take this issue very seriously. That is why I need the member for Maryborough and all members of this House to join with members on this side of the House in lobbying for further federal funds for the Bruce Highway.

In relation to those particular fatal accidents, my department is working on an audit with the Queensland Police Service, which we do with every serious accident on the Bruce Highway or any highway across Queensland. This is a very serious issue and it needs addressing. If funds are needed as a result of that audit, we will apply for those funds from the federal government. We are the custodians and the federal government needs to come to the party.

As the Premier and I have said previously, we need both sides in Canberra to recognise that further funds are needed for the Bruce Highway. That is why the Premier and I released this very important strategy looking at the future of the Bruce Highway. For the first time ever we have identified exactly what is needed on the Bruce Highway, be it from the start down here at Caboolture right up north to Cairns. We have identified 60 major projects that need funding. I want the member for Maryborough to work with us in lobbying Canberra for further funds for the Bruce Highway.

However, I want to give credit where credit is due to the current federal government. Let us compare its funding for the Bruce Highway with that of the Tories when they were in power. Under John Howard—12 long years of neglect for the Bruce Highway—spending averaged \$100 million a year. Under Labor, that has increased to \$480 million a year for the Bruce Highway—and so it should. Why should the people of regional Queensland put up with a substandard highway? The people in Victoria and the people in New South Wales would not do it. The member for Callide sat here in this place mute. He did not do a thing while John Howard was in power. Spending averaged \$100 million a year under the Tories and \$480 million a year under Labor.

But there is more good news on the Bruce. The Premier and I have recently announced further projects in terms of flood construction on the Bruce totalling \$370 million. Last week I drove up to Cairns and back from my home in Townsville. I was delayed by about an hour—I was telling the member for Barron River about it—because of all the roadworks underway on the Bruce. We have significant roadworks underway on the Bruce. They are being rolled out.

I say to the member for Maryborough that it was a tragic accident on the highway at the entrance to Maryborough. I urge him to join with us and support those on this side of the House. We need Canberra to come to the party on the Bruce and give us those funds.

Tertiary Education

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining. With major national reforms planned for tertiary education and TAFE across the country, can the minister please advise what steps the state government is taking so that Queensland can be at the forefront of change?

Mr SPEAKER: Two minutes.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I want to thank the member for Pumicestone for her question. I know from her personal representations to me on behalf of her constituents that she is keen to see good quality access to vocational education and training for her constituents and for all the people of Queensland. To that end, we certainly have a national agenda for reform of tertiary education and vocational training afoot. We have seen the Skills Australia report. This week we see the QPET report adding to this agenda. The Bligh government has achieved a lot with the establishment of Skills Queensland, firmly placing industry needs at the heart of the future direction of the vocational education and training sector.

To be ready for these national reforms, this government will be establishing a ministerial task force to consult on and design the future of our quality public provider, TAFE. We want to see public and private training and higher education providers work side by side with industry to build up our skills base, a partnership that will ultimately pave the way to greater prosperity, productivity and innovation.

When discussing training and education, I think it is important to look at how the LNP is performing on its assignments. On 28 May 'Captain Hindsight'—Campbell Newman—told the Darling Downs community that he would announce a policy on coal seam gas in 'four to eight weeks'. I would have thought it was a generous due date—nice and flexible. That is the sort of quality reforms you do in the training and education sector; you work closely with the students. But here we are nine weeks and five days later and we see no policy on CSG. It is late. There is a draft—I have to admit that—that, in the worst example of student activity, has been plagiarised from the website of the member for Callide. It is a cut and paste job, one of those assignments you would fail. It has not even been delivered on a due date.

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time is over.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mackay TAFE, Asbestos

 **Hon. SD FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology) (11.28 am), by leave: On Tuesday the member for Mudgeeraba made a number of serious but unfounded allegations. The member spoke of the Mackay TAFE asbestos rectification works and falsely claimed an imminent danger from dangerous asbestos and included allegations of a cover-up. To be clear, asbestos is dangerous when fibres are exposed. There was no evidence of this at the Mackay TAFE. In fact, when asbestos-containing material was assessed it was given a BEMIR rating, which is the asbestos register rating, of 34. This means it can be managed in situ and poses a low hazard. The asbestos removal at Mackay TAFE was being undertaken under the Department of Education and Training's asbestos removal program. If there was dangerous asbestos it would have been removed immediately.

The member made a series of allegations that are completely false. First, the member claimed that I had quietly instructed my department to issue a tender to remove asbestos wall sheeting at Mackay TAFE. This is completely untrue. At no time did I personally request the work be undertaken. I can assure the House that all due process and procedures for tendering building rectification work were correctly followed.

The works currently being tendered for the Mackay TAFE were listed on the asbestos register BEMIR well before the Mackay sitting of parliament. The Department of Education and Training identified the work to be undertaken at the TAFE and had the building assessed and placed on the register. This information can be found on the Department of Education and Training's website, and I table an extract from the register as at 9 May.

Tabled paper: Extract of table regarding the Mackay TAFE campus and asbestos [\[5023\]](#).

The Department of Public Works was requested by DET to put the project out to tender as a priority job for the new financial year. To be clear, DET requested the work. The suggestion that I directed the tender is a complete fabrication. It is a serious allegation, however, and I will be writing to the Speaker requesting referral to the Ethics Committee.

Secondly, the member for Mudgeeraba claimed that I denied there were ongoing asbestos rectification works at Mackay TAFE. This is also completely untrue. I told the parliament on 26 May that further works had been listed for A block. Thirdly, the member also stated that I had given a personal guarantee to the Mackay sitting of parliament that material at Mackay TAFE did not contain asbestos. This is also completely untrue. *Hansard* records that I stated my advice was that two cracks were found in pebble aggregate, exposing fibro sheeting, and that these cracks were sealed.

Fourthly, the member for Mudgeeraba claimed that a gerni mark on the wall of A block of Mackay TAFE was proof of a breach of workplace health and safety regulations. That claim is also untrue. This mark was made by a single overspray of a gerni cleaning the concrete wall below the area referred to. The overspray occurred on aggregate coating, not on exposed asbestos as claimed by the member. The allegations of the member are completely untrue and I reject them out of hand.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**APPROPRIATION BILL****Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)****Appropriation Bill****Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee****Report**

Resumed from 3 August (see p. 2369).

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (11.32 am): I rise to speak on the report of the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee's estimates hearing. Firstly, I would like to thank the committee staff for their efforts in ensuring that this inaugural estimates hearing under the new system was a success, and I think it was a success. The ability to question senior bureaucrats and the ability to ask a block of questions I think immeasurably added to the aims of greater scrutiny and transparency. While I think there were still cases where there was a reluctance to answer directly the questions being asked, this process was still a significant improvement over the previous system.

I particularly thank the chair of the committee, the member for Waterford, who did demonstrate goodwill and good intention—while he only emulated your efforts, Mr Deputy Speaker Wendt; they were sensational anyhow—in allowing a free flow of questioning during the hearing.

As the shadow minister for transport, I will confine my remarks to that aspect of the hearing dealing with transport. During the hearing, the Department of Transport and Main Roads I believe failed to adequately answer questions relating to the audit of the department's car parking in Brisbane's CBD and Fortitude Valley. An audit undertaken found the department had lost 16 car parks at a cost of at least \$80,000 to taxpayers. Repeatedly the minister and the department failed to answer basic questions such as how long the car parks had been lost, how they came to be lost, whether they had been found and how much taxpayer money had been wasted.

Issues of waste and poor accounting are of critical importance to the public. Yet the answers given to the committee did not meet that expectation. The department also failed to allay the committee's concerns of fraud relating to car park access cards, following the audit's finding that previous access cards issued to former employees remain unaccounted for.

The hearings confirmed that the new Queensland driver's licence continues to be plagued by poor planning and project management. An Auditor-General's report this year found the cost of the new smart card had blown out by around \$100 million. Furthermore, the cost of a new driver's licence will more than double, from \$73 to \$152 for a five-year licence. In light of this, there appears to be a reticence on behalf of the minister and the department to acknowledge anything has gone wrong with this project at all. Despite the fact that in last year's budget the capital expenditure was due to be completed, delays have meant over \$7 million will be required this year to wrap up the project.

The department and statutory bodies failed to outline any impact of the carbon tax on public transport services. Government departments in other states have already been able to release data on how the carbon tax will likely increase operating costs, but the Bligh government seems more concerned with standing up for Julia Gillard than for Queensland. The minister refused to answer whether the increased operating costs of the carbon tax would be passed on to public transport commuters. Furthermore, it is unclear if any risk management strategy has been put in place to ensure capital works projects do not experience budget blow-outs as a result of the carbon tax.

Public transport fares continue to increase, adding cost-of-living pressures to Queensland families commuting to work. Fares went up by 20 per cent last year and by 15 per cent this year, and they will go up 15 per cent every year until 2014. The latest TransLink tracker shows that more people believe public transport is becoming unaffordable. Despite the massive hikes in public transport fares and the potential for more under Labor's carbon tax, there has been no increase in service to match the public's expectation.

There is particular concern that the performance of TransLink is not entirely well reported. It appears that TransLink does not keep account of the number of customers who request an adjustment to their fares if they believe they were incorrectly charged. It makes it impossible to scrutinise whether the performance of go card fixed fares is fair when TransLink cannot confirm what percentage of requests for adjustments are denied. While the go card is a well-regarded product, it should not be

represented as perfect and free from errors. There is a need for much greater scrutiny of its performance, as well as the performance of TransLink, who manage the complaints of customers who believe they are unfairly charged.

Hon. CA WALLACE (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure) (11.37 am): I would like to thank the members of the committee for their time. I would like to join with my colleague the member for Indooroopilly in doing that. I thank the member for Waterford, who chaired a very good and robust committee. I think we had a very good and wide-ranging discussion that morning.

I want to concentrate on what happened with our summer of woe on our roads across Queensland. At the height of the flooding and the rainfall events this year, we had about 9,170 kilometres of road, or 28 per cent of the state network, damaged; 89 bridges and culverts washed away or broken; 11 ports closed; and 161 maritime aids damaged. It is a credit to my department that as a result of this year's budget we can get on with the job of working around the clock to get that infrastructure fixed and to get Queensland moving.

Regional roads in a state like ours, especially the 14 highways, are our lifeblood. I am sure the member for Mount Isa would agree with me that our roads are our lifeblood in regional Queensland and that we need to get them up and running as soon as possible. It is estimated that up to 80 per cent of the state's rebuilding effort will be spent on roads, making them safer, stronger and more resilient than before. The amount of \$1.4 billion has been budgeted for this year's reconstruction works.

Older roads are being rebuilt to modern standards using improved technology, with thicker road pavement and often a widening of the surface and sealed shoulders. Reconstruction works include bitumen resurfacing, stabilisation, formation repairs, regravelling unsealed surfaces and pavement replacement. Projects are being funded under the joint funded NDRRA—the federal and state government funding arrangements. Both governments are working closely together to deliver Operation Queensland and restore the road network for the people of Queensland. I must say it was disappointing to hear the opposition try to discredit that particular scheme during the estimates hearing that I attended, trying to say that it was not really part of the Main Roads budget, saying that it was not important. Well, go across regional Queensland and see the works happening on—

Dr ROBINSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive and ask for them to be withdrawn. We said no such thing, except valued the disaster funds that were provided.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! I must admit I was taking some advice from the Clerk so I did not hear the comments. Minister, is it possible for you to repeat those comments so I can understand what they were and find out whether the point of order is relevant?

Mr WALLACE: My comments were that I was disappointed that the opposition did not seem to value the works through our NDRRA contributions.

Dr ROBINSON: That is exactly what I find—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cleveland, there was no personal imputation there. Can you tell me what your concern was?

Dr ROBINSON: He is claiming that we made some sort of statement or remark or imputation about the disaster money and that we did not appreciate it. That is not accurate. It is actually false.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you mean 'we' being the LNP?

Dr ROBINSON: I led those questions so the imputation is towards me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I do not believe it is a personal imputation. I cannot see that there is a personal imputation there. Your name was not mentioned or you as the member, I do not believe.

Mr RICKUSS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has found the minister's comments to be offensive and he has asked for them to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, take your seat. I understand the request but I still have not heard that there was a personal imputation. You cannot personally find them offensive if in fact there is no personal connotation and I have not been able to identify that. Upon looking at the transcript—

Mr RICKUSS: He—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, please. Upon looking at the transcript, we can possibly look at the issue then, member for Cleveland, but at this point I cannot determine that there is a personal imputation so there is no point of order. Member for Lockyer, do you wish to make another point of order?

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, just to add to my point of order. The minister used the term about the opposition. Surely we as members of the opposition are being referred to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Certainly, member for Lockyer, but that is quite common. It happens here a thousand times per day. The issue in a point of order is that you find it personally offensive if your name is mentioned and the comments are offensive. I have not seen a transcript and we can look at this later, but I am yet to see that any personal imputation has been made against any member at this point. This is quite a common theme. In this case, there is no point of order and I would ask the member for Thuringowa to continue.

Mr WALLACE: It is a bit like estimates day where they wasted 20 minutes on a frivolous point of order with the chair. They are wasting the time of this parliament and the estimates.

I have got the Executive Council to attend. We have got great works going on and Main Roads is sustaining jobs across the state. This side of the House supports NDRRA. This side of the House supports the work that we are doing to fix up roads across Queensland. We will continue no matter what the opposition says.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.43 am): I offer some comments in relation to the estimates hearings of the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee on behalf of the member for Mudgeeraba, who is indisposed. I submit a statement of reservations on the report on her behalf in relation particularly to the building services hearings.

The LNP members of the committee welcome the recent changes in the estimates committee process as an improvement. However, they offer the following comments on the reformed committee procedures in the spirit of ensuring that estimates committees are able to truly examine the government's appropriations and ensure the executive is held to account.

We believe that insufficient time is allocated for hearings by estimates committees when considering portfolios vital to Queensland's future, resulting in non-government members having insufficient time during estimates committee hearings to pursue issues. Indeed, one hour is hardly enough time to dedicate to such a complex and diverse organisation as the BSA, especially when around half of the time is used up by government members asking self-serving propaganda and time-wasting dorothea dixers. In addition, insufficient opportunities are provided for hearings by estimates committees throughout the year. Notwithstanding our ability to hold the government much better to account, a number of ministers and some senior officers still avoided answering questions on what should have been straightforward issues.

We bring attention to the ongoing issue that the budget papers lack detail, are generic in nature and do not outline the forward years of expenditure, showing the Bligh government is living for the moment rather than forward planning for Queensland's future. Across portfolios, there have been many announcements made by the government since the appropriation bills were introduced that were not included in the budget papers. Such announcements underline the out-of-control spending and the lack of accountability that continues to add to a projected debt of \$85 billion—that is, \$85,000 million—in 2014-15. In addition, it should be noted that questions by Labor members failed to hold the Bligh government accountable for waste, poor planning and a lack of transparency—surprise, surprise.

With regard to building services, the issues of concern centred around avenues for dispute resolution and a blow-out in processing times. In relation to the loophole that allows building contractors to take a matter to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, QCAT, effectively preventing the Building Services Authority from investigating, the minister admitted the existence of a major problem but denied it was disadvantageous to homeowners and failed to give a time frame to rectify the problem. The member for Mudgeeraba asked the minister whether he thought it fair that mums and dads go up against multimillion dollar building companies in long and costly court battles. These all too common David and Goliath confrontations were certainly not the intention when QCAT was launched back in 2009 with great fanfare and the promise of easier resolution outcomes for homeowners. But what has the minister done to close the loophole? Absolutely nothing, and to make matters worse he made the startling admission that there is no money in the budget to protect consumers against predatory contractors from unethical practices such as this. In fact, he said it could be up to two years before the problem is fixed and the gaping loophole is closed, admitting he is prepared to hang out homeowners on meat hooks until then.

The minister spoke of the recent KPMG report and its raft of recommendations as a panacea for all of BSA's problems, but what he did not say is how he is going to fund the much needed reforms, particularly given the advent of national licensing which comes into effect next July and which will no doubt have adverse implications on BSA's licensing revenue. We also learned that delays in BSA dispute processing times have blown out to a record 120 days, representing a staggering 15.4 per cent increase over the last 12 months. The minister stated that increased numbers of subsidence claims—

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SD FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology) (11.48 am): I acknowledge the difficulty that the member for Mermaid Beach had in reading those words that clearly were not his and which he acknowledged were not his. Nobody could read the words of the member for Mudgeeraba and not struggle, I would have thought.

I rise in support of the report from the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee's appropriation examination. The committee considered the building industry aspect of my portfolio, including the Building Services Authority. During the hearing, I was able to advise the committee of the findings of the KPMG report released by the BSA board on Monday, 4 July. This review of the BSA was initiated during the term of my predecessor, the member for Rockhampton, and provides comprehensive reporting on the operations and structure of the authority. The report is available on the BSA website and I table a copy here for the records of the House.

Tabled paper: KPMG report titled 'Queensland Building Services Authority: Organisation Review Project—Final Report—June 2011' [5024].

Most members of this House would have dealt with a constituent issue arising from a building dispute and will know well of the emotive nature of these matters. I was pleased with the overall finding of the KPMG report that the BSA plays an effective role as a building industry regulator and consumer protection advocate. I was also pleased to report to the committee that of the large number of disputes notified to the BSA—about 5,600 in the last financial year—the vast majority of them, approximately 91 per cent, are resolved through mediation.

The shadow minister did spend a lot of time asking questions about QCAT, because what she was attempting to do was to spin a line about BSA matters impacting on the workload of QCAT. Whilst the functions of QCAT are not the responsibility of this portfolio, the general manager of the BSA advised the committee that there were 124 matters on hold while QCAT deliberates on them. This is a very small percentage of the disputes notified to the BSA and in fact the truth of the matter is that the work of the authority to mediate disputes massively reduces the workload of QCAT. One of the core issues related to this is the rights of affected parties to a dispute to have a matter dealt with by a court. There are natural justice considerations for all parties to a dispute. Once a matter is listed with QCAT, it is before the courts and the BSA—quite rightly—is not able to proceed with a parallel process. When a determination is made by QCAT, the courts have ruled—and quite rightly—the BSA is unable to readdress the matter. Section 83 of the Queensland Building Services Authority Act addresses this and specifically precludes the BSA from being involved in matters that have been before the courts.

These provisions of natural justice and the right to have a matter heard by a court provide the opportunities for affected parties to not proceed with BSA mediation and, in some cases, to prolong an outcome to the dispute. The KPMG report addresses these concerns, recommending a triaging approach to mediation with the power to require parties to mediate prior to QCAT referral. But this is a complex matter and it will require consultation with industry and consumer groups and extensive legal consideration followed by legislative change. We must protect consumers and enable rectification of defective work as well as ensuring that builders, many of whom are small businesses, do not have their business viability and livelihoods affected by vexatious litigation. During the examination the shadow minister focused on budget funding for the BSA and budget commitments to the KPMG report. I informed the shadow minister of two fundamental aspects relating to her concerns: firstly, the BSA is self-funding and, secondly, the budget was brought down in early June and the KPMG report was released by the board in early July. We do not as a government bring down budgets that fund reports we have not yet received.

Another key recommendation of the KPMG report was the implementation of a single suite of standard domestic building contracts. This is an important consumer protection recommendation. Similar with standard real estate contracts, a standard building industry contract will promote understanding and enable clearer definition of contractual matters during disputes. This recommendation will require significant consultation with industry and consumers and I urge the BSA to progress with this recommendation. The building industry is critical to Queensland's economy. It is worth an estimated \$45 billion a year and employs some 220,000 Queenslanders. It is feeling the effects of the global financial crisis, natural disasters and tougher lending criteria and it is a challenging time. In April the Building Revival Forum was attended by all levels of government and representatives of the property and building industry and a number of suggestions were made that are implemented in this budget, including the major projects office, the Building Boost and a \$15 billion infrastructure spend. I welcome the support of industry groups to these announcements in the budget.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.52 am): I welcome the opportunity to make some comments about the report of the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee and will restrict my comments to that committee's report to the infrastructure area. The infrastructure area during the estimates committee was an opportunity for the government to once again illustrate the extent to which it has failed. It was an opportunity for the people of Queensland to see how this government operates, if it is that anybody is in any doubt. The government released an infrastructure plan and a so-called discussion paper for the Bruce Highway on the first day of estimates. During the part of the hearing where the minister responsible for infrastructure appeared before this committee, we explored some of the issues surrounding that infrastructure plan and the so-called discussion paper for the Bruce Highway. It became obvious during the course of that hearing—if it were not obvious to everyone before that—that the whole thing was a farce, the whole exercise was a farce. The minister's response to the committee was farcical. The government was in a panic because the

opposition had identified the deficit in infrastructure as an issue for people right across Queensland but especially people who depend on the Bruce Highway. Every community up and down the coast is feeling the effects of years of underinvestment in the Bruce Highway to a point where their communities are being constrained and the economic growth of their communities and the lifestyle available in their communities is being constrained by the inadequacy of that important transport link.

A little over three months ago Campbell Newman, as the LNP election team leader, charged me with the responsibility of travelling right across Queensland and bringing together the concerns that were being expressed repeatedly about the deficit in terms of infrastructure after 12 years of a government that has done basically nothing. So in response this government launched a panic down in the department. It launched a panic response down in the department and the public servants were ringing us up telling us about how the Premier had set the deadline, how nothing else was important, that this report had to be done before estimates, it had to be ready for estimates, it had to be released so that the government got out there first before the LNP had a chance to release any sort of a report. It did that on the first Monday of the estimates, and what a farce it was! It was a list of projects that have been talked about for the last decade and, if this government has its way, they will be talked about for the next decade—a whole list of projects that came as no news to any local government leader, any community leader, anyone who has anything to do with this issue anywhere in the state. From Coolangatta to Cairns, people got that report and found nothing new—the same old list of projects, only a tiny fraction of which had any funding allocated to them. It was the same exercise that the government always indulges in. It was the same approach that this government has taken for 12 years. It was all about managing the media at estimates, not about delivering infrastructure. It was all about managing the politics, not about managing the problem. That is what this government has done for 12 years and that is why the state is in such a mess and that is why in particular the infrastructure across the state is so inadequate.

There were two local issues in my electorate that I used in the estimates committee to illustrate that very point. The infrastructure report identified the three bridges on the Don River as a project in the list of projects. That has been talked about in my electorate for 12 years. For 12 years we have been negotiating with the department and the department has been negotiating with landholders, but it still has not done anything more than drive a peg in the ground. There was no money allocated for that project, just like there was no money allocated for so many other projects. The other projects are passing lanes on the Bruce Highway to the north and the south of Gin Gin. The main street of Gin Gin is the passing lane at the moment. For the 12 years that I have been in this parliament I have been receiving representations and receiving lobbying from everybody who has served on the council in that area and every business owner in that area to get something done. Guess what? The passing lanes are in the infrastructure plan but there is no money again—no money! The only way these infrastructure projects are going to get done—the only way we are going to get anything done about the infrastructure deficit in Queensland, quite apart from another glossy document—is to change the government, change the way infrastructure is funded and change the way it is done, otherwise we are never going to get a different result.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (11.57 am): I rise to speak to the report of the estimates committee for the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee. I thank the member for Bundamba for giving me the chance to participate in this year's estimates committee process while she was otherwise indisposed. As someone who is committed to the reform process, I was deeply disappointed that I was not going to get the chance to participate in this process, but I am glad that I was given that chance. The process was much better and provided much greater opportunity for fact finding. I still think there is more reform to go to ensure that the culture of estimates committees can change from one of political point scoring to one of an opportunity for fact finding that may have political consequences. We have not got there yet, but there is still time. I found the estimates process a really good opportunity to find out information from ministers, particularly about issues that are of importance to the people who I represent. I got an opportunity to ask the Minister for Main Roads questions about planning along the Logan Motorway corridor. The Logan Motorway corridor bisects my electorate and impacts on major residential areas that are up against it.

The Logan Motorway corridor planning study that is currently underway is of great significance to the people I represent. I am glad to see that study is underway, but the people I represent hope that there will be further discussion about how those impacts will be measured. As well, along with the member for Springwood I am deeply interested in the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway that is currently underway. That will have a great benefit not only for people using the motorway but also for cross-town trips across Logan. The minister advised the committee about some of the delays, due to more than 130 days lost to wet weather in the past 12 months, but informed the committee that the major components of that project will be up and going by the end of the year.

I must say that some of the questioning of the Minister for Main Roads by the opposition really did fall flat. There was a question about the member for Broadwater putting up a sign on a roadway. The member for Broadwater had, quite appropriately I thought, thanked motorists for their patience while the

construction project was underway. The sign was paid for out of the member for Broadwater's own pocket and did not in any way touch on the expenditure of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, but we seemed to dedicate a fair part of the hearing to considering that issue.

I think where the opposition spokesman, the member for Cleveland, also fell flat was in his attack on the amount of state government money in the Main Roads budget. Despite opening questions alleging that there was a reduction in state government funding, you can see that in 2011-12 there was \$1.854 billion worth of state government funding and for 2010-11—the prior year—there was \$1.337 billion in state government funding. By anyone's measure, that is a significant increase. So I think that line of questioning really did fall flat.

I think the member for Indooroopilly's comments in the statement of reservation really do not reflect the evidence on the new Queensland driver's licence. The information provided to the committee was quite clearly that the Queensland driver's licence project that was first touted as a public-private partnership has changed significantly and no longer has those same aims. When the public-private partnership elements were withdrawn, we came to the new project. It is not a blow-out, as the member for Indooroopilly claims, but a project different from that which was announced originally.

Finally, I want to address the issue of the attacks by the Leader of the Opposition on the Queensland Infrastructure Plan. I must say that the whole point of a plan is to start planning, to start consulting, to start talking about those things long before the funding for those projects is allocated. How can the government win a debate when the opposition criticises someone for talking about a project that may occur in many years to come and then criticises them for not planning if they do not talk about it? The Queensland Infrastructure Plan had the rigorous discipline of saying, 'These are the projects that we are considering in the years to come. As funding becomes available, we will prioritise those projects in accordance with our plan.' It has been the process in South-East Queensland infrastructure plans for some time. It gives people an idea of what projects will be effected in their area and it gives people and the government an idea of the priorities across government, of where those projects will come, in years to come. This is about good planning, and the dollars will come as those resources become available. I commend the report to the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (12.02 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates committee report of the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee. I will focus my comments on my main roads and marine infrastructure responsibilities. A wide range of questions were asked in the estimates committee hearing. Unfortunately, few were answered. It was clear right from the beginning that the minister sought to hide from the public the failure of his government regarding main roads and marine infrastructure. However, the RACQ—the independent peak motoring body in Queensland—was more forthcoming with the facts. A recent RACQ report has confirmed that Queensland is home to the worst roads in the country. According to the RACQ's Australian Road Assessment Program report, 89 per cent of the Queensland road network is in the high- or medium-risk category. The RACQ concludes that, under the watch of this Labor government, Queensland has many of the most unroadworthy roads in Australia. To this day the minister refuses to acknowledge his government's role in the state's deteriorating road network, preferring to blame everyone else for it.

One thing that the minister and I agreed on was the importance of the NDRRA funds to repairing roads damaged by floods and Cyclone Yasi. I made the point that these funds were welcomed by all and were the legitimate entitlement of Queenslanders, who I noted had been severely impacted by these disasters. Although the minister was happy to speak about the disaster funding, he was less forthcoming about the \$326 million he has slashed from the state's Main Roads budget. Further, he sought in his answers to hide that fact under the disaster funds. The minister can deny that that is the case, but he has been caught red-handed by the RACQ in both slashing the budget and attempting to hide the budget cuts. This is what the RACQ said about the Queensland Main Roads budget for 2011-12 projected—

... if you take out the flood recovery money, Queenslanders are actually getting less for road upgrades.

Executive manager Michael Roth stated further—

... it is disappointing to see that the State's contribution to roads funding is going backwards while motorists are being asked to pay annual increases in registration fees and other government costs such as driver's licences.

That is the view of the independent umpire, but the minister would not face those facts. This is a damning indictment of this government's poor performance and one that the minister is yet to respond to. The budget figures reveal a massive planned reduced investment in state roads—a fact confirmed by the RACQ.

Instead of owning up to his planned budget cuts, the main roads minister—'Wally the slasher'—refused to acknowledge the budget cuts, instead hiding behind the disaster money and falsely claiming that they are making a record investment from state government coffers. At a time when the government should be investing more state funds into roads, in fact it is planning to invest fewer funds. Because the government went broke in a boom and racked up record debt, it is running deficit budgets in the years ahead.

Another question the minister failed to answer adequately was about the underspend or failure to invest in several road projects due to poor planning and delivery. Many projects experienced major underspends in 2010-11: the Dinmore-Goodna stretch of the Ipswich Motorway; the Cooroy-Curra section of the Bruce Highway; a 75 per cent failure to spend on the Cairns south grade separation works; an 84 per cent failure on the Temples Lane to Farrellys Lane duplication near Mackay; and a 36 per cent failure to spend on the Pacific Motorway between Nerang and Worongary. The list goes on and on.

Another area the minister failed to address adequately was the impact of federal Labor's carbon tax on the state Main Roads budget. It has been almost four weeks since the details of the carbon tax were announced by the Prime Minister, and Queensland Labor MPs refuse to stand up for Queenslanders.

Mr MOORHEAD: I rise to a point of order. The member is talking about a carbon tax which, by definition, starts beyond the time covered by the appropriations that are before the House.

Dr ROBINSON: They should be in the forward estimates.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr MOORHEAD: We are talking about approving appropriations for the 2011-12 year. The carbon tax does not start until after that year has been concluded. A discussion about the impacts of the carbon tax cannot be relevant to the debate before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! I take the point from the member for Waterford. Just bear that in mind when making your comments, please, member for Cleveland.

Dr ROBINSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. While the minister was willing to talk about the next 20 years and his Bruce Highway master plan, he would not talk about the next few years of the impact of the carbon tax. The government is clearly in denial about the indisputable facts that Labor's carbon tax will drive up the cost of the construction of roads. It will drive up the cost of roads—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Cleveland, just be careful.

Dr ROBINSON: This Bruce Highway master plan is already in tatters. Until the government identifies which projects will be part of the five per cent cut, every project is in doubt, including projects around the minister's own electorate of Thuringowa and projects in the electorate of Ashgrove. All of those road projects are now in doubt. Also a lot of marine infrastructure spend is now in doubt.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Nicklin, I welcome to the House students and teachers from the Pengari Steiner School in the fabulous electorate of Noosa.

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (12.10 pm): It is great to be here to speak to the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee report which has been tabled in the House. It is also great that the local member for Noosa is acting as Deputy Speaker at the moment. This is history in the making. It is not often that we have a member from the opposition sitting in the chair acting as Deputy Speaker. Congratulations, member for Noosa.

Turning now to the report that was tabled, unfortunately I did not have an opportunity to be involved in the report, but I certainly jump at the opportunity to speak to it because some of the matters in that report touch on important issues in my electorate of Nicklin in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast right beside the electorates of Gympie, Noosa and Maroochydore.

I lead off by thanking the Minister for Main Roads for his support for a number of road projects. Funding has been allocated in the budget for some important streets and roads in my electorate. Yesterday the minister spoke about the Nambour Connection Road and the significant dollars he was able to find in the budget to improve the intersection of the Nambour Connection Road with Blackall Street at the entrance to Woombye. No doubt we will have to wait until the coroner comes down with his findings, but I certainly want to thank the government on behalf of my community for keeping that intersection open. It is important that that intersection remains open for the future of the town of Woombye because the reality is that if that intersection is closed the only other avenue of access to the town of Woombye would be via and past the Woombye State Primary School and that would require a significant allocation of state government money to improve that intersection.

I will now turn to the Cooroy to Curra upgrade which was mentioned in the committee deliberations. Again I thank the minister for his support for my calls for the Cudgerie intersection on that proposed upgraded road to be moved further north. As recently as yesterday the advice from our minister's office was that we are still waiting on the federal minister's decision to approve the proposal before it can go back to our community for further consultation. This certainly will impact on residents in the Noosa and Gympie area as well. It is a good proposal. Our community is behind it. It is relocating the proposed Cudgerie intersection with the Cooroy to Curra upgrade a little bit further north.

I also want to thank the minister for the allocation of \$6.5 million for the upgrade of the Nambour to Mapleton Road. That work is about to start. It is great to see money has continued to be allocated. This is an important link road. I am certainly hoping that in next year's budget, whoever forms the government, will be able to see significant ongoing funding to continue the upgrade of this important link road.

That takes me to the issue of the go card. I really think we need to do more work on improving the accuracy and the reliability of our go card technology. In the last fortnight, believe it or not, I have had two elderly women come to see me with concerns about the accuracy and the technology of the go card. Both of these elderly women have been regular public transport users. In the past they always purchased weekly paper tickets that guaranteed their ability to travel around the Sunshine Coast and get home without any anxiety. Recently they got on the bus, they swiped the card and unfortunately all the money in the card was wiped. One woman was stranded. The second woman had to wait at the bus stop until a regular bus driver travelled the route, recognised her and out of the goodness of his heart he picked her up and delivered her to her normal destination. If I can use those two example to say to the government that we really have to look at other strategies. If the go card technology is not as reliable and accurate as we think it should be, we have to have some other strategies so that bus drivers are able to continue to provide transport for the very people relying on that public transport.

While on the issue of public transport, that takes me to the issue of Sunbus and the debacle on the Sunshine Coast where bus drivers are continually in debate with Sunbus. I think it is high time that our government stepped in and brought the parties to the table for negotiations to resolve it. Many of the residents on the Sunshine Coast are at their wits' end about the disruption that this industrial dispute is causing to all the people on the Sunshine Coast. I note that the Minister for Transport is in the chamber. Later this afternoon I will be meeting with the Minister for Transport about a number of matters involving the Yandina goods shed. The minister and I have had discussions about the proposal to improve the train timetables on the Sunshine Coast. I thank the minister for her involvement. Can I say that we have a long way to go. I think that the best way we can solve the problems of our rail transport is to get real money from the federal government so that the state government can put money in next year's budget to bring forward the railway duplication and upgrade to Nambour. It is most important that we see land continue to be purchased. I think that is an important priority.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs) (12.14 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates committee report for the Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee. At the outset I would like to thank all of the committee members who participated during the process and in particular the chair, Evan Moorhead. I would also like to thank the CEOs who attended, both the CEO of Queensland Rail and the CEO of TransLink.

What was highlighted during this estimates hearing is that the government is continuing its investment into providing transport across Queensland over the next financial year—over \$1.8 billion. Our priority is to build a world-class, sustainable infrastructure system and that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr Seeney: Rubbish! Where were you? You are hallucinating! The longest list of to-dos in the world. The longest list of gonna-dos.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Obviously the Leader of the Opposition is unaware of some of those projects, but I am happy to remind him of them, including the building of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project system.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Leader of the Opposition!

Ms PALASZCZUK: You can have your chance. Also \$47 million was allocated for a joint project between the Australian government, the Moreton Bay Regional Council and, of course, the state government for the Moreton Bay Rail Link. As the Premier announced in this House yesterday, stage 2A of the Eastern Busway is opening on 29 August this year six months ahead of schedule. It is this Labor government that is delivering the busways in South-East Queensland. We are also funding the 125 new and replacement buses for Brisbane with a commitment for more train carriages on the Citytrain network. We have the council promising, under the former lord mayor, new buses. Who is delivering it? The state government. As I made clear to the House today when announcing new CityCats, who has to deliver the CityCats? This state government.

Mr Seeney: Don't take other people's credit.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are promises that cannot be kept. That is what he is doing. You cannot trust Campbell Newman.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Through the chair, please, Minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course, Mr Deputy Speaker. Work is continuing with the Darra to Springfield line. We have the line at the moment from Darra out to Richlands and we are going to be bringing forward the completion of the Richlands to Springfield section two years ahead of schedule. That will be built within the next two years. That is very much welcome for residents in the areas south-west of Brisbane. Our commitment to cycles is very clear: \$36 million to construct state owned cycle links and \$12.3 million in grants to local governments across South-East Queensland. But it does not stop there. We are continuing our regional investment for upgrades to airports. I had the pleasure recently to go up to one of the airports in Far North Queensland. That is great for the Royal Flying

Doctor service. That was the Atherton Airport. This is money being well spent to make sure that our regional communities are also benefiting. We have also got money committed for the City Place bus station in Cairns and, of course, the Yeppoon rail trail.

In relation to the committee report I would like to make a few comments. The member for Indooroopilly claimed in his statement of reservation that despite rises in public transport fares there has been no increase in services. The facts clearly tell a very different story. We recently undertook the biggest overhaul of the rail timetable in 15 years and added 150,000 extra seats to the Ipswich, Caboolture and Sunshine Coast lines. On top of this, we added 50,000 weekly seats to the bus network to improve connectivity. Over the past two years this government has added more than 600,000 weekly seats to the public transport network and we will keep delivering.

Mr Seeney: Campbell Newman did that.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Campbell Newman did not do it. You are in fantasy world. TransLink and Queensland Rail identified minor issues on the Sunshine Coast line and what did we do? We fixed it straightaway. The member for Gympie came out and welcomed the changes. You might want to go and have a chat to him. The member for Indooroopilly also criticised TransLink's reporting. I want to draw the member's attention to the TransLink tracker report, published quarterly, which gives a detailed snapshot of how our public transport network is performing. The member might want to compare the level of data published here in Queensland with that in other states. In a recent report the Tourism and Transport Forum singled out TransLink when they said that the quarterly TransLink Tracker, mapping the performance of the South-East Queensland network, is the benchmark for public transport performance monitoring in Australia. I note the member for Indooroopilly did acknowledge in his statement that the go card is a well regarded product—finally admitting the go card is a well regarded product. I am pleased that the opposition is finally starting to recognise that the go card has been and will continue to be an outstanding success. I commend the committee report to the House.

Report adopted.

Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee be adopted.

 **Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.19 pm): It is my pleasure to support the adoption of the report of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. It was my pleasure to chair the committee. At the outset, I express my gratitude for the cooperation of all of the members of the committee, including the Deputy Chair, Mr Seeney, the member for Callide; my colleagues Desley Scott, the member for Woodridge, and Steve Kilburn, the member for Chatsworth; and the LNP members, Dr Bruce Flegg, the member for Moggill, and Mrs Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin. I also express my thanks to the ministers who appeared before the committee, their respective DGs and other officers, all of whom conducted themselves, in my view, with the appropriate dignity and transparency that is to be expected.

I acknowledge the sterling work done by Ms Bernice Watson, a new research officer to parliament. She was put in the deep end in terms of being a research officer to this committee. I thank her assistants, as well. As I said, Ms Watson was new to parliament and new to the committee, but she provided all that was asked and could be expected of her. I congratulate her on her contribution and wish her well into the future. I mention the very pleasing comments of Dr Flegg in the LNP's reservations, where he was kind enough to make some kind references to me.

The portfolios covered included those of the Treasurer in his capacity as Minister for State Development and Trade; the Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business; the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining; and, of course, the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. The departments include DEEDI, DET and JAG, or parts thereof. They are very important economic portfolios that cover State Development and Trade, the duties of the Coordinator-General, Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business. All of those portfolios are vital to the economic wellbeing and growth of our state. The other portfolios are also very important because they relate to the future economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our citizens, particularly in relation to education, skills and training. Of course, we must not forget the importance, with respect to vocational wellbeing, of the work done by the Workplace Health and Safety section of the industrial relations department, as well as all other work done by that department.

The portfolios covered by this committee's responsibilities are broad and interesting, but also vital in terms of the interests of Queensland. An indication of their importance is provided by the portfolio of education, which, as far as expenditure is concerned, comprises about \$9 billion. Education is at the cornerstone of the Labor Party's belief in the attainment of social justice and its belief that every Queenslanders has the right to fulfil their potential in life. The expenditure of a very large sum of money is well encompassed by its philosophy in that regard.

In terms of my electorate, I was very pleased that the relevant ministers made reference to my need for a state high school at Highfields, the work done by the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, SQIT, and the concerns that I have with respect to the African community. The LNP had some reservations about not having time, but I point out that we finished before 7 pm and we could have gone to nine o'clock or later if they desired. I welcome the support of all of the members to—

(Time expired)

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.24 pm): I am pleased to make a contribution on the consideration of the report of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. At the outset, I acknowledge the chairman, the member for Toowoomba North, for the role that he played. I took part in a number of estimates committee hearings. Some were better than others. I think that the member for Toowoomba North made a good start on changing the culture of the estimates committees. Unfortunately, we still had too many tiresome dorothy dixer questions from members of the government and turgid answers from ministers. Obviously, the same bureaucrat who wrote the question also wrote the answer. The Treasurer is a good example. Anyone who wants to read the *Hansard*—

Mr FRASER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SEENEY: Who has a glass jaw now? Who has a glass jaw?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! There is a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition will be seated.

Mr FRASER: I rise to a point of order. As the Leader of the Opposition well knows, for all the people about whom he might make that reference, I am not one of them. It is untrue and he should withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr SEENEY: I do withdraw. I will make some comments about that part of the estimates committee hearing that dealt with state development and the role of the Coordinator-General, because that falls within my shadow ministerial responsibilities. In response to questions that I asked about the role of the Coordinator-General, the estimates committee heard that there is a crying need for that office to attain the authority that it used to have in the state government. The role of the Coordinator-General has a proud history, but it has been subjugated and almost gutted by this government. I believe that it cannot now play the role that it was always meant to play. I remember in the early days of this Labor government when Jim Elder was known as the 'minister for grunt' and the department of state development was known as the 'department for grunt'. This government has lost its grunt. It has obviously lost that grunt over a period of years. That was obvious in the estimates hearing when I questioned the minister and the Coordinator-General about the role that the Coordinator-General was able to play.

It became obvious, if it were not obvious to anyone before that, that the convoluted and almost indecipherable departmental structure of DEEDI is, in itself, a constraint on economic and state development, as is its horrible twin, DERM. DERM has become the frustration of so many people in Queensland who seek to get approvals for anything. Whether it be a huge project of state significance or a tiny approval for some independent landholder or farmer, people have to run the gauntlet of DERM. In particular, DERM, but DEEDI as well, appear to have broken down into isolated cells of people determined to drive their own philosophical agenda rather than having any coordinated agenda from government.

It is obvious to me, and it became more obvious at the estimates hearing, that there are no clear lines of ministerial authority. It is almost impossible to understand or determine which minister is responsible. The whole concept of ministerial responsibility, which is so important to the Westminster system of government to make things work, has disappeared under the control of this government.

Therefore, it is no wonder the department of state development has presided over things such as the Galilee Basin development, where there has been no coordination of the important transport links that are essential to making that greenfields coal province a reality in the resource hungry world of today. There has been no coordination. The project proponents have invested considerable amounts of money to examine a whole range of proposals that, at its extreme, will mean that we will have two or three rail lines running almost parallel from the coal province to the coast. That would be an absurdity. It is now very difficult to sort that out, because of the incompetence of the government in this process from the beginning. However, it is a challenge that has to be sorted out. Whether it is market forces, whether it is government encouragement or whether it is the direct involvement of government, that issue has to be resolved for the sake of common sense. It has to be resolved for the sake of landholders and for the sake of the state, because the state needs that sort of development and it needs to ensure that benefits flow to the people of Queensland.

So it is with so many other projects that the department of state development and the Coordinator-General have been involved in. The CSG projects in Central Queensland that the Treasurer likes to wax on about are good examples of the complete lack of coordination. The housing issue in places like Gladstone and right throughout the Surat Basin—no coordination—are examples. Companies are trying to meet conditions that are impossible to meet without any coordination from the government, an incompetent government.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (12.29 pm): At the outset I would like to acknowledge the work of the chair of this committee and, indeed, the other members who worked on the committee. I appreciate the opportunity for the examination of the budget for the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation insofar as that relates to my role as the Minister for State Development and Trade. I also make the point that this is a department that is a success story of the reorganisation of government. Far from having the silos of DPI, the silos of DME and the silos of Tourism, we have brought together those strengths of the Queensland economy—the industrial development aspects, the economic development, the small business portfolio, the importance of manufacturing and the list goes on—under one economic agency at the centre of government. More recently, we have brought in the Coordinator-General to ensure that the drive towards delivering projects is at the very core of economic development in the government's intentions and in the government's organisation.

I want to make this point in particular: what we have seen in recent times from those opposite is a very concerning trend. On the budget figures they sought to traduce the independence of the Treasury and draw into question the veracity and the professionalism of those officers. Now we see it continue today as we did at estimates with the Leader of the Opposition traducing the Coordinator-General, a man of some 37 years engineering experience, in whom I unreservedly put my confidence to deliver on his responsibilities and to drive economic responsibility in this state. This is a line that is being run out there in 'tory land' at the moment and is being repeated by Campbell Newman, who likes to shout things to the wall and have them come back to him and then repeat them again.

In the history of governments of all persuasions around Queensland, around Australia and around the world there may have been times when governments have been involved in delaying projects, oftentimes for very good reasons. The LNG industry in this state was simply unimaginable 10 years ago. It was because of this government's efforts that it became a reality. It was unbankable five years ago. In the last couple of years what have we seen? From go to whoa in 2½ years. There is now more than \$40 billion worth of investment ticked off in one term of government. Why is that? Because we have driven that development from the start.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr FRASER: Members opposite do not like to hear that example which, in history's page, will go down as one of the great economic development opportunities delivered by this government and, indeed, by governments all around Australia. I hold that up as exhibits A, B and C to the sort of useless peddling of misinformation that is going on by those opposite to suit their own political agenda.

We remain committed to driving development in that industry and in others, in innovation—through the innovation vouchers program, as I detailed at estimates, and in the BITI program, as I detailed in the parliament yesterday. In that context it is important to inform the House that QMI Solutions and, indeed, AIC, the Australian Institute for Commercialisation, have now joined forces as a new powerhouse of delivering innovation and commercialisation support services. It is an industry organisation driven by this government that has been delivering, particularly in the manufacturing sector. It is utterly important for many businesses who have had the benefit of those services. We seek once again to streamline those services to provide support to businesses operating not only in manufacturing but also more broadly.

It is worth making the point particularly that, when it comes to economic development, this state and this state government have been at the forefront of driving industries like LNG, creating a whole new export industry for the people of Queensland for generations to come. It is an important contribution to the ability to move to cleaner fuels into the future and it should be recognised for the achievement that it is.

In closing, whatever the politics of the day, whatever the politics of convenience that are employed not just by those opposite but also by those outside of this state, I look forward to the time in 20 or 30 years when people reflect upon what has occurred in this state over the last 10 years in the transition to LNG and it will be regarded as a benchmark case for facilitating economic development. It is an industry of the future that is going to deliver a whole new generation of prosperity. Ultimately, just as when we brought in the gas scheme, there will be an occasion when this Leader of the Opposition, who opposed the gas scheme at its inception, will have to stand up and admit that—as he was then, just as he is today—he was wrong.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (12.34 pm): It gives me great pleasure to talk to the report of this committee, and my statement of reservation is included in the report. Let me say at the outset—I will be talking about education—that the LNP puts the greatest emphasis on education because it is the future

of young people in Queensland. That is why I as shadow minister, where appropriate, lend the government our bipartisan support, as I have done in areas like universal access to kindergarten, the move of year 7 into high school and the national curriculum. However, as so much of this committee was focused on the fact that with many of these initiatives the devil is in the detail—as we saw with the government's failed and aborted voucher funding system for kindergartens and the drastic underresourcing of the move of year 7—things that are fundamentally good things to do in the right direction can come unstuck because the execution is not there.

It is right and proper that, as an opposition, we should scrutinise and we should question the government in relation to these matters. I notice the minister for education is one of those ministers who likes to shoot at the person asking the question when he knows he cannot answer the question, and we saw that again in this committee. I also notice that, very frequently in education, the government has followed the positions of the LNP opposition. It has followed them in its recent announcement about weapons. I have spent years trying to urge this government to take seriously the issue of weapons and knives in schools. It might only be a consultant that it has employed, but at least now the government is starting to listen when we say that it is a problem. Likewise, it followed our calls in relation to principals' powers, lifetime bans on serious offenders, kindergarten funding reform and school closures.

Maintenance and safety of schools have been central to many things that I have done since entering parliament, from the early days of making the government aware of asbestos problems. Once again that dominated the hearing. I notice that the minister claimed on Channel 10 just before estimates that no child had been injured due to lack of maintenance. Yet a very serious injury to a child was presented to the committee—a child who had major surgery as a result of a trip hazard in a school that was absolutely peppered with trip hazards, sharp objects, unfenced embankments, unfenced watercourses and the like. It is a paramount duty of a government to keep its schools safe for our children to attend. We will continue to raise those sorts of concerns.

Interestingly, the Education part of this committee was scheduled late on a Friday afternoon and evening, even though Education accounts for nearly a quarter of the budget. The minister had rolled out a couple of announcements to try to fill in what little media attention the committee might have received for education. Interestingly, he brought out the issue of lifetime bans for offending teachers—something we had previously called for. However, when asked the question, 'Why are any seriously offending teachers employed?'—in other words, would the lifetime ban have made a difference?—he did not have an answer.

I noted during the committee hearing that the government is prepared to put \$25 million into making teachers redundant. This is a program that is underway now, yet we know that 550 full-time equivalent year 7 teachers will no longer be required in primary schools after the end of 2014. This is the sort of short-term planning that results in a lot of waste of taxpayer money. The amount of \$25 million is a lot of money in the Education budget.

We also saw the minister's haphazard approach to the planning of schools. The director-general listed a lot of the schools that have very tight capacity with the move of year 7. The minister then went on to say that he was going to go up to Toowoomba North and talk to people and make a decision on the ground there, even though not one of the schools listed by the director-general was anywhere near Toowoomba. They have completely ignored good planning in locating schools.

In my remaining few seconds I extend my thanks to the chair, the member for Toowoomba North, who did a very professional job, to our staff—Bernice Watson, Peter Rogers and Carolyn Heffernan—and to the parliamentary attendants.

(Time expired)

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (12.39 pm): I rise to speak to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee estimates report and recognise also, as other members have done here, that the current system is an improvement on the old system. But I still think there is a way to go, most particularly in the way that the opposition learns to use the extra time it has and the extra opportunity that it has been given to scrutinise the government. If the estimates committee that I sat on was any indication, opposition members have a long way to go in learning how to use that time to properly scrutinise government.

I would particularly like to talk to the education portfolio because I think it is one of the most important portfolios that the government delivers in that it directly impacts on the future generations of Queenslanders like few other departments do. I think that the \$8.78 billion investment in education that has been delivered by this government this year is just one part of an ongoing commitment—or, as was described to me by a principal the other day, a 'relentless commitment'—to improvement that this government has been driving over many years. I think our program of improving education for not just this year but for many years in the past is something this government can be incredibly proud of.

I would like to talk about the \$91 million which is part of the delivery of kindergarten programs through either existing kindies or long-day-care centres. That impacts directly on my electorate in that I recently handed four certificates to long-day-care centres—Carina Heights Child Care and Development, the Cat and Fiddle, the King of the Castle and ABC Carindale—for them to deliver kindergarten programs in long day care. I think that is one of those programs that does not always get the attention it is due, but it is something that will provide real benefits to our children to prepare them for prep year and year 1 and as they move through their education. Once again that is a small part of an ongoing massive program of improvement and investment that this government has driven—sometimes having to do it without the support of the opposition and without the support of LNP members at other levels of government. But we have continued on and delivered it anyway.

We are also doubling the size of the C&K Carina Kindergarten. Just last week I was visiting the site of the new kindergarten at the Gumdale State School. Once again that is something that will deliver real outcomes to the children not only in my electorate but throughout Queensland.

We have also seen this government introduce the prep year. I think that is one of the greatest changes to education in Queensland's history. I was not here at the time, but I remember listening to the whingeing and moaning coming from LNP members when this government introduced prep. When I talk to teachers now—I talk to year 1 teachers and primary school teachers—they say that it has been a massive change and it has been of such a benefit to our children and to everyone else in Queensland.

There is also funding in this budget for the continuation of the flying start initiative—another fantastic initiative. There is \$9.6 million to implement some of those flying start initiatives, including the move from year 7 to high school in 2015, and there is the allocation of \$7.5 million to provide for infrastructure and buildings to facilitate that move. Once again, we hear the LNP, the opposition, complaining about this. It will go down just as it did with the prep year. We will look back at this and say what a great initiative, once again driven through by the goodwill of this government against the negativity of the opposition.

There is also \$26.2 million to complete the rollout of a \$72.3 million literacy and numeracy program. Importantly, there is an increase in the school maintenance budget of \$50 million—an increase of 30 per cent—which takes it up to \$134 million a year. I was interested to listen to the member for Moggill who spent nearly the entire time that he had quizzing the education minister about a school in his electorate. He is supposed to be the opposition spokesperson for education in Queensland. What a wasted opportunity. Here again we hear this fallacy that you can provide schools in which no-one will ever be hurt under any circumstances. We can do that. We can pad the walls of every room, we can turn it into a mental health institution and we can guarantee the children will be safe. It will not be providing educational outcomes. It will simply be a place where we lock kids away and do not let them do anything—hardly conducive to a great educational outcome. What the education spokesman showed us at the estimates hearing is that those opposite are not ready to govern at any level.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.44 pm): As a member of the Industry, Education Training and Industrial Relations Committee, I make the following comments in relation to the tourism, manufacturing and small business section of the estimates report, and I acknowledge all of those involved. Tourism sits in DEEDI, which might explain its omission in this committee's title, but, then again, the Treasurer did go to some length to explain that the tourism portfolio was only one of several management units under his control—a comment that supports the growing perception that Labor at local, state and federal levels takes Queensland's \$9 billion tourism industry for granted, treating it as a limitless cash cow that they can abuse and milk at their whim.

Tourism, manufacturing and small business are responsible for employing hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders and generating billions of dollars for the state's economy, yet consideration of the portfolio was only given 60 minutes. Given the significant challenges these industries are facing, the brief period of time allocated in the 2011 estimates hearings could easily be viewed by many affected businesses as insulting and highly unsatisfactory. One hour shared between the opposition and the government was nowhere near enough time to examine all three components of this portfolio in the manner that they deserved.

Budgets and actual spends for supplies and services between 2008-09 and 2010-11 show a pattern of overspending that totals \$41 million over a three-year period. Budget allocations are rarely met and, from the minister's unconvincing and unsupported responses, it appears there is little or no attempt to maintain some form of doing so in the future. The accompanying footnotes did not identify in set terms or amounts the reasons for these overspends. This action in itself is misleading and reveals a tired, toxic Labor government trying to hide its sins.

Put simply, the budget papers surrounding spending details are inadequate. Budget items should be included in notes contained in budget papers. Unsatisfactory answers given with regard to funding deficits were neither helpful nor specific. The minister did not or could not give a straight answer, and the fact remains that her department overspent its budget. Of particular concern is the minister's belief that Queensland does not need a current aviation plan. The Queensland Commercial and Tourism Aviation

Plan 2008-10 has well and truly expired and there is no sign of a replacement plan with an up-to-date policy. The minister brushed aside my question, revealing either arrogance or ignorance or both in regard to this subject. Meanwhile we have a struggling tourism industry reliant upon aviation to support it, saddled with a minister who supports a carbon tax which could cripple it.

On 11 March this year this minister told everyone to 'just wait and see' what Julia Gillard and Bob Brown had in store for them with the carbon tax. Well, they have waited and, now the carbon tax details have been released, it is clear that they will all suffer from higher domestic airfares, higher room rates, higher transport costs and higher power rates. Tourism in particular will be made less competitive and less attractive at a time when this Labor government is urging us to holiday in Queensland, and this by a minister who was caught out spruiking super cheap deals that did not exist.

Labor is forcing a tax on us that will see more Aussies holiday overseas and bypass Queensland. But it appears that the honourable member for Whitsunday had planned for the carbon tax all along. During estimates she said—

Do you know, we did not wait for anything. We have been working with tourism businesses, with manufacturing businesses and with small businesses in many sectors for many years now on preparing them to succeed and be sustainable within a carbon constrained economy.

If the minister knew the carbon tax was coming, why did she tell businesses to just 'wait and see'? Last week on a visit to the Whitsundays residents labelled the member for Whitsunday the 'minister for hide and seek' because she had been mute on how the carbon tax will affect their ailing businesses. Why hasn't the member for Whitsunday fronted the already struggling businesses in her own electorate—some 40 of them forced to close their doors? What does she have to say to the business owners I have met who have not been able to pay themselves a wage for 12 months or the charter operator who had to lay off half their staff? Why didn't she demand answers from her Labor mate Mayor Brunner when he recently slashed \$100,000 from a \$250,000 local tourism budget?

I will tell you why: because she supports the carbon tax 100 per cent in any shape or form. She certainly does not support her constituents. She said as much at estimates. The minister tried to hide behind a distraction called the pledge which she stated was for the benefit of operators, but in truth any operators wanting to go on the Tourism Queensland sponsored roadshow in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria in May had to sign up. Instructions were given that signing up to the pledge was a prerequisite. Participants had to wear a branded shirt and be a member of an RTO. This was not about earning a certificate because you were an accredited provider; this was coercion to be selected to attend an interstate marketing campaign.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.50 pm): I rise to speak on the report following the estimates hearing conducted by the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. It is a great honour to be the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations in a Labor government that places so much emphasis on educating the future generations of Queenslanders as well as focusing on protecting workers' rights. This commitment is backed by substantial allocations in the 2011-12 state budget—a record operational education budget of \$7.4 billion and \$123.9 million for industrial relations and worker safety. In particular, our education reform agenda is again at the forefront of funding in 2011-12, with \$622 million allocated over the budget estimates to implement our flying start agenda, which includes year 7 joining high school in 2015 and further funding provided to help make kindergarten available to all children by 2014.

With so many positive initiatives happening within the education portfolio, I was surprised to read the statement of reservations from the member for Moggill—although with his constant negativity, carping and bringing down of Queensland, it should not have been a surprise at all. In particular, he made the absolutely vacuous and unsubstantiated claim that somehow by having the estimates hearing on a Friday afternoon the government was avoiding scrutiny. What a joke. The statement of reservations would be funny if it were not so serious.

This comment is even more laughable considering the member for Moggill was writing questions at the end of the hearing. He had not prepared for the hearing; he was still writing questions. He was ill-prepared and this demonstrates his lack of understanding and his lack of depth of knowledge of the portfolio. The member for Moggill follows in the fine footsteps of the member for Redlands, as he tweeted on that occasion that 'Friday is POETS day'—ping off early, tomorrow's Saturday. That is the attitude of the member for Moggill. The reality is for the member for Moggill, and I will tell him today through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that governing the great state of Queensland is a 24/7 job. The people of Queensland deserve better than someone who was writing questions at the end of the hearing and someone who was trying to get out of the hearing early so he could escape and do something else.

The most pressing issue for the member for Moggill in the state education system—and it is a system that comprises 1,227 schools, almost half a million students and almost 40,000 full-time equivalent teachers—was the issue of flood run-off at the Chapel Hill State School. Member for Moggill, do not misrepresent my comments as I speak on this today; I believe the issue of run-off at Chapel Hill is serious and that is why we have arranged for a hydraulic engineer, an arborist—who will check other

matters at the school—and the director-general of education and training to visit the school in the past three weeks. We have allocated more than \$160,000 so far this year for maintenance at Chapel Hill State School, including \$129,213 for drainage works. We have injected an extra \$50 million this year into maintenance, lifting the state-wide total to a record \$134.8 million—the highest annual maintenance expenditure in the history of schools in Queensland.

But let us be clear. This issue of run-off at Chapel Hill State School has been around since the school was built in 1978—33 years ago. Can I say through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this was not a problem for National Party education ministers Val Bird, Bill Gunn, Lin Powell, Mike Ahern or Brian Littleproud or the Liberal education minister Bob Quinn. This was not a problem for them and not a problem for the member for Moggill, who has been in this House for seven years, until he raised it at the estimates hearing. This was nothing more than a cheap shot for a cheap headline in his local newspaper or a sound bite for the six o'clock news. We will continue to work with the school community to deliver an outcome for them.

The closest the LNP has got to an education policy was what Bruce McIver said at the Liberal National Party conference on 15 July—the same day as the education estimates hearing. He said that Queensland students are being brainwashed in Queensland schools. The Liberal National Party members would have the education curriculum written by politicians and party hacks like Bruce McIver, not by educators. They would have curriculum written by those party hacks and not educators. It is a slur on every teacher in Queensland schools when they are denigrated in that way.

I will not say much about the member for Mirani. He did not know the difference between a WorkCover claim and a court case. He has no idea. This is a shadow minister who cannot make the cut on the seven policy committees that have been created. In fact, there are 11 committees in total in this parliament—including the seven policy committees—and he cannot get on to one of them. The Liberal National Party have promoted two parliamentary secretaries and a backbencher to policy committees but the member for Mirani cannot make the cut. So much for the Liberal National Party's commitment to industrial relations and labour relations in this state.

I thank all government members for their contribution to a very important and thoughtful report.

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (12.55 pm): I thank the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations for his kind words. At least he recognises that I have some ability, rather than some of his cohorts who actually have to read a speech in this parliament.

I would like to comment on the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee hearing. I thought the member for Toowoomba North handled the committee hearings well and I believe the new format is a step forward. Indeed, the cross-flow of questions and answers was far better than I have experienced in the many years I have sat on committees. I was not a member of the committee as such—I was an invitee—and I thank the committee for giving me the ability to participate.

One of the issues I raised at the committee hearing related to the Southbank Institute of Technology. It is a private-public partnership. Unfortunately, the answers to our questions on notice were not really conducive to getting a clear understanding of the financial situation that the Southbank Institute of Technology finds itself in. With declining numbers and revenue, the government through the minister was unable to guarantee that the government over a period of time will guarantee the shortfalls that are becoming quite significant in the continued operation of the Southbank Institute of Technology. I said at the committee hearing that this is a magnificent facility. The board will have to do some very innovative budgeting to make sure the government is not left with a big hole to fill in the coming years. I think I made that point fairly well—that even though there are issues they have to be addressed now and addressed very quickly.

One of the most important challenges we face in this parliament this year and in the next few years is the training of our young people. The figures that are coming out of Central Queensland and across Queensland in terms of the skilled workforce we require in the state are unbelievable. I made the point at the committee hearing that there are huge numbers of immigrant workers coming into Queensland on 457 visas who are taking very highly paid jobs in our Queensland workforce and that there are 127,800 people in Queensland who are unemployed. In some areas in Queensland, we have a youth unemployment rate of more than 20 per cent. This is an indictment on our government. Quite frankly, instead of making politics like the previous minister made in this House and instead of criticising opposition members, it is about time the minister did his job properly and was positive about the way in which he handles his portfolio. One of the biggest challenges we have—and I will repeat it again—is getting our young people and our long-term unemployed back into the workforce and doing profitable jobs that are conducive to their lifestyle et cetera.

The other issue I raised in the hearing was the QPET report, which at that stage had not been released. I see that it now has been released, and thankfully it has come forward. I have not had a great chance to go right through the report, but it appears that there is another government task force being set up and there was a cost of \$400,000 for the report. In terms of the federal direction in terms of training, I have some fears that this whole issue is becoming redundant, and I made that point particularly at the hearings.

I also raised at the hearings section 666 of the Industrial Relations Act, which states that there are I believe 20 penalty points for each day that an employer does not properly pay their employee. On that particular Friday of the committee hearing, it had been 455 days since Queensland Health had properly and successfully paid its employees. The government through the minister was all over the place in terms of where it sits in terms of properly paying its employees. I made the point that if I was a businessman who had not paid my employees for 455 days, this government would be all over me like a rash.

I believe great points were raised in the estimates committee hearings. It is about time this government governed instead of being in the situation where it is continually attacking members of the opposition.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Crime and Misconduct Commission; Mclver, Mr B

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 pm): On 18 July the CMC announced via press release that it had found no evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the president of the LNP, Mr Bruce Mclver. What the CMC release did not say was that the complaint was referred to it by the secretary of the Labor Party on or about 19 March—four months earlier—on the basis of an unsubstantiated media report. There was no other evidence available then and there is still none today to substantiate the accusation in any way. It is unacceptable that the CMC took four months to dismiss such an unsubstantiated and politically motivated complaint. For four months this remained a live political issue while opportunists such as the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer were able to speculate wildly, protected by the privilege of this parliament, with the clear political intention of attacking the integrity of a man they could not otherwise impugn.

It should have been reasonable for the CMC to be at least alert to the possibility that it was being used by the Labor Party to gain political advantage in an opportunistic way and, in the absence of any evidence or collaboration of the original accusation, deal with the matter expeditiously. No Queenslanders faced with such a flimsy accusation should be subject to four months of nerve-grinding uncertainty while the CMC exercises its extraordinary powers to subject a whole range of that person's associates to Star Chamber like grilling for up to eight hours at a time—and that is what happened to people who were associated with Bruce Mclver—and, if it chose, the CMC could bug their phones and install listening devices in their homes and workplaces.

The role of the CMC is to fight official corruption, not to become involved in politics by action or omission. By failing to resolve this obviously political issue in a reasonable time frame that reflected the veracity of the accusation on the evidence available, the CMC has put itself in a position where its political independence can and should be legitimately questioned. Every Queenslanders should be able to have confidence in the CMC and the legitimate role that it should play. The treatment of Bruce Mclver by the CMC in this issue will undermine that confidence that every Queenslanders should have.

(Time expired)

Mount Isa Hospital

 **Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (2.32 pm): I rise to commend the Mount Isa Hospital on its success in recently recruiting one of the largest numbers of junior doctors in the hospital's history. Five years ago the hospital was receiving first preferences in the annual round of medical recruitment from only three or four newly qualified Australian registered junior doctors. This year the hospital received 31 first-preference applications from junior doctors seeking resident medical officer positions, with 18 of those doctors already holding Australian health practitioner registration. New training schemes and improved facilities have turned Mount Isa Hospital into the hospital of first choice for many junior doctors just starting out in their medical careers.

Part of stage 1 of Mount Isa Hospital's \$65 million redevelopment is a purpose-built RMO room, which was opened on 7 July, which is providing a comfortable and great space to study, rest, hold meetings and catch up with colleagues. I recently had the pleasure of visiting this new room and met and spoke with Dr Matthew Lynch, Dr David Shilton, Dr Sathiyaseelan and the very hardworking and committed Dr Ulrich Orda, head of our emergency services department.

Mount Isa Hospital also now holds accreditation with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine for primary rural and remote skills training and advanced skills training in emergency medicine, obstetrics and anaesthetics. This means that more RMOs can access more training in this state's most remote major regional centre and gain experiences which will contribute greatly to their

professional development. I commend Queensland Health in recruiting and training these new doctors. Along with these new staff, the Bligh government is also delivering 16 new treatment spaces in our emergency department and a regional cancer centre and will provide new services—

(Time expired)

Pumicestone Passage, Watercraft

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (2.34 pm): I want to talk about the issue of Pumicestone Passage, a body of water that sits between Bribie Island, Golden Beach, Pelican Waters and Diamond Head in Caloundra, and in particular a debate that has now been ongoing for some time with regard to whether jet skis and other watercraft should be banned. The argument centres around three different issues: firstly, the impact those craft will have on the environment; secondly, the population boom that will occur in Caloundra, particularly with the onset of Caloundra South over the next 10, 15 or 20 years; and, thirdly, the need to understand that Caloundra and indeed the Sunshine Coast are very strong tourism destinations.

The first two—that is, the environment and the population—speak for themselves. There is certainly a need to look at the passage closely in relation to overpopulation of the area to ensure the passage itself is not loved to death. Therefore, there is clearly a need to consider whether jet skis and other watercraft should be banned. However, caution should be taken when considering that point because many people do come to the passage as tourists. They come to Caloundra as tourists and they spend large sums of money on accommodation, food, beverages and other initiatives and activities right across the Sunshine Coast.

I am happy to say that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council is now closely looking at the issue and will put together a draft proposal for consultation with the community in the near future. It is incumbent upon all people across Caloundra to be actively involved in this process and to understand the pros and cons of all options that are put forward. It is most important that we start this process almost immediately because, as we know, time ticks by very quickly and 15 or 20 years can pass by before you know it. What we do not want to see is that in 10 or 15 years time we are still having the same debate as to what should occur. I urge all Caloundra residents to be involved in this very important process.

Newman, Mr C

 **Ms JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (2.37 pm): More than three weeks ago I challenged Campbell Newman to front Ashgrove voters and face me in a local debate about local issues. What I suggested was a community town hall meeting organised by an independent non-political third party at which Mr Newman and I could take questions from genuine local voters on issues that concerned them. I challenged him to submit to questions from people who live, work, operate a business or have some other direct personal interest in our area such as sending their children to one of our local schools. What was the response from the LNP absentee candidate? He fobbed off locals and their right to question candidates by saying that he would not even consider the idea of any debate until after the state election is called, up to another eight months away.

Fortunately, ABC Radio's Madonna King recognises the public interest in such a forum and has agreed to host a program where I as the member for Ashgrove along with other endorsed candidates can be quizzed by locals. Not surprisingly, Mr Newman suddenly revised his position—something we are all getting very used to—and reluctantly agreed to participate, but he is still not going to give Ashgrove voters' concerns any priority. I advised the ABC that I would be available anytime, but Mr Newman has told the ABC that he could not possibly squeeze the people of Ashgrove into his schedule until 9 September at the earliest. This is another five weeks away and some six months after he was endorsed as the LNP candidate for Ashgrove. I will never hide from answering difficult questions that matter to us locally, and neither would any member of parliament who is genuinely committed to the community they are in this House to represent. Mr Newman clearly thinks being questioned by Ashgrove locals is not a priority for him and is an imposition. My challenge today to Mr Newman is to tell the people in our community why he rates them so lowly.

Year 7

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (2.39 pm): During the recent estimates committee hearing the Minister for Education accused the opposition of using back-of-the-envelope figures for the costing for the move of year 7 to high school. The minister was trying to defend his own very poor estimates of the funding. Then the real answer came—not from the minister but from the director-general—that the audit has yet to be done. We do not know what it will cost to move year 7 into high school. As that audit is underway—it has no definite time frame—I call on the government to ensure that it is done openly and that at each of the high schools, particularly those that are already close to or above capacity, the audit

process is done openly with the school communities so that the government understands the facilities that are needed. It is not just a case of plonking demountable classrooms onto school ovals. High school education involves much, much more than that.

There is also another range of complexities, such as the effect on children from rural and remote areas who require distance education and the effect on terrific schools such as Toowoomba Preparatory School, which will be significantly impacted by the changes. The changes will also affect boarding schools, particularly the state's co-educational boarding schools. We will now have hundreds of young Queenslanders—some as young as 11—attending high school and needing to board. So many more of our high schools in this state will be enrolment managed, meaning that people cannot choose which high school they want their children to attend. In some cases, these children cannot even attend their own local high school. These are the matters that the government needs to address.

(Time expired)

Quest Business Achievers Awards

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (2.41 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, last Friday night I was very pleased to attend the *Quest* newspaper business achievers awards along with yourself, the member for Bulimba, and the member for Greenslopes. I was very happy that three local businesses from my electorate picked up awards. I would like to congratulate Sandy Small and her business partner, Shane Ridge, from Carina Curves for picking up two awards. They picked up the Brisbane City Community Contribution Award and the Best Fitness and Sport Award. Sandy and her crew at the Curves Carina do a great deal of work in raising money for breast cancer. They are at nearly every community event that I go to and are very passionate and connected members of the local community. Also to pick up an award for the second year running was Carina North Meats. Michael and Sherry James are back-to-back winners. They won it last year. Michael and Sherry are small business people who contribute a lot to the local community. I work with them often doing fundraising barbecues. In fact, this year, through the collaboration that I have with Michael and his wife at their butcher shop, we have raised over \$4,500 for local schools and community charities and fundraising events. Also at the winner's table was the Carina Leagues Club. This leagues club is connected very much to the local community. It contributes a lot. I would like to congratulate Wade Core, Doug Wakefield and the team at the Carina Leagues Club for winning this award. Over the past 12 months the Carina Leagues Club has donated \$10,000 to five local schools to build sustainable gardens. They are a platinum sponsor of the fete at St Martin's, which is in my electorate. They also support 17 different sports clubs through their contribution to the Clem Jones Centre.

I think it is interesting that the three businesses that picked up awards from my local community are all businesses that are connected to the local community. They contribute greatly to the local community and support the members of our local community. I congratulate them all on their awards.

Teenage Adventure Camp Queensland; Kirra Surf Life Saving Club

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.43 pm): In the final week of June I was delighted to attend the annual Teenage Adventure Camp Queensland—TAC-Q—which was held at Currumbin. This week-long camp offers teenagers with life-threatening and debilitating diseases the chance to have some fun in a safe and organised environment. The camps have been running at Currumbin since 1995, with this year's organiser, David Cameron, providing an unforgettable experience for the 26 campers as well as the 23 volunteer carers. Campers came from as far north as Cairns and Proserpine and as far south as Ballarat in Victoria to take part in the week of fun. Highlights included a wheelchair disco, helicopter flights, Harley-Davidson rides and a trip to Jupiters casino to watch the live show *Stomp*.

As the patron of TAC-Q, the highlight of the camp is always the final dinner, held on the last night of the camp where you can see how the campers have grown and developed over the week, challenging themselves beyond their known abilities and you witness the beaming smiles on each of their faces. I give many thanks to David Cameron and his team.

I also wish to congratulate the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club, which was this year's winner of the Point Danger branch Patrol Club of the Year and recipient of my annual donation of a new surf rescue board. Each year, the winner of the Point Danger Patrol Club of the Year is determined using a point-score system, with the Kirra Surf Life Saving Club coming out on top with 843 points—over 70 points ahead of their nearest competing club. Surf-lifesaving has a deep history in Currumbin and it is an integral part of the community. Of the 11 clubs in the Point Danger branch, eight are situated in the Currumbin electorate. Together over the past 12 months those 11 clubs within the Point Danger branch performed 288 rescues, 6,550 warnings and 2,360 first-aid treatments, with no lives lost between the flags. I salute them all.

Our surf clubs are filled with hardworking, dedicated lifesavers and volunteers who put in hundreds of hours on patrol, providing an invaluable service to the many tourists and locals who flock to our beaches all year round, particularly at Currumbin.

Year 7

 **Ms O'NEILL** (Kallangur—ALP) (2.45 pm): As part of this government's A Flying Start for Queensland Children, from 2015 year 7 will become the first year of high school in Queensland. This change is part of an exciting 10-year journey of reform. It follows the successful introduction of a prep year in 2007. Moving year 7 is a significant reform that will benefit students at all Queensland schools.

I am very excited that a new high school in Murrumba Downs in my electorate will be the first state school in Queensland to trial year 7 in high school. It is a great chance for the students to enjoy not only a brand-new school but also to take advantage of the resource and curriculum changes that will give them the very best start to high school. This yet to be formally named high school at Murrumba Downs is situated on the same block as the fabulous Undurba State School. It has been designed to take advantage of the trees and the dam on the property and is Green Star rated to four stars.

The design and maintenance of this school will reduce the consumption of energy, water and resources. The classrooms are designed to cool naturally, with high louvred windows and vaulted ceilings to ensure airflow, which means that the students will be comfortable without the need for air conditioning. I have been into the rooms on hot days and it is amazing how effective the design is.

With the appointment of Mr Paul Pengelly as principal, the school is literally off to a flying start. He has held meetings with the parents of the new year 7 students and an informative, very well attended public meeting for interested parents and residents. Paul has firm views on respect and responsibility and school pride, and I know the students and parents are in good hands. His entertaining information sessions resulted in an unprecedented, in my experience, 70 people signing up to be part of a consultative group to assist with and support the development of the new school as well as choose uniforms, set up the P&C, the tuckshop et cetera.

Having a new high school, combined with being the first school to trial year 7, is wonderful news for the people of the Kallangur electorate. This great school joins with the other great schools in Kallangur to give kids the best start in life.

Go Card

 **Mr EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (2.47 pm): The public expects to be told the truth by this state government and its agencies. But in recent days, once again, we have seen a lack of openness and transparency from this tired, long-term Labor government. Today, there are reports that raise significant questions about both the accuracy of information and evasion by the state government and its transit authority, TransLink, with regard to its go card system. Internal emails suggest that TransLink failed to answer media questions about a go card fault after intervention from the body's chief executive, Peter Strachan.

Straightforward and appropriate questions were asked by the *Brisbane Times* of TransLink about how many people were incorrectly issued with a fixed fare of \$5 due to a glitch in the system earlier this year. The internal emails released under right to information laws to Channel 7 show that the *Brisbane Times* received no written response on the issue and was never told how many people had been affected, apparently after the TransLink chief executive replied to the media manager with a short email saying, 'I think this should be a simple it's all fixed. No story. Move along.' This comes after the same right to information search revealed that three years after go cards were introduced into South-East Queensland the system is still wracked with unreliability, with almost one in 10 card readers, or about 2,000, malfunctioning every month. Despite this malfunction rate, detailed in these internal TransLink documents, the TransLink CEO continues to publicly claim that the system has a reliability rate of 99 per cent.

Although the go card is a well-regarded product, it should not be represented as perfect and free from errors. The government and its agencies need to be open, transparent and accountable, not evading responsibility and hiding the truth.

Women in Hard Hats

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (2.48 pm): Next Wednesday I am meeting with female students at Forest Lake State High School in my electorate. I will be wearing my pink hard hat to promote our government's new Girls in Hard Hats program. This program encourages girls to think about taking up a career in the male-dominated trades and industries. Girls in Hard Hats is run by the Office of Women in my department and offers information, exposure to female role models in the trades and try-a-trade opportunities to young women. Around 140,000 skilled workers are needed in the mining and energy sectors in the next three years alone in Queensland. These industries need women. It is no longer a choice. Trade careers for women need to be a reality not a novelty.

In Queensland the gender mix in apprenticeships is 86 per cent male and only 14 per cent female. Of these apprenticeships females make up only two per cent of apprenticeships in the male-dominated areas of automotive, construction and utilities. In construction there are 10,700 male apprentices and only 209 female apprentices. It is the male-dominated trades that are the higher paid. Hairdressing and child care remain the lowest paid trades. Girls in Hard Hats is saying to girls that you can have an exciting non-traditional career and greater economic security.

The shadow minister for women, the member for Maroochydore, has a curious view about Girls in Hard Hats, though. She stated that quite frankly it is flippant and tokenistic. I do not know what is tokenistic about women having a share of the action in the higher paid trades. I do not know what is tokenistic about women advancing their economic security. I urge all members to get out to their schools, get a pink hard hat—I will happily give you one—and promote Girls in Hard Hats.

Department of Environment and Resource Management, Water Act 2000

 **Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (2.50 pm): On Tuesday night in the adjournment debate I spoke about the matter of Rod Reilly and his difficulties having his issues addressed and his correspondence disappearing in the offices of the department. It has been some time since Mr Reilly's issues arose, but he has said to both the honourable Kate Jones MP and John Bradley in one of his letters—

I have suffered significant personal and financial loss as a direct result of actions by the then minister and his department.

He was referring back to when Minister Robertson was the minister. He goes on to say—

We request that you agree to enter into an agreement to fully and adequately compensate for all losses, both financial and personal, suffered as a result of actions by the then minister and his department.

One can see that Mr Reilly has a lot of concerns. I table two documents that I had hoped to table on Tuesday, but they only arrived after I had given the speech and I was not aware that I would get to make a two minute speech today.

Tabled paper: Department of Natural Resources briefing note, dated 19 April 2002, titled 'Recommendations of Referral Panel—Application by Cubbie Station' [\[5025\]](#).

Tabled paper: Department of Natural Resources and Mines briefing note, dated 17 July 2003, titled 'Recommendations of Referral Panel—Application by Cubbie Station' [\[5026\]](#).

The briefing paper to the minister was compiled on 16 August 2003. It was received in the ministerial office on 16 July. It was signed off, both by the adviser and the minister, on 17 June. That is almost a month to the day before the briefing paper was actually given to the minister. So there needs to be some clarification as to how that occurred. There also needs to be clarification as to why, under FOI, there is a note to Rod which says—

This got lost somewhere in the system.

That was for almost 18 months.

(Time expired)

Townsville Creative Technologies College

 **Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.53 pm): Last week I joined the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining, Stirling Hinchliffe, at the opening of the Townsville Creative Technologies College which I am very excited about because it is a development that means for Townsville, as a major regional centre and the second capital of Queensland, something pretty stupendous. This education and training centre will complement the already strong community of artists in Townsville. It is a one-of-its-kind facility drawing budding artists eager to learn about new technologies to the city.

The college will specialise in digital and creative technologies, which is a first for Queensland, and will be the major training hub for digital skills in North Queensland. This means graphic art and design, audio and music production, 3D animation, game programming and much more. I cannot stress enough how important it is that opportunities are provided to learn new skills and knowledge to be better prepared and equipped for today's workforce. This college will certainly do that.

I cannot leave out the main driver for the centre, Bjarne Ohlin, whose dream has been realised. Not only will it cater to young people as they make their way out of school and into employment, but it will also provide opportunities for mature age students keen to develop their professional skills. Without Bjarne's hard work, commitment and passion it would not have happened. By far the biggest benefit of this development in North Queensland is the fact that travelling long distances interstate will be a thing of the past. The expertise as a first digital creative hub in Queensland is right here in the north and it is truly welcome news indeed.

It is a further demonstration of this government's commitment to regional Queensland. Townsville is home to a number of creative and artistic people so to have this training facility where they can develop their talents and broaden their knowledge and also to demonstrate their abilities and secure jobs in their industry will not only benefit the Townsville community but it will enrich Queensland. It is early days for the college. The first cohort began in July but there has already been a significant show of interest from locals who are eager to become students—150 at the last count.

(Time expired)

Kindergarten Funding

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (2.55 pm): Last year when the Labor government signed up to the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education they agreed to provide universal access to kindergarten for all Queensland four year olds. Far from providing universal access to kindy, this government is denying access to these four year olds who need it most: bush children and children with special needs. Why? Because unless you fit their box, unless you go full time 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year you do not matter to this government. Under the Bligh government, the parents of sick, disabled and bush children must pay fees for three days even if they only attend for one. The alternative is no kindy.

This is unAustralian and a disgrace. Bush children in Gregory live a long way from the nearest school where a kindy is located. At five years old they must commence prep. This is not with other preppies but in a mixed age classroom at a single teacher school or via distance education. They must know how to take direction and correction. Given their isolation and the extra challenges of their prep year, to succeed these four year olds are desperately in need of a kindy year. In the past they have been able to attend a full day once a week with their parents making a round trip into town. This may be the only real interaction with a group of peers and authority figures who are not family members.

My own children were a part of this category known as country casuals. I know how important it was to them. While they are called country casuals, bush children's enrolment are really shared enrolments. The enrolment position for one town child may cater to two or three bush children in my electorate. Sometimes the enrolment is shared with a special needs child who also shares a limited ability to go to kindy with a desperate need for kindy.

The Labor government is penalising them for limitations they cannot change. I appeal to the education minister to review this idiotic policy and try to put credibility back into the system and address the needs of these little four year old preppies who do not live in town.

Gold Coast, Police Resources

 **Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (2.57 pm): Newspaper polls continually show that police officers are very highly regarded by the majority of the population. Their courage, dedication and commitment are the reasons Queenslanders place so much faith and confidence in their police service. They put their own lives at risk in order to protect the community. There is no greater example of this than the tragic death of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding. Last week, I attended a QPS awards ceremony which included the posthumous presentation of the QPS Valour Award, the service's highest award, to the slain officer, which was accepted by his wife, Sonya.

There has been significant focus on policing on the Gold Coast in recent times, not always positive. It seems to me they are often the football between the government, the opposition and the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* has been leading a campaign for more police on the Gold Coast. In response to an extra 50 officers being deployed to the Gold Coast for a month, Monday's front page screamed 'First weekend of Coast blitz a dud'. Of course, I expected nothing less from the journalist who is a self-proclaimed Liberal. I think it is more likely that the criminal element in our community went to ground because of the police presence.

Every day our police officers face the worst of what our community has to offer. I want to acknowledge the great job they do, often in very difficult circumstances. Whether dealing with serious crime or more minor matters, they carry out their duties in a professional and caring manner. On the Gold Coast we have many talented and passionate officers who often go above and beyond what is required of them, often giving up their own time to keep our community safe. Their presence at the Burleigh Police Community Consultative Committee is always welcome. Let us not forget the detectives in the CIB who have their hands full dealing with more serious crime, but their successful clean-up rate speaks for itself. Police officers are constrained in what they can say and often cannot defend themselves or their actions. I want to assure members of the Queensland Police Service that the very high standard of service being delivered on the Gold Coast does not go unnoticed.

Newman, Mr C

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (2.59 pm): Five minutes ago the member for Ashgrove stood in this place and made an extraordinary attack on the LNP leader, Campbell Newman, saying that he was absent from the electorate, that he does not care about Ashgrove, that he does not have the interests of Ashgrove residents at heart. I have just been speaking to the candidate for Ashgrove, who is doorknocking in Ashgrove as we speak. In fact, at the moment Campbell Newman is actually in Laurel Street in Enoggera, which is in the electorate. Do members know what Campbell Newman just said to me? He said that the people of Laurel Street and Tennis Avenue, where as the candidate he was doorknocking yesterday, are saying how much they want to get rid of Premier Anna Bligh. They are telling him how much they want to get rid of the Premier. To get rid of the Premier, what do they have to do? They have to get rid of their local member for Ashgrove!

The member for Ashgrove cannot come into this place and say that the candidate for the LNP in Ashgrove is not in Ashgrove, because he was there. Campbell Newman was there yesterday, he was there the day before and he is there today, doorknocking the constituents in Ashgrove because he is determined to make change in Queensland. He is determined to make change in Ashgrove. The only way that he can make that positive change in Ashgrove is to get rid of the local member, which the people in Ashgrove desperately want.

(Time expired)

Samford Road-Wardell Street Intersection Upgrade

 **Mr WATT** (Everton—ALP) (3.01 pm): I have spoken before in this House about the fact that, as the member for Everton, fighting congestion on our roads is one of my top priorities. As a father, I know how frustrating it is to sit in traffic when you want to get home to spend time with your family. That is why fighting congestion will remain one of my top priorities. This week in the House we have heard a little bit about some of the work the government is doing to fix the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street at Enoggera. Much of that comment has come from the member for Ashgrove. It has been my very great pleasure to work hand in hand with her and the member for Ferny Grove to fix that notorious bottleneck.

While the intersection is situated in the electorate of Ashgrove, it is very much an impediment also to people living throughout the electorates that the member for Ferny Grove and I represent. Earlier this year, the members for Ashgrove and Ferny Grove and I agreed that this was our top priority heading into the state budget. We commenced a community campaign to get the support of our local residents behind us in putting pressure on the government to find funding to fix the intersection. I am pleased to say that we were successful in doing so. Over 1,000 people signed petitions, which led to the government making a decision to bring forward work to fix that intersection so that it will be finished by 2014. Stage 1, which will cost a bit over \$1 million, involves lengthening the left-hand turning lane from Wardell Street into Samford Road. That work will be completed by the end of this year. Stage 2 is a bigger project and involves many more turning lanes being installed and extended to fix up the entire intersection.

Today I want to make the House aware that consultation with the public about different options for the design has begun. People living throughout the electorate I represent have received a brochure with design plans inviting them to provide feedback to the department on what they think of those designs. Consultation closes on 2 September and I encourage all of the residents in my electorate to put in their ideas so that we can fix the intersection once and for all.

D'Aguilar Highway, Upgrade

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.03 pm): This week I tabled both an e-petition and a paper petition from concerned community members regarding the state of the D'Aguilar Highway. Interestingly, I did this almost two years to the day since I first did that and, frustratingly, the government still has not addressed the safety on this increasingly busy state road. Two years ago the constituents of Glass House and I were calling for urgent safety upgrades to the D'Aguilar Highway, particularly between Caboolture and Woodford.

To be honest, I had high hopes. We were to meet with the Minister for Main Roads and, subsequent to that meeting, we had a commitment from the Bligh Labor government to lodge a \$12 million black spot funding submission. Devastatingly, the black spot submission has disappeared into a black hole. To date my efforts to determine where it has gone leave me with only two conclusions: firstly, it was never submitted or, secondly, federal politics have cruelled its passage through the supposedly independent black spot committee.

I have lost patience and so have the people of Caboolture, Wamuran, D'Aguilar, Mount Mee, Woodford and beyond. I thank Mrs Bev Wilson for being brave enough to initiate this petition. The petitions I tabled this week are a desperate plea. If this government is not interested in improving the highway then it should at least lower the speed as a short-term measure to reduce the likelihood of even more deaths.

Everyone knows that lowering the speed limit to 80 kilometres an hour between the Rangeview Estate at Wamuran and D'Aguilar is not a long-term, sustainable solution. There is a very real concern—and I am happy to name it—that doing so will only serve to amplify the frustration of some drivers. There are no overtaking opportunities on this stretch of the highway and I do fear that the result will be irrational behaviour, and even the safest highways cannot protect against that. On the positive side, an 80-kilometre-an-hour speed limit means that in the event of an accident the cost, particularly to human life, will be less. At the end of the day, that is what is most important. I want to know that this government has done everything it possibly can to ensure not one more life is lost on this highway when that could have been prevented through something as simple as changing a few speed signs.

Go Card Retailers

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (3.05 pm): If go card was a music release, it would have reached multiplatinum with the recent sale of the two millionth card. Seven of the top go card sellers are located in my electorate of Brisbane Central. This milestone was not achieved alone. We have many supporters in the retail industry who are helping us to deliver go cards across all of South-East Queensland. I am very proud that many of the top sellers are located in my seat of Brisbane Central. Top-performing retailers have been recognised with multiplatinum plaques, because it is important to celebrate their success, as supporting all our retail agents is vital for the continued success of the go card. We now have the largest smart card retail network in Australia.

The retailers who have made go card a success in Brisbane Central, who were awarded plaques just recently by me, were Supanews Myer Centre level E, Supanews Central Station, Supanews Myer Centre level A, Rankins on the Mall, City Mall News in Queen Street and 7-Eleven in the Brisbane CBD. They are top performers. The plaques we presented them with are gorgeous and I know that they are hanging with pride in those stores. They have been very helpful in ensuring the continued success of go card.

There are other recent milestones for go card. Go cards are used for more than three million trips per week and are used for more than 80 per cent of weekday travel on the TransLink network. There are more than 500,000 registered go cards, and more than 100,000 customers are using auto top-up services. There are now 560 locations at which people can buy go cards and more than 1,500 places where they can be topped up. That is excellent news not only for residents in Brisbane Central but also for those who travel to Brisbane and want to have the luxury of using a go card on the network. This is a great system. It is helping deliver access to public transport. As we know, if you can access public transport you can get around.

Gowrie-Kingsthorpe EPC 1979

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (3.07 pm): Today I have the privilege of tabling 1,414 letters on behalf of the Gowrie and Kingsthorpe communities, which have recently learned that they are subject to exploration permit 1979. These letters express the concerns the community holds for this permit, which encompasses a significant area of the electorate of Condamine. I now table those letters.

Tabled paper: Bundle of letters concerning the proposed mining exploration of residential areas around Toowoomba [\[5027\]](#).

It is astounding that the former minister for mines and energy and current Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining could even consider issuing an exploration permit in this closely populated area, located less than 10 kilometres from Toowoomba's CBD, less than five kilometres from Highfields and less than 20 kilometres from the township of Oakey, but issue it this government did. There are 125,000 people who inhabit Toowoomba and the surrounding district and approximately 3,500 who reside in the communities of Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe. The issuing of this exploration permit has caused considerable concern and angst to those residents and those in the neighbouring communities of Highfields, Toowoomba and Oakey. They are experiencing health concerns, financial concerns, emotional concerns and environmental concerns, none of which those communities had until several months ago when they discovered that EPC 1979 was on their doorstep.

On Friday, 18 February I attended the first community meeting of the Toowoomba Coal Mine Action Group at Gowrie Junction Community Hall. Approximately 700 people attended that meeting, loudly and clearly expressing their disgust with the then minister. On Friday, 8 April I attended a further community meeting that was equally well attended, but still there were no answers from this government. There have been subsequent meetings to discuss the health, environmental, economic and emotional issues that this EPC has raised. Already negative impacts have been experienced in the property valuations of the residents of Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe, and this has been attributed to the issuing of the exploration permit.

New Acland Mine is located west of the town of Oakey. Stage 3 is moving closer to the boundary of Oakey and the people who live there. Mining is encroaching at a rapid rate on their farming land, on their rural communities and on urban areas. This debate will continue.

(Time expired)

Dayboro Show

 **Ms MALE** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.09 pm): Every year my family and I look forward to attending the Dayboro Show, which is always a well-organised event. This year's show was no exception. It was opened by Dayboro Resident of the Year, Dr Paul Inglis, in recognition of his tireless contribution to the community. Once again, my family and I had a great time at the show. It is really an enjoyable family event. While walking around the agricultural section of the show, I became extremely envious of the wonderful entries in the vegetable and produce exhibits, as the vegetables I grow certainly do not compare to those on display.

People travel from far and wide—not just from the Moreton Bay region but from all around Queensland—to attend our wonderful show that has so much entertainment to offer such as showjumping, sideshows, woodchopping, the animal farm, championship dog show and everyone's favourite, the fireworks. It is certainly a real boost to the local economy.

I would like to thank the Dayboro Show Society Committee led by president, George Thompson, vice-president Errol Brough and secretary Alison Taylor and their volunteers for the many hours of hard work they put in. In recognition of the ongoing hard work of the Dayboro Show Society, the Bligh Labor government again gave them almost \$10,000 in funding from the Show Societies Grants Program, building on the grants received in 2009 and 2010. The funding is especially significant this year following the summer of natural disasters. As we know, Dayboro was one such community that was affected by flooding and I know that the show society was appreciative of the extra boost to their funding.

Shows unite communities and allow people to marvel at the local produce, agriculture, horticulture and the people who make it such a special place in Queensland. This is especially evident in Dayboro. It is a show that has brought together a small community for the past 56 years and, thanks to the funding from the Bligh government, many more years to come. If you have not been to the Dayboro Show, I urge you to put it in your calendar for a must-do next year.

By the way, the Pine Rivers Show is on at Lawnton this weekend. It is another show that is supported by the Labor government through the grants program. The Pine Rivers Show is on this weekend. I know the members for Kallangur and Everton will be joining me there. I ask all members to think about visiting my local area to attend that show as well.

Nerang-Broadbeach Road and Gooding Drive Roundabout

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.11 pm): The Minister for Main Roads, Mr Craig Wallace, and his department have failed the residents of Mermaid Beach and the Gold Coast through arrogant decision making and poor infrastructure planning and implementation. The Robina Parkway-Gooding Drive roundabout on Nerang-Broadbeach Road is a key example of a government that does not consult with stakeholders before charging ahead with a temporary solution which will impact on property values and efficient traffic flows. The lack of proper planning and the government's underestimation of traffic flow at this location over the last 10 years is a flawed Main Roads outcome and is continually having a major impact on the residents of the region. Because of this bad planning, it is now being proposed that buses divert along council controlled backstreets, rat-running through residential streets in quiet neighbourhoods and disturbing normally peaceful communities. On top of this intrusion, traffic lights are being added to the Nerang-Broadbeach Road specifically for bus interruption of the traffic flows. This will only further impede the constant flow of traffic and will turn Nerang-Broadbeach Road into another parking lot—just like Bundall Road is in the mornings.

Our communities deserve better than having their local roads inundated with buses rat-running through these suburban streets, particularly around the backstreets of Nerang-Broadbeach Road between Hoy Street, Broadbeach Waters and Garden Grove, Carrara. Local residents are up in arms about this issue that the Department of Transport and Main Roads is proposing. This rat-running proposal for buses highlights the failure of the department's relatively new roundabout solution for traffic flows in this busy area. I believe it should immediately disregard any option that allows this rat-running and research a suitable solution that will reduce the congestion at the current roundabout located at Gooding Drive, Carrara. I urge the minister to take action on this issue immediately to address this tired, old Labor government's lack of planning of roads and transport infrastructure over many long-suffering years which the residents of the Gold Coast have had to endure.

Capalaba, Infrastructure

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.13 pm): While the LNP continues to say anything whether it is scientific or otherwise, claim anything whether it is true or otherwise, promise anything whether it is rational or otherwise, the Queensland Labor government is building a stronger, fairer, greener, healthier and smarter Queensland. People across the Redland City are waking up to the LNP's hollow unfunded promises and policy black hole.

The current budget saw substantial investment in roads infrastructure in Redland City, and other transport infrastructure will also be undertaken to improve road safety and traffic in my community. Most recently, Labor has also delivered an extension of the right-turn lane from Moreton Bay Road into Mount Cotton Road in the heart of my electorate. I campaigned for the extension of this turning lane and I am pleased that the government has listened and the project has been delivered. I also thank the Minister for Main Roads for responding to my community's concern. Of course, during any roadwork there are some traffic disruptions. However, the Department of Transport and Main Roads makes every effort to complete work after-hours and in a timely manner. I also thank the community for their patience in this regard.

I am also pleased that the construction work will commence again in Capalaba on the new Capalaba park-and-ride facility as early as this year. The park-and-ride facility is part of TranLink's \$44 million station upgrade program and will provide parking for more than 200 cars in stage 1 and better access for pedestrians and cyclists and even bicycle storage. The park and ride will help to reduce traffic congestion and encourage more use of public transport.

Residents in Capalaba will also benefit from investments across Redland City including improvements at intersections on Cleveland-Redland Bay Road at South Street, Boundary Road and German Church Road. We are building a better Queensland, a stronger Queensland, while the LNP complains about anything we do.

Gladstone Electorate, Housing



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (3.15 pm): I quote—

Just to let you know that a certain land agent in Gladstone got hold of my landlord and has emailed that they are able to get \$650 a week. We were paying \$425. Now the landlord is requesting from our real estate \$650. They have been able to keep it down to \$480 per week but after six months it will go up to \$650 or the landlord will move their house over to the agent who has promised \$650. But by then it will be \$700-\$750 a week. I have contacted Allan at the local paper. They are putting a spread in tomorrow's paper. As it is what my wife Marion does, voluntary work at the women's centre and the amount of families that have been forced out of their rentals and have no place to stay is rising at great rate of concern.

That is a typical story of people living in my electorate at the moment—those who have committed to the electorate over a long period and who often are on quite modest incomes. At least three of the caravan parks that used to operate in Gladstone have closed down or have been redeveloped. One at Barney Point has evicted all of its permanent tenants and has become a workers camp. One at Benaraby at Boyne River has also evicted any holiday makers. It has agreed to keep its long-term residents but it is going to a workers camp. It is alleged that Calliope Caravan Park, a place where a lot of battlers live, has been sold and will be changed to a workers camp.

I spoke in this place yesterday and I have a meeting planned with the Deputy Premier's office today about this very same issue. I am thankful for the interest that the Premier and the Deputy Premier have shown, but this problem is accelerating at a great rate and a solution has to be found as a matter of urgency.

Bike4Life



Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (3.17 pm): On 31 July the Sporting Wheelies Association and Central Queensland University conducted Bike4Life. It consisted of four different riding routes: 100, 60, 25 and five kilometres around the university. It fitted very neatly with the proposals in Toward Q2, which is a plan to turn Queenslanders into the healthiest people in Australia by 2020. I assisted with that and I rode the 60 kilometre ride from the university through Cawarral and back to the university.

I think is instructive that from last year to this year the number of people who took part in the two longer rides—the 100 and the 60 kilometre—actually doubled. It is a credit to the organisers, Peter Raeburn and his committee, that so many people have seen fit to take part in Bike4Life. If anyone is interested, it will be on again next year. I will make sure that I let everyone know when it is on. Everyone can then gain the full benefits of the healthy lifestyle and the health assets from bicycling.

Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme



Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (3.18 pm): Regularly I hear stories through my office that are similar to the one I am going to talk about today in the parliament. It is about a Mount Morgan mother who is a sole carer for her intellectually impaired 40-year-old son who requires a heart transplant. The pair travel to Brisbane twice monthly, so every fortnight they get on a plane to come to Brisbane to meet with a specialist. As members in the parliament would know, the government pays for the return flights from Rockhampton to Brisbane. Once in Brisbane, obviously they then have to find accommodation and stay overnight.

Currently the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme allows \$30 per night for accommodation. I am not sure if anybody else has tried to find accommodation in Brisbane, but there is very little in the way of cheap accommodation in Brisbane and \$30 a night does not go far. For people who are travelling on a regular basis to Brisbane for specialist treatment it is almost impossible. These people obviously have to cover the cost of their own meals and in some cases some of the transport costs to and from Mount Morgan to Rockhampton and Brisbane as well.

There are a lot of people around regional Queensland who, because of the more centralised system of health in Queensland, have to travel to either Brisbane or Townsville to see a specialist. Unfortunately regional Queenslanders are the people who miss out. It is no wonder that the death rates

in Central Queensland and regional Queensland are so much higher than the rates in other centres. It is about time this government cared about people who live in regional Queensland and this tired, 20-year old government got back to governing for all Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Cooktown Events Centre

 **Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (3.20 pm): On Saturday, 23 July I joined with Senator Jan McLucas and the Mayor of the Cook Shire Council, Mr Peter Scott, in officially opening the \$10 million Cooktown Events Centre. It is a fantastic events centre and hundreds, if not thousands, from the local community turned out for the opening of what is a fantastic facility for Cooktown and the surrounding area.

One of the first things I did upon being elected in 2004 was call a public meeting, as there was concern in the community that there was not enough for young people to do. Over 100 people attended that meeting, with the majority indicating that the main problem was that there was not enough space for youth activity. I am proud to say that the state government was the first level of government to bring significant funding to the table from which the project built momentum. Other levels of government came on board which saw the project go from a \$3 million project with state government funding to a \$10 million project, with \$5.5 million from the federal government and \$1.5 million from the Cook Shire Council.

I should not single out any individual. It has been a great community effort getting this project off the ground. But I would like to pay special tribute to Sian Nivison from the Cook Shire Council for her tireless efforts and patience over many years to bring this project to fruition. I also acknowledge the former member for Leichhardt, Jim Turnour, who brought the federal government to the table to fix the land issue and provide funding. I should also mention former Cooktown police officer Russell Jean for not allowing me to take my eye off the ball on this project.

The sports hall that is part of the events centre has court markings for basketball, volleyball, netball, badminton and short tennis. The events centre is an evacuation centre and is rated to category 5. The events centre auditorium can seat 550 people. There is a gym. There are meeting rooms. It is the new heart of this fantastic community on Cape York Peninsula and proves that this government is delivering services to Queenslanders wherever they live.

(Time expired)

Haughton River Bridge

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.22 pm): Federal funding was recently announced for the Bruce Highway, which has been rated by the RACQ as Queensland's worst road. That comes as no surprise to North Queenslanders. While I welcome any forthcoming funding and certainly flood proofing, the people of North Queensland have been kept in the dark as to exactly where the so-promised pledge by Labor to fix the Bruce Highway over the next 20 years will be spent. While Minister Craig Wallace was quick to come out and politically grandstand with Prime Minister Gillard, the people of the north have only seen some vague references to the planned work. Funding is long overdue and people are hoping for more passing lanes in its widening works, especially in the Bowen to Townsville section. However, we are still not sure exactly what is being done, and I call on the minister to give us the specifics of where and what this funding will be spent on.

A major concern is the Haughton River Bridge. This bridge is between Ayr and Townsville. It is a narrow, no-sided bridge which bears the brunt of all major floods and has been the scene of motor vehicle fatalities and many near misses. I have had many constituents come to me with tales of near misses on that bridge. Recently an elderly Ayr resident driving from Townsville was terrified when a semitrailer crossed the centre line on the bridge and sideswiped her vehicle. Her car's side mirror was knocked off and she had to fight to stay on the bridge. Main Roads's strategic plan has included the replacement of the bridge, but it was listed in the medium-term projects. To have this dangerous bridge on the list for replacement in five to 10 years is not good enough. It should be higher on the government's list of priorities.

Labor's strategic plan is just that—it is a plan to plan, 'to continue the Bruce Highway planning'. The Bruce Highway is the economic lifeline of North Queensland. Because of the incompetence of this Labor government, whose ministers have not stood up to Canberra, and because this Labor government has not made it a high enough priority for years, the Bruce Highway has been ignored and underfunded for years. New South Wales have done it. They fought for their roads and got funding under the same type of government. But this is an incompetent Labor government that would not fight for the Bruce Highway.

(Time expired)

Young Carers

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (3.24 pm): I would like to share with the House an extract from a case study from a research report published by the Australian Catholic University in April 2006. It states—

Michael is 16 years old. When Michael was 13, he was in a car accident with his mother Jane. Both Michael and Jane were rushed to intensive care where they stayed for some months—during which time Michael's father moved to another city to start 'a new life'.

Michael sustained some internal injuries but recovered over time. Jane, however, had considerable damage to her brain—leaving her partially blind and unable to walk. After leaving hospital, Michael (her 13 year old son) became her primary carer and helped her around the home or, as Michael puts it, 'became her legs and her eyes'. Though challenged physically, Michael still sees his mother as providing for him 'like all Mums do—she still makes sure I'm okay, tells me to do my homework and clean my pigsty room'.

Sadly this is just one of a number of similar stories for young people in our communities. In fact, some research suggests that there are almost 400,000 young Australians who are carers.

Recently I met with Courtney Banks. Courtney was one of the school captains at Morayfield State High School last year. She is now studying for a bachelor degree in marine science. She is an exceptional young woman and she has a big future ahead of her. Courtney through her schooling years was the carer for her disabled sister. Courtney is a young carer. Courtney spoke with me about her experiences as a young carer and about her love for her sister. Courtney also spoke with me about the need to raise awareness of the challenges facing young carers. One way to do that is through our schools by identifying who is a young carer and providing extra support to them. By identifying who are young carers we can provide better support for them.

(Time expired)

Springdale-Blackwall Powerline

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution today about the Springdale to Blackwall 500 kV powerline. This will be the largest powerline ever built in Queensland if it is actually built. I have a letter here that I would like to table from Jeanne and Lindsay Campbell which has been sent to all members of parliament.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 July 2011, from Jeanne and Lindsay Campbell regarding the proposed overhead transmission lines to be constructed through Lockrose [\[5028\]](#).

In this letter they state how concerned they are about this 500 kV line going through their area, particularly the area of Lockrose, which is in my electorate. I have spoken to the member for Bundamba and the member for Ipswich West, and they asked me to mention that they had also received this correspondence. The fact remains that I am doubtful whether this project needs to go ahead in the way that it is. There is an argument that it could go underground. There is an argument that the demand needs stated previously and the fact that we would need this powerline may not now be the case. Has the take-up of solar changed the expectations of power? Is the demand still there? They are some of the questions that need to be answered.

Also, I have information about an underground ac-dc powerline in Victoria. It is one of the longest underground ac-dc powerlines in the world. It is the Murraylink Transmission Interconnection, which joins South Australia and Victoria. This project was done in 2000. I am sure the technology has developed further since then. This is the sort of project that a group of people from Lockrose right through to Minden and Marburg are looking at. Why can't this type of technology be used? Why can't this underground technology be used? It is going to end up being cheaper in the long run, and this delusional government cannot see that.

(Time expired)

Winter, Mr P

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise today to put on the record of the House my condolences at the sad passing of Philip Winter. Philip Winter was born in Canberra during the war. His father was serving in New Guinea at the time and he spent his early years in Bathurst and Sydney with his mother and grandparents. The Winter family moved to Townsville in the early fifties, and that is where Phil completed his secondary schooling. Phil became a teacher. After teaching in Townsville, Phil was transferred to Mount Isa, where he taught at the Central State School for many years. Celia and Phil met in Mount Isa in 1965 and were married the following year. Their first child, Megan, was born in 1968, followed by David in 1969 and Jennifer in 1971.

Phil was a man who believed in and worked hard for social justice. Phil was a man who understood the empowerment of education and ensured that his gift as an educator was used for those who needed a hand. Phil was very soon teaching English as a second language to adult migrants at night while teaching English to migrant and Indigenous children in Mount Isa during the day. Phil was also a brave man and a man of conviction. Phil appeared in an advertisement in the Mount Isa paper supporting the Whitlam government's education funding. In the days of the Bjelke-Petersen government, this could have been a very career-limiting decision for a government employee.

In 1982 the Winter family moved to Brisbane and Phil worked at the Phoenix House in Adelaide Street teaching English as a second language. After teaching English in Japan, Phil returned to Australia and moved to Beenleigh. Phil was a true believer and an active member of the Waterford branch of the ALP. He was a dedicated volunteer and loved to debate politics. Phil was renowned for his thirst for a controversial debate, never shying away from issues such as euthanasia and abortion.

Phil passed away this year after a short and unexpected battle with cancer. Phil's passing is a great loss to our community. I recently joined Theresa Jude and the team from Beenleigh Library for the unveiling of a photo of Philip in his much beloved Beenleigh Library. Philip's daughter unveiled the photo, which was entirely appropriately hanging in the newspaper section of the library. Philip was a quiet achiever but a man who touched many people's lives, whether as an educator, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a community activist or a friend.

Flying Foxes

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (3.31 pm): A sensible management plan needs to be put in place in Queensland to manage flying foxes. We have management plans for kangaroos, many domestic and feral animals, wild dogs and fisheries, for example. The present permit system to control flying foxes is not working, and now human and animal lives are at risk and significant disruption is occurring with the movement of horses and horse events.

The recent Hendra virus outbreak at Chinchilla has highlighted to us that regional Queensland is not insulated from this killer virus. This fact, along with numerous other outbreaks in Queensland and interstate, highlights the urgent need to have an effective management plan that will work and save lives. The flying fox colony in which the latest outbreak of Hendra virus is located, in Chinchilla, is less than 100 metres from the state high school and within 150 metres of the Illoura retirement village and the showground. Many local and intrastate horses are stabled throughout the year at the showground as Chinchilla hosts numerous horse events.

The Hendra virus outbreak at this location will have a negative impact on future events unless an effective management plan is put in place. For example, the Queensland championships of a sport I am closely involved with—polocrosse—will be held in Chinchilla in early September with between 700 and 800 horses in attendance. We need to ensure that players and horses are safe. The thoroughbred racing industry on the Downs is concerned and cannot afford to have another setback.

The previous New South Wales government moved a colony of flying foxes from a school in northern New South Wales. If it can be done there, it can be done here. Many species of animals go through a phase of plague numbers. I believe the big seasons we have recently experienced have contributed to increased numbers and more competition for food by the flying fox colonies. Irrespective of numbers increasing or decreasing, if there is an increased chance of disease spreading then urgent action must be taken. It is the government's responsibility to ensure the safety of our people and animals against any disease, let alone a killer disease. Any government which places animals ahead of human life is not fit to hold power. I call on the government to urgently implement a sustainable and practical plan to reduce the threat of Hendra-carrying flying fox colonies through our communities.

Cairns, Health Services

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.33 pm): Yesterday a petition carrying 47 signatures calling for a new hospital on the south side of Cairns was lodged in what could be described as a good try despite the best efforts of the principal petitioner, a previous and likely future candidate for Mulgrave. I now table the remaining non-conforming section of the petition, containing more than 3,000 signatures.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition calling for the construction of an all-weather hospital for the Cairns region [[5029](#)].

It is said that people are not always sure exactly what they are signing up to. In the case of this petition, it was passed around the bar at the Grafton Hotel, and several people I know thought it was calling for a cyclone shelter to be built in the area. These people at least will be pleased to know that, thanks to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the Bligh government, in partnership with the Cairns Regional Council, a cyclone shelter capable of housing more than 1,800 people will be constructed at Edmonton. But the thrust of this petition was for an all-weather hospital, and, while I do not agree with all of its words, it is a very clear indication that people in the southern suburbs care about our future health needs. This is why the announcement last December that land for a future health precinct had been secured—again, thanks to the Bligh government—was so well received by local people.

I know that all Labor members in the Far North are proud of the government's massive job-creating investment of \$446.3 million for the redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital, which will see it remain the primary regional hospital. As I have said many times, most recently in my speech during the budget debate, I would like to see some sort of development on the Queensland Health land at Edmonton in the form of a primary health facility sooner rather than later. Any investment for a facility at Edmonton would be money well spent and, in time, that facility would grow to be a second supporting hospital for the region.

The petition was also critical of a lack of an evacuation plan in the wake of Cyclone Yasi. This issue was also raised at the community consultation session I attended at Edmonton in June to inform the review of the health services plan for the Cairns region. Following the unprecedented events in February this year, Queensland Health is working with other government agencies, including Emergency Management Queensland, on future disaster management responses in parallel with the health services review and it is expected to be completed by the end of 2011. I say again that I am committed to delivering the best long-term, sustainable health outcome not only for my local community but for the entire Far North Queensland region.

Toowoomba Intellectual Disability Support Association

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (3.35 pm): It was my pleasure to recently visit service providers in Toowoomba in my shadow portfolio areas of child safety, disability services and mental health. I would like to thank all of those who gave of their time to give me an insight into the on-the-ground services in their local community.

The Toowoomba Intellectual Disability Support Association, TIDSA, is working to ensure individuals with an intellectual disability have access to safe and happy housing, not only in Toowoomba city but also in the surrounding shires of Gatton, Cambooya, Rosalie, Crows Nest, Jondaryan, Pittsworth and the Darling Downs. The commitment and dedication of the organisation, which is obvious in president Tony Lanigan and his committee, has helped see TIDSA's continued growth over the last decade and has seen so many more people receive their valuable services.

Despite years of underfunding and being ignored by the Bligh Labor government, the community mental health sector across the state still manages to provide amazing programs to support people in our community who live with mental illness. In Toowoomba, through programs to support transition into the workforce or efforts to raise awareness and reduce stigma, the work of the community sector is truly inspiring.

It was great to pop into the Toowoomba Clubhouse, which has recently opened an onsite coffee shop for its members. The clubhouse provides a restorative environment for individuals to build self-esteem and workplace skills and build friendships with their peers. My time with Luke Terry and the members at the clubhouse was really inspirational.

On a different note, I was also very fortunate to learn of some of the number of services provided to families by Mercy Family Services. Through foster care programs, sexual abuse counselling and a family intervention program, the services provide all levels of care to help vulnerable children and families in a positive, supportive and constructive way. The work of the community sector always leaves me in awe. This government could learn a lot from listening to this sector.

(Time expired)

Building the Education Revolution, Arundel State School

 **Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (3.37 pm): I was privileged recently to attend the Arundel State School as the local member and to represent the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations to officially open the \$3.2 million Building the Education Revolution funded facilities, which consisted of six new classrooms. This is just one project approved by the Australian government out of 4,500. The cost of 1,200 projects for state schools in Queensland totals \$2.1 billion. The principal, Michael Quinn, and teachers at the Arundel State School do a wonderful job and are strongly assisted by the P&C. President Jo Butler was also in attendance, as was Glenn Hoppner, the regional director of the south-east region. This project will greatly assist in the teaching of the children in the Arundel area.

The Bligh government is managing the implementation of BER in Queensland state schools on behalf of the Australian government. It is a great example of the two levels of government working in partnership. Under the Primary Schools for the 21st Century element of BER, the Australian government has provided \$3 million in funding to the school for their classrooms. In addition, the government has provided \$200,000 under the National School Pride element for refurbishment of the school. These contemporary classrooms provide an environment for students to work together with their teachers on innovative learning enterprises. This is teaching for the 21st century. The BER program is doing a great job providing additional school facilities while supporting and creating local jobs.

The federal Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations, Chris Evans, said of BER in a letter which I read at the opening—

Whether a project involves the refurbishment of a classroom, the construction of a covered outdoor learning area or a new library or science centre, each is a valuable addition to a school's learning environment and to the quality of the education Australia provides.

I would like to acknowledge the work and effort that your school has invested. I believe this effort and the wider Education Revolution initiatives that we are all working on together will benefit the school and broader communities for many years to come.

(Time expired)

Traveston Crossing Dam

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (3.39 pm): Ever since the federal government stopped the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam, we continue to receive mixed messages about the future of the Mary Valley. Recently the valley's bush telegraph was running hot with word that the state legislation had been changed to remove any reference to the Traveston Crossing Dam. Many people celebrated this announcement, yet this morning I searched the state government maps to check for myself. Guess what I discovered? I discovered that the Mary Valley dam site at Kenilworth is still identified as a restricted area and the Mary River dam site at Traveston Crossing is also still identified as a restricted area. I again take this opportunity to call on the state government to remove these sites from current government documents. These sites must be removed before any of the land purchased in the Mary Valley by the state government comes on the market for sale. If I can find them in the maps, I am certain solicitors for prospective purchasers will also.

Recently the alternative Premier and leader of the Liberal National Party was in my region and spoke about the previously proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. I accordingly wrote to the leader of the Liberal National Party on 30 June and said—

I refer to your reported commitments in the media recently about the Traveston Crossing Dam and ask: will you, if your party forms government, give a commitment not to build the dam at Traveston Crossing and to remove all restricted sites in the Mary Valley from the government regulations?

I still await a response. I hope other members of the Liberal National Party in the chamber take this matter up with their leader on my behalf and on behalf of the constituents in the Mary Valley because we certainly want this matter resolved before the next state election.

Homelessness and Child Protection Week

 **Ms van LITSENBURG** (Redcliffe—ALP) (3.41 pm): This week is Homelessness and Child Protection Week, a time to look at how we protect children and support families and adults at risk and how we can improve our social structures to address these issues in our community. Housing affordability has been a growing issue and many vulnerable families and people are having difficulty affording private rents. The Bligh government is working with the federal government to deliver affordable rental accommodation of one-, two- and three-bedroom dwellings at 20 per cent to 25 per cent below market value. The state government delivered 28 dwellings on the Redcliffe peninsula by the end of this last June and we are on track to deliver another 154 dwellings by 30 June 2012. Currently, we also have 1,466 social housing dwellings on the peninsula. We have completed another 63 dwellings during the 2010-11 financial year and will have completed a further 58 dwellings by the end of the 2011-12 financial year. The Queensland government is doing everything it can to ensure that there is enough affordable housing for people in my electorate and right across the state, and this has gone a long way to providing security for many families and vulnerable people.

The huge strides in child protection management and an increase in effective foster and kinship carers has ensured at-risk children have safer and more nurturing foster homes to go to. The state government funds Chameleon House to provide homeless youth three-month stays, with personal support to re-enter mainstream living. This program includes transitional housing with family support for young people with children. The Redcliffe youth space is also funded by the state government to run many programs including Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Green Army programs. All of these programs enable people to obtain the support they need during times of crisis and create a sense of wellbeing in the community.

Bundaberg Base Hospital, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Services

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (3.43 pm): I table a Queensland Parliamentary Library research brief on a Dr HW Wijeratne, an overseas trained doctor employed by Queensland Health within the obstetrics and gynaecology services at Bundaberg Base Hospital for approximately 10 years.

Tabled paper: Queensland Parliamentary Library brief, dated 21 July 2011, titled 'Dr Hewawelengodage Wimalasiri Wijeratne (aka Dr Wimal Wijeratne)' [[5030](#)].

This research brief shows that since 13 April 2010 in this place, for the protection of pregnant Burnett-Bundaberg women and their babies, I have named and regularly raised concerns regarding the medical treatment provided by and the communication skills of Dr Wijeratne. The library research brief also shows, after uncovering a confidential Labor cabinet document and report—and I table that—that this government, despite what it has told the media, has known since 2005 that—

... there are a significant number of complaints, seven (7) over a two (2) year period relating to the communication and treatment of patients by Dr Wijeratne. It was noted by some staff, even in a letter to the A/director of medical services, Dr Nydham in March 2002 that there was up to one (1) patient a clinic complaining about his communication manner. These complaints span the last 3 years of Dr Wijeratne's appointment.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health report, dated 29 June 2005, titled 'Special Investigation—Alleged Inappropriate Release of the Final Report of the Review of Clinical Services at the Bundaberg Hospital' [[5031](#)].

In reply to question on notice No. 384 asked on 24 March 2011, the Minister for Health wrote on 24 April or thereabouts in relation to Dr Wijeratne that—

... he was not employed within Queensland Health.

I table that reply.

Tabled paper: Copy of question on notice reply No. 384 [5032].

An *A Current Affair* TV crew have confirmed that they found Dr Wijeratne working for Queensland Health at Mount Isa public hospital on Saturday, 2 July this year—69 days after the minister wrote that Wijeratne was not employed within Queensland Health. The minister may have misled this House. The *A Current Affair* investigation was prompted by Stephen Limkin's short film *Suffering in Silence*, which gives voice to some of the eight women who have made complaints to me about this doctor. I repeat my call for an independent investigation, clinical—

(Time expired)

Townsville, Public Transport

 **Ms JOHNSTONE** (Townsville—ALP) (3.45 pm): Last Monday night Deputy Premier Paul Lucas and Minister for Main Roads Craig Wallace hosted the regionalisation forum for Townsville. I was really interested to hear from participants about their thoughts on what they wanted to see for future planning in the Townsville and broader region. A number of important matters were raised throughout the evening, but one issue my constituents were particularly concerned with was public transport, both in Townsville and between Townsville and nearby towns. For years now Townsville residents have voiced their discontent with public transport throughout the region, especially surrounding the current bus service, to properly service the city's needs. I make particular reference to bus services in the Townsville CBD. The constant feedback I receive is that what we have in place in the city is not functioning like it used to. It is not working and the people of Townsville are asking for better.

We are a growing city. Townsville is a city on the move. That is why the state government has earmarked Townsville as Queensland's second capital city. It is a major centre north of Brisbane. However, our growing population combined with ageing infrastructure sprawled across a large geographic area means our public transport system now needs a major focus for our immediate needs and into the future. The people of Townsville understand the importance of creating a cleaner, greener society and minimising our carbon footprint and generally want to find ways to achieve that end, but most residents are forced to shun the idea of catching a bus to get anywhere for a multitude of reasons. There are not enough services and sometimes the scheduled services run late. Recent changes to bus routes in the CBD in particular have caused major concern and upset to residents, both on the mainland and connecting from Magnetic Island. At the request of our local taxi industry, this Saturday night and early into Sunday morning I will be undertaking a walk through our drink-safe precinct to have a look at the public transport system in that area. I am looking forward to seeing how that works. Delivering better public transport will be a key goal of mine to ensure that the people in my city are confident that we are ready for the responsibility of being Queensland's second capital city.

Redlands Electorate, Roadworks; Calvary Christian College

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.47 pm): Last night in this House the Minister for Main Roads was bragging about roadworks being delivered in my electorate of Redlands—the intersections of Beveridge Road, Dinwoodie Road and Ziegenfusz Road. What the minister failed to advise, however, were that those projects were all between five and 10 years behind schedule. The minister also failed to advise the House that there is approximately five kilometres of single carriageway still left incomplete—that section of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road through my electorate promised between early 2001 and 2004. The minister also failed to mention those also dangerous intersections that were not constructed—the intersections of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road and Magnolia Parade, Anita Street, Double Jump Road and Boundary Street. These are four dangerous, notorious intersections in my electorate left in limbo and still not addressed. My community would like to know from the minister when those dangerous intersections will be addressed, when they can expect them to be upgraded. They also want to know when this minister is going to deliver the upgrades to Mount Cotton Road—also a notorious road in my electorate, with multiple fatalities against its name. Tree trimming and line marking do not constitute roadworks. What we need is a full upgrade of that road. The minister brags about work that is five to 10 years late and half-done. I would like to know when the minister is going to finish the job and when the people of my community will have the safer roads much touted by this government.

I also recognise Matthew Alcock and Rachel Oates, two school leaders from Calvary Christian College in my electorate. Together with their principal, Cathy Hockey, they joined us here today for a visit. Matthew wants to be a youth pastor, and I commend him for that. Rachelle wants to represent Australia as a goalkeeper in Australia's women's football team, and I wish her well for that, and move on to events management. I wish them both well for their respective futures.

Valuing Volunteers in Sport and Recreation Awards

 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.49 pm): Earlier this year I held an awards night to recognise the valuable contribution of some dedicated Queenslanders who were sport and recreation volunteers. It is great to be able to pay tribute to these wonderful people who really make a difference. All over Queensland every week of the year, people flock to sporting fields, ovals, courts, pools, halls, beaches, rivers, bikeways and parks in a bid to keep active and every week of the year they are supported by hundreds and thousands of volunteers who organise and coordinate those activities. It is a wonderful reflection of their commitment to volunteering in this industry that the sport and recreation sector now has the largest proportion of volunteers of any other sector in the community.

A volunteer's contribution to the community cannot be understated and often goes unrecognised. Recently, I congratulated Jamboree Heights local Robyn Luscombe and Westlake local Steve Burke on winning one of the Bligh government's 2011 Valuing Volunteers in Sport and Recreation awards. Robyn and Steve are inspirational volunteers who give their time and energy to help keep local sport and recreation organisations running across Queensland. Robyn has been convener of the Centenary Bike Ways Group for the past seven years, during which time she has helped to develop a website and organise many activities for cyclists. Robyn played a major role in supporting her local community's recovery efforts during the natural disaster earlier this year, helping to arrange for many cyclists in her group to help move flood victims' possessions to higher ground.

Steve has been volunteering with Special Olympics Australia for the past 10 years. During this time he has held a number of roles, including regional sports coordinator, head basketball coach, assistant basketball coach and as a volunteer supporter of tenpin bowling. Steve also mentors athletes in the 2011 Special Olympics Australia Athlete Leadership Program.

Robyn, Steve and their fellow award winners have gone above and beyond the call of duty to support and develop the sport and recreational activities that they love. I would like to thank them for their selfless contributions to their local communities and congratulate them on their great achievements.

Nerang Public Dental Clinic

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (3.51 pm): As a GP I know the importance of regular dental check-ups, even if you do not like going to the dentist. However, one of my elderly constituents' experience at the Nerang public dental clinic was one that rivalled water-boarding. I will share with members her experience to demonstrate how lacking our clinic is due to insufficient funding and resources from this Labor government. The constituent had an appointment to have her teeth filled, but she did not count on leaving the clinic drenched in water from head to waist and spending the next three days in bed. She put it down to out-of-date equipment and swallowing the rinsing water as the equipment was not good at sucking water out of her mouth. She said it was the worst she had experienced at a dental clinic for a long time, which resulted in her not only becoming ill but also suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea. My constituent told me that during three attempts to have her teeth filled water sprayed in her eyes, went down the front and gathered on a paper towel across her neck and front and finally, during the third attempt, sprayed over her shoulder and down her back. As if this was not enough, my constituent said that the chair was detached at the head and was most uncomfortable.

She was full of praise for the staff, who were extremely embarrassed to use the outdated equipment. My constituent asked the clinic staff if they had requested replacement equipment. They said that they had been told that it would be looked at in June 2012. That has been happening every year. I urge the minister to investigate the matter immediately and replace the equipment where needed.

One is always apprehensive about going to the dentist, but the Nerang public dental equipment is something that Queensland Health cannot be proud of. Good dental care reduces gum disease and improves masticatory function. It improves nutrition. In ATSI patients, it reduces rheumatic heart disease and 15 per cent of all heart disease. Good dental care improves quality of life and makes working-age people more employable. Recent meta-analysis of epidemiological studies has shown that patients with chronic periodontitis and gum disease have an increased risk of coronary heart disease and patients with fewer than 10 teeth have an increased risk of developing coronary heart disease. Heart disease causes—

(Time expired)

Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, Coomera Campus

 **Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (3.53 pm): In my grandparents' day young people aspired to be the butcher, the baker or the candlestick maker. With the recent opening of the state government's \$27 million Gold Coast Institute of TAFE at Coomera, the young people of the northern Gold Coast can now look forward to becoming the artist, the producer or the graphic designer. At the brand-new Foxwell Road campus, students young and old will be able to study a 21st century curriculum of information technology, screen and media, interior technology, interactive digital media, music, building, web and graphic design, live production and civil engineering.

For a long time now I have fought hard to achieve a TAFE campus in the Albert electorate. Therefore, I was absolutely thrilled to join with the Minister for Skills, Stirling Hinchliffe—and I thank the minister, who is in the chamber—and the member for Southport to officially open this great new institution. Thanks to these multimillion dollar blue-ribbon facilities, we can expect to see a real boost in skills for the Gold Coast film and television industry.

On two occasions I have had the pleasure of joining the minister to tour the amazing facilities. Complete with seven recording studios, computer laboratories and motion-capturing capabilities, this new TAFE campus stands out as an educational centre of excellence in the very heart of the northern Gold Coast. Its opening caters for the needs of our rapidly growing corridor population and will help prepare the students of today for the exciting career opportunities of tomorrow.

I am proud to be a member of this Labor state government that is committed to seeing three out of four Queenslanders hold a trade, training or tertiary qualification by 2020. I am very pleased that this new Coomera TAFE campus puts us on track to reach this target in Albert.

Maroochy RSL Club, Carbon Tax



Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.55 pm): On 28 February 2011, Premier Anna Bligh said—

We won't make a judgement about a carbon tax until we see what it is.

It has been almost four weeks since Labor's carbon tax details were announced, yet Premier Anna Bligh still refuses to stand up for Queenslanders and the many businesses and organisations who are going to be impacted by this tax, including the Maroochy RSL.

This morning I tabled in state parliament a letter and a copy of their energy audit with regard to how this tax will add up to \$71,000 extra in electricity costs. This is a job-destroying tax, yet this Labor government is failing to stand up and has been very silent in respect of the real costs. The other states have been doing energy audits and the modelling and they are saying clearly that there is a huge antijobs impact. But not this Labor government. It has had its eyes shut with the mentality of 'Don't ask, don't tell. Try to pretend it is going to go away.' But we know that it is a huge impact.

The more than 120 jobs at the Maroochy RSL Club are threatened. I have heard that from the club. They are desperately worried, because to add another \$71,000 to their energy bill is huge. This club has cut its energy usage. Yet despite that cut in energy usage, over the past 12 months they saw their bill go up \$1,500—and that was without a carbon tax. But this government is in denial. It is not standing up for businesses or community organisations across Queensland who have genuine issues and genuine concerns. They have been doing their energy audits, they have been getting the advice about the huge impact, which will cut jobs. But this government has refused to do the work, or has refused to reveal it. Either the government is incompetent or it is a contrivance when it says that it does not know and it does not want to know, but Queenslanders do.

Cairns Convention Centre



Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (3.57 pm): Recently, the Cairns Convention Centre celebrated 15 years of operation. In 1996, the Cairns Convention Centre became the first regional convention centre in Australia.

Mr Schwarten: Built by a Labor government?

Mr WETTENHALL: Built by a Labor government. I take that interjection from the member for Rockhampton. The firm AEG Ogden has been the proud manager of the Cairns Convention Centre since its opening. The stability of that relationship has been a very important element of the success of the Cairns Convention Centre and its partnership with the Queensland state government.

In that 15 years, the convention centre has generated around \$700 million in direct economic expenditure to the region, provided over 1.5 million room nights and hosted almost two million delegates and patrons at events at the centre. Conventions have driven much of the economic value, but the convention centre has also been home to the Cairns Taipans and a number of concerts and community events that have provided a real community focus at the centre. That is something about which we are all very proud.

The centre has achieved international recognition for its design and operation. It is recognised as the world's first environmentally friendly centre, winning awards as far back as 1996—in fact, winning the first global environmental award. It has been voted in the top four convention centres in the world for the past 10 years, including being voted the world's best congress centre in 2004—the only regional centre to achieve that accolade.

I want to pay tribute to the general manager, Ross Steele, and his dedicated staff who make the centre such a success. Over 20 per cent of them have been there for the full 15 years. That is a remarkable achievement. The Cairns Convention Centre has been an integral part of the Cairns economy and will continue to be so for generations to come.

Hervey Bay Hospital and Hervey Bay Dental Clinic, Waiting Lists

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.59 pm): I would like to raise concerns about the waiting lists at our hospital and dental clinic in Hervey Bay. I bring to the attention of the House the situation of a lady who has been a category 1 patient since January with a high white blood cell count and bladder problems. A referral from her GP was received on 6 January 2011 and she was categorised as a category 1 patient. A waiting list letter was sent. She will receive an appointment in due course. Our hospital system is not the problem; it is trying to get people into our hospital system that is the biggest problem. Our dental clinic is also a problem. I will read a message from a lady—

Dental clinic being a state matter, I was wondering when someone was going to start pushing for more money for these clinics.

I work part time and my husband is on the age pension. We have both been waiting over 8 years to see a dentist. At the moment I have an emergency appointment for a tooth ache in 2 months time. Surely something can be done about this.

I am also wondering, has any survey been done recently, on just how many of us are on these waiting lists and for how long.

This is something I deal with every week. People cannot go in and see a dentist. We have to ring the Sunshine Coast call centre. I do not know how people get diagnosed over the telephone. I had one woman in my office with a broken tooth. It must have been extremely painful. She had to go to the hospital to get painkillers and be treated. She could not get in to see the dentist. I hope that we can rectify those problems in the future.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee

Report

Resumed from p. 2431.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (4.02 pm): It is a great pleasure to rise in this debate of the estimates committee report and in that respect acknowledge and thank the member for Toowoomba North for his skills in chairing the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee through that estimates committee process and, indeed, the other members of the committee who contributed. This gave me a great opportunity to report to the committee and to the parliament on how the Bligh Labor government is on track to meet our 100,000 jobs target. Indeed, three recent major investments in the liquefied natural gas industry alone have the potential to create another 18,000 jobs for Queenslanders. The fact that Labor has created almost 80,000 jobs since our election promise more than two years ago demonstrates how we are on track to achieve that extraordinary goal, particularly in the face of the global financial crisis at the time of that commitment. How has this been done? It has been done with a lot of hard work and by delivering strong, sensible, workable solutions to stimulate jobs growth in Queensland.

Employment growth over the next two years is expected to support some 140,000 jobs as the state's economy enters a new wave of prosperity, with five per cent growth expected this financial year and 5.25 per cent next year. The Deloitte Access Business Outlook report released last week shows that Queensland is a magnet for massive business investment, clocking up a record \$184.5 billion in known projects for the June quarter alone. Those billions of dollars in projects mean that skilled Queensland workers will be in high demand. That is where the vocational education and training sector, and indeed our nation-leading employment programs, have a key, if not a crucial, role to play. To that end we are focused on making sure, as I was saying to the parliament earlier today, that we respond to the national reform agenda in relation to vocational education and training and are focused on reaching our target of having three out of four Queenslanders having a trade, training or tertiary qualification by 2020.

To this end we want to see public and private training and higher education providers and industry work side by side in building workforce skills. That is where things like the Queensland Skills Commission, the CEO of which was available to the estimates committee hearing to report, is all the

more important in the way that it is keyed into and engaged with industry to be responsive to industry's needs as we see this massive rollout of investment and the requirements that has for the labour force needs of the state.

As part of this broader engagement we want to make sure that we respond to the needs of Queensland's labour force, and I certainly appreciated the opportunity to brief the committee in relation to that. One of those areas that we are making a great difference in is our Green Army. It was good to report on the fact that we have reached our promised target, creating 3,000 Green Army jobs, 12 months ahead of schedule. That was due in no small part to the joint state and federal governments' commitment of \$83 million to the Queensland Natural Disasters Jobs and Skills Package. I pay tribute to all of those people involved. Those Green Army workers have a certain sense of pride, and that is not a bad thing.

While we were considering the estimates the member for Mirani had an obsession with the federal government's proposals for a carbon price. During estimates he came within a hair's breadth of admitting that the scheme might actually deliver benefits to Queensland. He asked me—

... can you highlight the opportunities for small business and even the manufacturing industry to gain a competitive advantage with the carbon tax ...

I reckon someone got to him during the break, though, because he went to water. But who can blame him for supporting carbon pricing? The member for Mirani holds shares in not one, not two, but three clean energy companies. He has hit the trifecta! They are not just any clean energy companies, either; they are the ones that feature in the Commonwealth government's Clean Energy Future TV ads. There is the member for Mirani onto a smart thing for once.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (4.07 pm): In speaking to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee report, in relation to the Department of Education and Training I read that the department supports the delivery of quality education and training across the continuum of learning, through early childhood education and care, schooling, training and higher education. Last night I very passionately spoke about the effects of alcohol on our young people and the need for early education. Hoteliers are hit very hard in relation to licence fees, but very little is channelled into educating our young people. We see a lot of young people sneaking into hotels, pubs and clubs, and if they are caught then hoteliers are hit with the full force of the law.

We have seen what happens in relation to crashes and the social issues that result. I believe it is important that we educate our children on the effects of alcohol by the time they hit the schools. Through a program called Crash, Emergency Services are showing the effects of alcohol on the community. They are actually bringing this program to the schools. This is something that can go a bit further. All that money that is channelled from the hoteliers needs to be put into education so students can be prepared when they enter the big world.

Also in relation to education and care I wish to bring to the attention of the House a problem of flying foxes in Charters Towers that needs to be addressed. Colomba Catholic College is right beside a park. The school has been putting up with the smell, ticks and parasites that are in that area. It is very unhealthy to have bats and school kids co-existing. Last year we had a problem at the Charters Towers State High School and the Millchester State School, but nobody wanted to do anything about it. There were thousands of bats above the trees at the schools. As members would understand, bats are killing people, they are killing dogs and they are killing horses. It is very unhealthy to have thousands of bats in our schools. If they do arrive in schools, they should be removed immediately. We cannot be sympathetic to the flying fox cause; we need to be sympathetic to the children's cause at all costs. Bats are vermin and they carry a lethal virus. It is not good for children and bats to co-exist. Therefore, it is hypocritical for the government to talk about education and care, because no care has been shown in making students put up with bats day in and day out.

The report mentions the fly-in fly-out workforce in Central Queensland. Moranbah is one of the biggest centres in North Queensland. When I was first elected in 2004, when people walked down the town square they would know everybody. There was social interaction and community participation. Kids were safe in the street. After the massive boom and increase in drive-in drive-out and fly-in fly-out practices, basically no-one knows who's who or what's what. There has been a massive increase in antisocial behaviour. There has been an increase in brawls. There has been an increase in crime. However, I am not saying that they are all baddies or anything like that.

I make it clear that nobody is against fly-in fly-out. What we are against is a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce. BMA's Caval Ridge Mine is a massive project on the outskirts of Moranbah. The workers there use the health services and the dental services, but they contribute very little to the community and the community does not benefit at all from them. Even a 70 per cent workforce is probably a bit too much, but that was what the application stated and that was okay. However, things have gone too far.

The report talks about economic development in the Surat and Galilee basins. Everyone supports mining. Everyone knows how important it is in relation to royalties and benefits to the state. However, I question the proposal by the three companies, Adani, Hancock and Waratah, to build three rail corridors. If they are going to build a rail corridor then build one, not three. You do not want three corridors running through—

(Time expired)

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.12 pm): I rise to speak to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee estimates report for 2011. Those portfolios are important to our communities right across Queensland. Education is one of the backbones of community resilience and certainly of forging a future for our young people.

We have great teachers and great schools in the electorate, both public and private schools. During the last sitting I spoke with the Minister for Education about a proposal by the department of education, through DERM, to sell off Education land. This is at a time when affordable housing is very difficult to get, particularly for entry-level teachers. It seems completely unbelievable that the department would consider selling blocks of land and the high school site at Calliope at a time when the Gladstone region is going gang busters. The minister gave an undertaking that he would review that proposal, but I have not heard anything back. Again I put on the record my opposition and the incredulity of the people of the electorate that the department would sell those blocks of land when houses need to be built for teacher accommodation. The high school site needs to be retained for high school purposes, because the demand at Calliope is growing exponentially.

In the region there is also a demand for kindergarten and day-care centres. I know there is an overlap with the federal government here. Nonetheless, it is very important for our littlies to get a really good start in life. Many parents find it very difficult. Because of the economy both parents need to work to gather an appropriate income. Our cost of living is rising significantly. We are similar to Mackay and other mining regions. Many parents are finding that they both have to go to work, but there are insufficient facilities for the under-prep-age children. One of our day-care centres has a waiting list of families that runs for something like four or five pages. On Monday of this week in my office I spoke with a very aggravated lady who had only recently come to town. She is very concerned, because she has two littlies and she could not find placements for them. Certainly that issue needs to be given consideration.

Small business is the backbone of any region. This week I have received communication from a number of small business operators and employees in senior positions in the small business industry. They are saying that they are finding it difficult to backfill positions. Many men and women see a better financial future for themselves by working on the construction of the LNG plant. They leave vacancies in small businesses, which are finding it very difficult to backfill because of accommodation problems. I was contacted by one company that had an apprentice who wanted to come to town to work, but with accommodation prices hitting \$450 a week—if you can get a flat for that much money—there is no way an apprentice could afford that. That is more than their week's wages. There is real demand and real pressure on small business to fill positions that are vacant because there is no accommodation available within a reasonable price range. I am sure that the Minister for Small Business would be concerned about that. I raise the issue in relation to these estimates because there needs to be expenditure by this government on affordable housing.

The same thing is happening within our TAFE system. In my electorate the TAFE has lost its way to an extent. I have raised that in this place before. There is a great opportunity for training through TAFE in Gladstone, but it lost its leadership when Bill Fry moved to Mackay many years ago and his position was never filled. There is nowhere for apprentices to stay when they come to Gladstone to do their block training. There is a block of land beside the TAFE. A few years ago it was proposed that the apprentices themselves could build accommodation there, which would be available for them when they come to do their block training. I put that site up for a cyclone shelter, when the expressions of interest were out. In between times, when it is not needed for emergency purposes, it could be very gainfully used to accommodate apprentices during their training.

There is a lot of pressure on small business, industry and education with the industrial growth that is occurring in my electorate. I implore all ministers who have responsibilities in those areas to look at the way that practical solutions can be embedded in the decision making and in the funding in the electorate of Gladstone.

 **Hon. JH JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business) (4.17 pm): I am pleased to take this opportunity to contribute to the debate on the estimates report of the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. There is no doubt that the past 12 months have been amongst the toughest of times for the tourism, manufacturing and small business sectors. Through this, the Bligh government continued to work hand in hand with industry to build operator resilience and help ready businesses for the new era of opportunity coming their way. As I said during the estimates hearing, there is a sense of quiet optimism building across regional Queensland and, as minister, I have been privileged to work with each of the sectors in my portfolio in their fight-back against the odds.

At the estimates hearing it was timely to announce several new initiatives aimed at building on the success of the \$12 million Nothing Beats Queensland campaign. This year's budget funds the new \$1 million Tourism Towards 2020 Capability Program, which will commence in September. Tourism Queensland and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation are finalising the content with a new program that ultimately will deliver a mix of one-on-one mentoring and training. Importantly, it will support businesses as they implement new systems and upskill, including benchmarking their operations against some of the best in the world to gain a competitive edge. I am also determined that this program should support businesses to gain and maintain an edge in the digital marketplace that is quickly changing the face of industry.

During the estimates hearing I was absolutely delighted to launch the Outback Education Tour Subsidy Scheme. This new initiative delivers subsidies of between \$50 and \$130 to encourage school communities to head to our unique outback classrooms for their next excursion. Not only is this an incentive for schools to head to places such as the Carnarvon Gorge, Richmond and Winton, but also it is an opportunity for our young people to learn more about our state's heritage. Additionally, this initiative will support our tourism operators in outback Queensland as they continue on the road to recovery.

A third new initiative announced at the hearings is Tourism Queensland's new study tours brochure, which rightly positions Queensland as the destination of choice for international study tours. Study tours are an emerging market. With some of the best educational experiences available right here in Queensland, it is important to get industry into the box seat now to tap into markets such as Asia, and that is exactly what we are doing.

My actions in highlighting the many initiatives being taken to help industry grow stand in stark contrast, however, to the performance on the day of the shadow minister. It was clear that the shadow minister has no idea about how to read budget papers. Despite her clumsy attempts to find a conspiracy lurking under the bed, she came up empty handed. She also continues to prosecute a silly argument that I had been missing in action on issues of importance to the tourism industry. Granted, I do not invite the member for Currumbin to hold my hand as I work, but even she must be aware that I have been in this parliament every sitting day since becoming the minister. She could easily ask me a question about tourism, but no. Instead, the honourable member insists on prattling on about climate change, a policy in the federal arena.

If I were trying to hide, how could I be making, on average, more than 40 industry visits or meetings every month? Why would I issue an average of one media release every day? And why would I do things like speak live to camera in the Brisbane city mall during the launch of the 'Harvey and the Humpbacks' campaign or accept an invitation from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council to speak at a boardroom lunch last week or the Australian regional tourism conference in Townsville next week? In fact, I have recorded two radio interviews already today, debunking some of the nonsense put about by the member opposite, who cares little about the industry but more about the sound of her own voice.

If anyone is hiding from the media, we know who it is: 'Captain Hindsight', the excuse for a Leader of the Opposition, who has run so hard from the media this week that we cannot see him for dust. Queensland is moving forward, unlike the LNP. I will continue to champion the cause of tourism, manufacturing and small business by doing my job to the best of my ability, working hard and speaking up for these industries in the days and months ahead.

Report adopted.

Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): The question is—

That the report of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee be adopted.

 **Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (4.22 pm): I rise to speak to the report of the estimates hearings of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee held on 19 July 2011. I am chair of that committee but I am sorry to say that I was unable to chair that hearing. I thank all the members of the committee for doing a wonderful job on the day. In particular, I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for coming onto the committee and the member for Murrumba for chairing the meeting on the day. I also thank the member for Mount Isa and the staff who assisted in the preparation and those who worked on the day.

I would like to take this opportunity to comment on an important issue raised during the hearing and that is the total amount of outstanding SPER fines. I am advised that the total value of debts registered with SPER as at 30 June 2011 was \$680 million. It is important to note that most of those fines were under active compliance—that is, the debtor was paying or working off the debt or they were under active enforcement by SPER.

In 2010-11 SPER collected \$158.3 million. That equates to around \$1 million collected for every SPER employee. I understand that this is less than the \$166 million collected in 2009-10. However, it is important that we acknowledge the very sensible deferral by a few months of enforcement of fines owed by Queenslanders who were affected by the natural disasters that beset our state earlier this year. This is an acknowledgement of the fact that many debtors are people who have, for example, not paid a parking fine and it would have placed an unreasonable burden on them to continue to require them to repay their debts while trying to get their lives back on track and get back on their feet after the floods and cyclones. I think the deferral was the right thing to do.

I am advised that as at 30 June 2011, of the \$158.3 million collected by SPER, \$133.9 million was returned to the Queensland government, with a great proportion of the rest of those funds being returned to local governments, universities and victims of crime. I commend the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General and SPER officers for collecting \$158.3 million in the 2010-11 year that might not otherwise have been returned to government and those other recipients. In doing so, those funds can now be used for schools, hospitals, roads, parks and other services and amenities that benefit our communities.

SPER provides an important function in our society today by providing a number of options for the enforcement and repayment of fines including payment instalment plans. This is by far an improvement on the arrangements in the past when fine defaulters were sent to jail. There are two reasons, as a general rule, we should not be sending fine defaulters to jail. The first reason is that deprivation of liberty is a punishment that should be reserved for the most serious types of offending. In the past imprisonment for fine defaulting has proved to be somewhat dangerous. I know that the Attorney-General drew attention to the New South Wales case of a young man called Jamie Partlic, who was serving time in jail for a fine default when an incident occurred and he ended up in a coma.

The second reason is that sending someone to jail for fine defaulting does not make economic sense. It costs approximately \$200 per day to keep a person in jail. That is \$200 a day that could be used for much needed programs and services for the people of Queensland. SPER keeps a large proportion of debtors in compliance or enforcement without having to resort to sending people to jail. I commend the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General and SPER officers for the work they do as well. I also acknowledge the good work that SPER is doing in recovering substantial amounts of funds that are used for the betterment of our communities.

I turn now to make some general comments about the estimates process. As we have heard from previous speakers, the estimates process has changed. When we look at the stats, I notice that the opposition was able to have a lot more time than government members in which to ask questions. I do not think that is a bad thing. I think that is what estimates committees were set up for. I was pleased to see that stats analysis in the report. As time goes on under the new committee system, this could change. Obviously, throughout the term, the opposition will be able to use the new committee system to question ministers and departments therefore bringing estimates back in line to an even contest of both sides. I am very pleased that the committee made use of those other people who are now able to be questioned by government or non-government members. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.27 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to this estimates committee report related to the budget of 2011-12 and to note with interest the Committee of the Legislative Assembly's first report about questions asked at the hearing by the different committees. I want to thank the honourable member for Murrumba, who chaired the committee on the day in the absence of the honourable member for Springwood. We certainly had a lengthy hearing. Under the general observation section in my report that is contained within the report itself I have commented that we do think more time could be allocated, especially in the area of police.

In relation to the number of questions asked, I was pleased that, along with my colleague the honourable member for Kawana and the Independent member for Maryborough, we asked the second highest number of questions of a committee. I think it is salient to note that the reason we were able to ask the 379 questions that we asked is that we did not ask the ministers many questions. We asked 30.6 per cent of questions of the ministers—that is the Attorney-General and the police minister—and we asked 69.4 per cent to the director-general and to the other officers.

There were three reasons we did this. If we asked the officers a question we would get a real answer and you do not get a political diatribe, which is especially what we get from the Attorney-General. If we ask the officers we get a succinct answer. We do not ever ask the police minister questions because he says that he is only responsible for procuring funds in his portfolio and is not responsible for the provision of services by the various sections in his portfolio, whether it is Police, Emergency Services or Corrective Services. Then he says that we are criticising the people in his portfolio on the front line, as we heard in this place this morning.

Mr Roberts: Back to Bjelke-Petersen days—telling the Police Commissioner what to do, when to do it, where to put police—the dark old days of Bjelke-Petersen. That's what you want to go back to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I hear the police minister now saying that we want to go back to the days of the Bjelke-Petersen government. It is appropriate that we look at the Police Service Administration Act, which we questioned the minister about at the hearing. It states that there are supposed to be communications between the minister and the commissioner—the commissioner is supposed to furnish the minister with reports and recommendations—and that the minister, having regard to the advice of the commissioner, will also then give in writing directions to the commissioner. These reports should be recorded and published, given to the CMC and then reported to this place. We got confirmation from the minister that he has never given any reports to the commissioner.

He is obviously having some sort of ‘nudge-nudge, wink-wink’ relationship with the commissioner or else he is not giving any directions about areas like the Gold Coast, where we have crime that is almost out of control. It is obvious that if the minister is not complying with the Police Service Administration Act—we are not seeing any evidence of any communications between the commissioner and the police minister. Yet that is something that came out of the Fitzgerald inquiry. Instead, we have the political games again coming from the police minister saying that he does not have an inappropriate relationship with the Police Commissioner. No-one is asking about whether it is inappropriate, but it is obvious that on the Gold Coast the minister has not even been able to provide the funds necessary for our police districts.

At the hearing we asked about the details of district funding, and the answers showed that there was \$11 million taken out of the Gold Coast, Logan and Coomera districts over the last two years.

Mr ROBERTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can you stop the clock, please?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Stop the clock. The member will resume his seat.

Mr ROBERTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, the member is deliberately misleading the House. He knows that the budget for all of the districts in the Gold Coast region—which is the south-east region—have in fact increased over the period of time that he is talking about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order, Minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I refer to the minister’s own answer to our question taken on notice. It states that the south-east region district expenditure is less than the district expenditure reported for 2008-09. I will leave it there.

On other issues, I have already mentioned issues about police policy directions and accountability. We also dealt with the issue of police recruitment. While we have had 280 extra officers in the last two years, the number of police receiving the operational shift allowance has declined from 7,396 to 7,347. There are real concerns about the lack of knowledge about sex offender movements from interstate. Statistics on drug use among offenders on probation and parole show that, of 14,000 on probation and parole, we had over 6,500 positive urine tests for illicit substances. Numerous issues were raised about assaults and violence in prisons.

Finally, to do with the flood inquiry, the minister’s response to the flood inquiry’s damning criticism of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service response to its inquiry shows that he needs to do more than be a procurer of funds. It is not good enough to say that there has been miscommunication or that information may not have got to the commission. The commission says that the service has been unwilling or unable to provide this information.

(Time expired)

Mrs KIERNAN (Mount Isa—ALP) (4.32 pm): I rise today to speak to the estimates committee report. I feel quite privileged to have again been a member of an estimates committee and to work in respect of that process. As members are aware, this committee examined the proposed expenditure of the portfolios of the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, and the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Neil Roberts, and their respective organisational units. Having been involved in previous estimates committee debates, I believe that both ministers provided detailed insight into and understanding of their portfolios and in doing so showed a willingness to take a variety of questions on many different and difficult issues.

As members know, the new committee system also saw the introduction of the new arrangements, with equal time allocations being abandoned and members being allowed to question chairs, DGs and commissioners directly. Working in this new free-flowing process of estimates hearings was a credit to the Deputy Premier, the minister and the senior officers in attendance. I think that, by and large, all members of the committee conducted themselves appropriately. It is also pretty obvious that not all members were always satisfied with the answers provided to their questions, but one would think they would concur that the process provided them with an excellent opportunity to explore every aspect of the areas up for examination.

I believe that the committee members had ample time to question each minister, and most certainly it gave opposition members a great deal of hearing time for them to take up lines of questioning until exhausted. I strongly disagree with them in their suggestion in their statement of reservation that they had insufficient time to pursue issues. Perhaps under the new system they should have been better prepared instead of having the repetition of questioning that occurred from them.

I now want to briefly comment on some of the issues examined during the hearing in relation to the Deputy Premier, Attorney-General and Special Minister of State, Paul Lucas. A good deal of time was spent by the opposition in canvassing the management of the State Penalties Enforcement Register—as we have just heard from the member for Springwood—known throughout the state as SPER, and matters relating to the collection of outstanding fines. The protection of Queensland consumers with regard to gift vouchers and the work that is being done by the Attorney-General in that area is most welcome. The CMC, Legal Aid and the Public Trustee all provided information in relation to their areas of responsibility throughout the hearing when questioned. Another area thoroughly examined was the ECQ on electoral expenditure and the management and integrity of the electoral rolls.

Matters examined under the portfolio of Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services were police numbers in the south-east of the state and the recruitment and retention of police officers. I thought we only had one police district in the state, because that is all we talked about! The corrective services aspect of the portfolio was examined extensively across many areas, as was emergency services. There is little doubt that our emergency services are the best in Australia—from QAS, fire, EMQ and police through to our volunteers such as the SES, who were on full display throughout the earlier part of this year. While it is appropriate to scrutinise budgets and resourcing, the heart of the matter rests with the fact that we have some of the finest people serving our community day in, day out and providing safety to the rest of us at the highest level.

It would be remiss of me not to pass on congratulations to the parliamentary research staff—Amanda Powell, Amanda Honeyman and Gail Easton—who provided their invaluable assistance and guidance during this important process. I would also like to congratulate them on organising our first committee meeting and our first public hearing yesterday. I would also like to congratulate my fellow members of the committee and in particular the acting chair, Dean Wells, who chaired without fear or favour. I think everyone would agree that the new process, as part of our parliamentary function, and the hearings themselves are of great value.

I am very happy to advise that it is my belief that the new system provided an assurance that all expenditure from the public purse is scrutinised and that all responsible portfolios are being properly administered. I consider the new estimates process provides an excellent opportunity for opposition members to demonstrate how clever they are.

(Time expired)

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.38 pm): Today I respond to report No. 1, for estimates 2011, of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee. In doing so, I would like to direct honourable members to my statement of reservation that is contained in the committee's report. Like Disney's *Aladdin* musical and the song that Aladdin sang to Jasmine on the magic carpet ride, this new committee process was indeed 'a whole new world, a new fantastic point of view, no-one to tell us no, or where to go, or say we're only dreaming'. Although on occasion, I note, the honourable member for Murrumba did call me to order and say no.

Like any good Disney flick, you need a villain. For the good guys it is always best to steer clear of the villain, and the LNP did that. We absolutely steered clear of the villain. So is it any wonder that, due to the efforts of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise and me, our committee holds the record for the highest percentage, I believe, of questions asked to departmental representatives and not the Deputy Premier. I believe if we can learn anything from this estimates process it is that, to get straight answers without the political spin or thuggery typically reserved for question time, we are best served in this place by asking the director-general rather than the Labor Party minister. This is quite concerning.

In this committee we received the confirmation surrounding the issues of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry and the debt pool blow-out. I note that in his response to questioning at the time the Attorney-General said that it was not a blow-out and he proceeded to tell us that a record \$115 million had been recovered. We need not remind the Deputy Premier that, with a record blow-out of \$680 million in outstanding fines, you would expect to see a higher collection rate.

The issue is that the government has all but given up on recovering this outstanding SPER money. This is a symptom of a government that is more interested in appearing to enact legislative reform and fiscal accountability than actually putting that into practice. Despite spending \$1 million in attempting to recover the fine defaulters, for every \$1 recovered \$2 is added to the debt pool and the government is out of ideas on how to reduce that debt pool.

Labor's new electoral laws, which suit its political interest, come at a time when Peel Street is out of money and Labor Holdings has gone bust. It was revealed that the new taxpayer funded political campaigns have blown out to over \$30 million. This includes additional staffing requirements at the Electoral Commission to deal with this new legislation. I am not convinced that the Electoral Commission has the capacity to conduct and facilitate both the state election and the local government election in the same month or within two or three months as the case may be in 2012. So my message to every Queenslanders is this: as you wait in the shopping centre queue wondering whether your

EFTPOS card is going to work and whether you have enough money to buy the groceries for your family, remember that it was the Labor Party Deputy Premier who signed off on your hard earned taxes being put in to bankroll the Labor Party. Some \$30 million of taxpayer money is now going to political parties.

There are serious issues that remain unanswered about the movements of senior staff in the Crime and Misconduct Commission. This is a body that is responsible for upholding integrity and fighting corruption, yet the termination of senior staff and the withholding of a reasonable explanation by the chairman are of serious concern. As I stated during the estimates hearing, I am perplexed as to how senior members of the CMC were terminated and then employed by other government agencies across Australia in high roles without any explanation about their terminations. The financial cost of these terminations is considerable.

The estimates hearing also revealed that Legal Aid was taking mortgages over people's homes in exchange for grants of aid but not telling these people how much the mortgage was for. I note the comments from the chairman of Legal Aid at the time of the questioning that the idea I put to them was in fact a good idea and that he was actually going to look at implementing it. I do hope the government implements our idea of telling people how much their mortgages are when they get Legal Aid.

The Office of the Adult Guardian has also been unnecessarily overspending on temporary appointments of senior guardians by regional managers. Given the work that is undertaken by the office, it is vital that the practice of employment continuity is encouraged, particularly when dealing with the most vulnerable people in our society.

The LNP members welcome the recent changes to the committee structure, but the fact of the matter is that the member for Surfers Paradise and I could have gone on for another 10 hours with our questions. We have a serious portfolio, with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General particularly. Given more time, we could have got through at least another half of the questions that we did. There are serious issues with SPER and this government is not addressing those issues.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.43 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the estimates hearing for the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee chaired admirably by the Hon. Dean Wells, member for Murrumba, on 19 July this year. This was a very productive estimates hearing and all members of the committee were impressed with the new arrangements and the way the chair allowed the free flow of questions. Members of this House are well aware that during the time between budget week and estimates hearings a lot of preparation occurs within government departments and ministerial offices to ensure that information is made available at the hearing. Of course the Parliamentary Service also plays a valuable role in the smooth running of the hearings, and I commend the work of all those people who were involved in that process.

Firstly, I would like to reflect on the opposition's statement of reservations attached to the report regarding the police portfolio and refute their findings. The facts are that the total expenditure on policing in the south-east region, which includes the Gold Coast, Coomera and Logan districts as well as specialist regional resources and support functions, increased almost 13 per cent from 2008-09 to 2010-11. In 2008-09 total expenditure for the region was \$123 million; in 2010-11 total expenditure for the region was around \$141 million. The LNP's claims are rubbish. They are deliberately misleading the people of the Gold Coast.

The minister said that district expenditure in 2010-11 was less than in 2008-09 because a large number of district functions were moved to regional functions in this period, thus removing significant financial responsibilities from the district. These resources included police communications centres, scenes of crime, training, water police and forensic crash units. They were previously funded out of the district's budget but were moved into the region's budget. As a result of the shift, regional expenditure increased from \$2.7 million in 2008-09 to \$31.5 million in 2010-11. These resources remain in the region and support all districts within the region.

I would also like to look at the LNP's comments in relation to police pursuits. The Queensland Police Service policy on pursuits has been the subject of continued evolution. A restrictive pursuits policy was implemented in October 2006. This resulted in a marked reduction in pursuits last year, from 630 in 2006 to 309 last year. Officers currently receive ongoing training in pursuit policy which reinforces public safety as a top priority. On 31 March 2010, the State Coroner delivered his findings into an inquest into police pursuits, which included 13 recommendations. The Queensland Police Service announced it would support all of the recommendations contained in the State Coroner's report by implementing a more restrictive QPS police pursuits policy and associated training by the end of 2011.

In relation to evading police, at the same time as the restrictive pursuits policy was implemented, the Queensland Labor government introduced Australia's first evade police laws. The maximum penalty includes vehicle confiscation and a fine of up to \$15,000 and/or three years in jail. The government will now consider the CMC's findings into this review of evade police laws and recommendations and respond in due course.

I would like to comment on some of the areas within the hearing that were of great interest to my electorate of Mount Ommaney. I was able to ask about the January floods which affected thousands of homes and hundreds of businesses. The work of the Department of Community Safety during the disasters was outstanding. Emergency service workers, ambulance officers, Queensland fire and rescue staff and corrections staff performed very well under very difficult circumstances.

Recently, the interim report of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry was released and provided recommendations to the government and the council. Many people in Queensland were eagerly awaiting this report. However, at the estimates hearing, I was keen to ask the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services what he was doing in preparation for the 2011-12 flood and cyclone season. The minister stated that disaster planning is done by Emergency Management Queensland and he advised the committee that in the budget there are a number of initiatives to increase the capacity of EMQ.

(Time expired)

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (4.48 pm): I was not a member of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee but I have been invited to participate in this debate on the budget estimates and it is with pride that I do this. From the outset, I want to pay tribute to the Queensland Police Service from the commissioner down, and in particular Deputy Police Commissioner Ian Stewart. I want to single him out for the leadership that he showed during the recent dreadful floods and the awful things that we experienced over Christmas and the new year.

Deputy Commissioner Ian Stewart was at the forefront all of the time and is a great deputy to the commissioner. The calibre of these people shows what a great Police Service we have in Queensland. I want to put that on the record today. In my own area of the Longreach police district, Inspector Mick Keys, who has not been there all that long, certainly showed true and exemplary leadership for his troops in places like Alpha and Jericho. Too often we take for granted what the police do, but I wanted to put that on the record today.

I heard what my colleague the member for Surfers Paradise said in relation to the police estimates, and that is what I want to reflect on today. The shadow Attorney-General said that we bring attention to the ongoing issue that budget papers lack detail, are generic in nature and do not outline the forward years of expenditure, showing the Bligh government is living for the moment rather than forward planning for Queensland's future. That brings me to the Queensland police. The Gold Coast will now have a police helicopter to monitor situations and assist police with support in relation to the detection of the criminal element. For so long the opposition and I have been crying out for a helicopter. I have always believed that constructive and positive policies, regardless of what side of politics they come from, should be implemented in order to advantage police or any other government instrumentality in the execution of their duty for better outcomes. I am pleased that the government has at last decided that it will act in this regard. As the shadow minister mentioned, the horrific events that have transpired on the Gold Coast in recent months are out of control. The government through the police department has increased resources. That is all good, but I hope it is not too little too late.

One issue that concerns me is police recruitment. For too long now we have been losing good police officers right across this state to the mining industry and we cannot afford to be losing these professional people. Just the other day in my electorate Clermont lost a really good young officer, an ex-soldier from Iraq and Afghanistan, who was only a police officer for a short period and has now gone to the mines on more money. It costs \$100,000 to train police officers and therefore the government has to look at ways and means of securing police officers in terms of providing them with the necessary resources so they want to stay and work in that field. Despite the fact that the superannuation contributions are great, at the same time we are losing good officers.

There are also many unmanned stations right across Queensland. In my electorate of Gregory there are still a couple of unmanned stations where one officer has to travel hundreds of kilometres just to provide that resource. These communities deserve a police officer. I say this to the minister: near enough is not good enough. We also have to do something about accommodation right across the state, and I have spoken to the shadow minister about this issue. Places like Mackay and Mount Isa have exorbitant costs for rent, and it is the same in places like Emerald. The list goes on and on, and I know the mining boom is playing a significant factor in terms of running government and budgets et cetera. Queensland police and our emergency services personnel—ambos and firies—are an integral part of keeping our state safe in an everyday environment. I urge the government to address these anomalies as a matter of high priority.

 **Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (4.53 pm): Due to the absence at a Commonwealth of Nations conference of the committee chair, the honourable member for Springwood, I served as chair of this estimates hearing. Our committee sat for nearly 10 hours, the longest hearing time of any committee. It also exemplified the philosophy behind our reforms to the committee system. By and large, the examination of the executive evinced the free-flowing style that the Leader of the House and other reformists made clear should be our new trademark. Rather than the more traditional modus operandi with preset collections of questions on disconnected subjects, members on both sides pursued

lines of questioning to their conclusion and information and accountability were maximised. I thank my colleagues for the manner in which they conducted themselves at this hearing. I especially thank my deputy, the member for Surfers Paradise, who presided during sections of the hearing. I thank the committee staff for their unfailing assistance and all Parliament House staff who assisted, including Hansard staff for their endurance through this longest of all of the estimates hearings.

As one would expect on a committee dealing with law and law enforcement, the new standing order allowing questions to be directed to DGs and other officers was more extensively utilised than on any other committee. Some 244 such questions were asked. A number of these questions were asked of CMC chairman, the Hon. Martin Moynihan. Because part of the questioning involved issues relating to CMC personnel and because, although her service was before Mr Moynihan's time, my wife is former CMC personnel, I stood aside from the committee after the hearing and took no part in the post hearing meetings or preparation of the report. Not that mere knowledge or the belief that you have knowledge of a matter constitutes a conflict of interest. But in case a CMC personnel issue was going to be the subject of a motion at the committee I thought it best to take leave of the committee for a few days. But none of that stops me from speaking on that issue here.

The member for Kawana indicated perplexity when his questions did not elicit the information as to why a significant number of ranking CMC officers had had their tenure interrupted by Mr Moynihan and the opposition made a statement of reservation on this point. However, you do not have to be a genius to work out why such things occur. I am sure the CMC has reported in detail to the CMC parliamentary committee about these matters. That all-party parliamentary committee has used its discretion not to report these matters to the parliament. I am sure it has its reasons for nondisclosure at this time.

While on the subject of the CMC, I note that it is rare for such an organisation here or interstate to have someone with the integrity and sagacity of a Supreme Court judge to serve as chair. Although he signed up for only a short term of office, Queensland is fortunate that Mr Moynihan has chosen, after his retirement from the bench, to go this extra mile for our community.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr WELLS: I thank honourable members from both sides of the House for their hear, hears. He also gave some of his post retirement time to reviewing our court processes. One of the issues I had the opportunity to canvass with the Attorney was the implementation of reforms to the court processes known as the Moynihan reforms. These include increasing the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court and the District Court and streamlining the committals process. The new committal system requires such things as applications to cross-examine witnesses and the presentation of arguments as to why a witness needs to be examined at all. Not only does this save time and money, but it also reduces the impact of the committals process on victims of crime who, under pre-Moynihan arrangements, have been subject to comparatively unrestricted and sometimes gratuitous cross-examination which for many is deeply traumatic.

Mr Lucas: Very good point.

Mr WELLS: I thank the minister for his comment. As to the jurisdictional changes, these will increase the timeliness and reduce the cost of justice. However, we need to monitor very carefully those cases where trial by jury will no longer be available as a result of the change in jurisdiction. We need to ensure that sufficient safeguards are in place for the presumption of innocence. In its statement of reservation the opposition also drew attention to the fact that while the minister had daily communication with the Police Commissioner he had never given a formal direction. It is not usual for ministers to give chief executive officers, whether uniformed or not, formal directions. The only time a minister would do that would be if the minister wanted the chief executive to do something that was not a standard operational procedure. It was a bit over the top for the opposition to redescribe normality as evidence of a conspiracy.

(Time expired)

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (4.58 pm): I was not a member of the committee but I want to make a few comments on some of the issues raised. The Queensland Police Service has a big problem keeping front-line police officers on the beat. Assaults are on the rise, with one recently in Hervey Bay where the officer ended up with a serious head injury and was in the Brisbane hospital for some time.

With ongoing wage disputes and the lure of well-paid mining jobs, of the 498 police who are sworn in over the last financial year only 113 actually hit the front line. With just 150 extra cadets anticipated this financial year, it is predicted that only 34 police officers will hit the front line after resignation, retirements and medical discharges are taken into account. The Queensland Police Service has said that the reasons for the resignations were change of career and family reasons. After talking to the family members, I can tell members that their main concern is the safety of their loved ones going out on the streets at night and wondering if their partners are going to come home at all, or whether they

have to go to the hospital because of injuries or have blood tests done because they have been spat on. The other reason is the cost of living, especially in those mining areas. The cost of living in some of those mining areas is just getting out of hand for police officers and other people who have to serve the community. This is a real problem and it is going to be a real problem into the future.

Recently there was a bad car accident outside my property and I had to wait there until the police arrived. We often take our police for granted, but when you are in a predicament, when you are hanging on to somebody who is injured like I had to that night, and the police officers turn up and take control or the paramedics turn up, you realise what a difficult job they do. I would like to thank all of those police officers who turned up that night and helped out. You just feel so helpless sometimes when you have somebody in a car who is badly injured. I do not know how these police officers keep turning up to some of these car accidents night after night. It is pretty hard.

Earlier this year the police minister said that we had four new recruits coming to the Maryborough district but we were then told that four were leaving the town. This resulted in the headline 'Snow job done on police numbers'.

A government member interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes, it was. The article states—

NEWS of four new police officers heading to the region's understaffed stations was met with a few brutal home truths yesterday as it was revealed the same number were on their way out.

I think things should be explained a little bit better when we get new recruits and we should make sure that police numbers are all aboveboard, because everyone out my way thought we were going to get—

Mr ROBERTS: You haven't had any more first-year constables?

Mr SORENSEN: I am not sure on that one. The police to population ratio in Queensland is one police officer for every 434 people. In the Maryborough district the police to population ratio is one police officer for every 596 people, but in my electorate of Hervey Bay the police to population ratio is even worse. It is something like—

Mr Dempsey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! Member for Bundaberg, there is no response required from you. Your own member has the floor.

Mr SORENSEN: Yes. In my electorate of Hervey Bay the police to population ratio is worse. It is about one police officer for every 1,500 people and in the peak tourist season—

Mr Lucas: That says something about the crime rate there.

Mr SORENSEN: But police officers are being assaulted. Some of the business owners in the area are still asking me to try to get that area cleaned up. We really do need extra front-line police officers in Hervey Bay.

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (5.03 pm): Thank you for the opportunity today to reiterate the Bligh government's commitment to building a fair, safe and just Queensland through its \$1.060 billion justice budget in 2011-12. This investment defends the most vulnerable Queenslanders, including funding key activities such as Legal Aid Queensland, the Office of the Adult Guardian, which provides an important service in protecting the rights and interests of adults with impaired decision-making capacity, and Victim Assist Queensland. The Bligh government is also continuing its significant investment in capital works, with \$262 million allocated for key projects. That funding includes \$244 million for Brisbane's Supreme and District Courts building, scheduled for completion mid next year, a further \$1.3 million to upgrade the Maroochydore Courthouse and \$830,000 for the upgrade of the Mackay Courthouse. In addition to justice services and infrastructure, the government is also driving reform through a range of initiatives, such as leading the way in relation to the regulation of gift card practices to protect consumers from dishonest operators.

There was discussion about the State Penalties Enforcement Register. To use the value of the debt pool as a basis to assess SPER's effectiveness is to be misinformed. SPER does not control the individuals or organisations committing offences, nor the agencies or courts imposing the fines. How could you blame SPER for the number of fines that people incur? That is not a variable that SPER can control. The number and value of fines registered with SPER are the result of the fines that issuing agencies refer to SPER once they have not been paid on time.

SPER's role is recovering outstanding debts, whether against individuals or corporations, many of whom continue to avoid, refuse or ignore their debt to the community. SPER has recovered over \$1 billion since it commenced operations in 2000, which is an average of approximately \$100 million a year, with the 2010-11 year being the second highest collection year, at \$158.3 million, despite a three-month deferral on compliance and enforcement action which was put in place from January 2011 in

response to the devastating natural disasters. Debts are only written off after undertaking exhaustive investigations and where deemed appropriate, for example where a debtor has died, a corporation is deregistered or there is insufficient information to identify or locate a debtor.

In the past, imprisonment for fine defaulting has proved to be somewhat dangerous. I remind the member for Kawana of the New South Wales case of a young man, Jamie Partlic, who served time in jail for fine defaulting and when an incident occurred he ended up in a coma. Sending someone to jail for fine defaulting does not make economic sense. It costs approximately \$200 per day to keep a person in jail. That is \$200 per day that could be used to pay for schools, hospitals, police, teachers or any other public servant—nurses et cetera.

It is not surprising that the member for Kawana criticised Electoral Commission reforms because those on the other side, with the pay-per-view conference, want to return to the old days of brown paper bag politics.

There was discussion about Legal Aid and mortgages. The demand for Legal Aid's services is high. Accordingly, Legal Aid Queensland uses strict criteria when granting aid for legal representation. In the last financial year, Legal Aid Queensland issued 27,196 grants of legal aid for legal representation, provided duty lawyer services to adults in 57,310 appearances in the Magistrates Court and provided duty lawyer services to children in 7,108 Children's Court appearances.

I should point out that, in terms of mortgages—because there was a mention of that—section 18 of the Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997 allows Legal Aid to take a charge or mortgage over a client's property as a condition of approval of legal assistance. I ask the member for Kawana: who was in government when that section was introduced? It was the Borbidge government. It is not that I have a problem with doing that, but it is a bit interesting that he is criticising it. In any event, there were some legitimate concerns raised about the level of notification to grantees in relation to mortgages, and Legal Aid has undertaken that it will take some further steps to make sure that people are advised of the current level of that mortgage. I think that is a good example of questioning in the committee being taken on board.

The Adult Guardian assists some of the most vulnerable people in our community. An ageing population means that demand for the services of the Adult Guardian continues to grow. Several decisions were made by the Adult Guardian in 2010-11 to ensure the office maintained budget integrity. Measures were put in place to ensure the office continued to provide the required level of service delivery to vulnerable clients.

I thank the government and non-government members of the committee. They have recommended that the proposed portfolio expenditure be agreed to without amendment. I would like to thank the staff and also the staff of my department for the excellent job that all of them do and I also thank my office.

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.08 pm): A couple of years ago the government rushed into this place and introduced anti-association orders, because it said that it needed to do something about the scourge of outlaw motorcycle gangs in Queensland. We saw the Attorney-General's predecessor railing against this insidious perversion of our community and that they were going to crack down on these outlaw motorcycle gangs with these very draconian laws. Let us fast forward two years and see what is not in the estimates committee report, where the government praised itself much and then could not talk about the success of those particular orders. As predicted, they have been an utter failure.

This government was warned at the time that the anti-association orders were not going to be successful in cracking down on outlaw motorcycle and criminal gangs in Queensland because the laws would be unconstitutional if tested in the High Court and that the bikie gangs were going to be well and truly ahead of the government on that particular act. We have seen that that is absolutely the case. Since that time the South Australian experience has been that their laws have been invalidated by the High Court as a consequence. Only recently we have seen the New South Wales laws struck down in the courts as unconstitutional. Now we know why the Queensland government has never once used them. They are too scared to use them because, as they were warned by the LNP at the time, they would invariably be unconstitutional.

In Queensland we have the situation where outlaw motorcycle gangs, criminal gangs in this state, continue to act with absolute impunity because this government has gone about this the wrong way. It has glued on its ACME hairy chest as Coyote used to do in *Looney Tunes*. Every time Coyote used to want to get Road Runner in that cartoon he would dial up ACME and get some sort of latest contraption and he would strap it on. It never worked. This government has strapped on its ACME hairy chest and it has failed. It has not made the fundamental changes to law in Queensland that make a real and absolute difference to cracking down on outlaw criminal activity in Queensland.

Laws that really make a difference are laws that crack down on the profit incentive for those outlaw gangs. We must make sure that we can gain access to their ill-gotten gains and that we are able to confiscate them because that is what they fear most. We have to make sure that we have the best intelligence and the crack squads that are able to infiltrate them through covert operations to make sure that they can be brought to heel.

We have had a government that has been resting on its laurels over the last couple of years. It brought in absolute dud legislation promising a lot to this place, legislation which is now invariably unconstitutional and never has been and never will be used. This government should repeal that legislation because it is a waste of time and do something proper to crack down on these outlaw gangs.

The honourable member for Gregory talked about the issue of a police helicopter. What a farcical joke that has been in Queensland. Year after year the Police Union, the LNP and its predecessor parties were calling for a police helicopter in Queensland. If New South Wales can have a number of them and even Tasmania can have one, why should we deny the police a helicopter, an essential crime-fighting device for our police service in Queensland? The other day when the government was dragged kicking and screaming to this realisation what it did was come up with a charity version of a police helicopter for the Gold Coast where, through some charitable application by the Gold Coast City Council, matched by the Queensland state government, we have a trial of a police helicopter. We have a government that is begrudgingly coming to the LNP's position. The Premier said, 'This will cost us money. This could cost us a couple of million dollars.' What price is keeping our community safe?

The incumbent Attorney-General thought nothing as health minister in vapourising 200 times that amount of money when he stuffed up the health payroll system. He was not held to account in any way whatsoever. That was 200 times what the government is allocating to a police helicopter. He sits there with relative impunity with no responsibility whatsoever. This government is prepared to be the real scrooge when it comes to keeping the Gold Coast and Queensland communities safe. What a sense of lax priorities from a government: a begrudged \$2 million when it can waste almost half a billion dollars. That is why this government is on its way out.

 **Mr FOLEY** (Maryborough—Ind) (5.13 pm): I rise to participate in the debate today regarding the estimates committee process. At the outset I would like to thank our very, very hardworking staff: the two Amandas—Amanda Honeyman and Amanda Powell—and also Gail Easton. They have been absolutely fantastic, hitting the ground running with a brand new committee and a brand new system. We talked a lot about the SPER fine defaulters. There were lots of questions. Obviously there is a hideous amount of money outstanding. The community gets frustrated to see outstanding moneys when hospitals, roads and the Police Service so desperately need those funds. I have a very clear idea and that is get the money in and spend it at Maryborough Hospital and also on upgrading the Bruce Highway at the entrance into Maryborough.

I asked questions of Justice Manus Boyce QC, who is the chair of the Queensland Prostitution Licensing Authority, about the health of prostitutes. He outlined in very clear terms exactly what health checks were done. When I raised the question of the mental health of prostitutes in Queensland there was just no answer to that question. My opinion would be that the physical health of prostitutes is nowhere near as big an issue as the mental health of prostitutes. These are often young ladies, often university students, who have been brought from overseas under the guise of having regular jobs and end up in brothels. These people are absolutely mentally decimated by selling their bodies to the dirty Johns who go and hire prostitutes. I would challenge any member here to say that they would think that becoming a prostitute, male or female, would be a good career option for their children or grandchildren.

What I would like to see is an adoption of the overseas model where the procurer of prostitution services is the person who cops the blame not the prostitutes themselves, because they are often young ladies in very desperate circumstances. We also talked a lot about the fact that, despite business flourishing in legal brothels, there is certainly just as much business, if not more, going on in the illegal brothels where no health checks go on. But, of course, the government certainly enjoys the revenue from the legal side of prostitution. The general public could be forgiven for thinking that the mantra is 'if it moves, tax it and, if it doesn't, tax it anyway'. I would urge the various authorities and the various ministers charged with responsibility of these young people working in Queensland to pay particular attention to the mental health aspects of those workers.

In terms of the actual estimates process, I thought it was an improvement on the old model. There were much more free-flowing lines of questioning. Being able to question directors-general and other rather notable people and not just have all your questions via the minister was more popular than the government bargained for. It might have been a good day if you were a minister because a lot of the questions were directed to the directors-general. I thought the ministers had a relatively easy day compared to the old system—not that they would have seen it that way, I am sure.

The member for Hervey Bay touched on the safety of police. That is a massive issue in Queensland. We are already hearing anecdotal evidence of many police officers saying, 'You know what? This is all too hard. I can earn twice as much money working in the mines. I am out of here.' Apart from the cost of training these officers, it is really sad to see young officers, who could have a life-long career, being teased away to other opportunities. Officers in Hervey Bay have been bashed. Some of our new police recruits in Maryborough are absolutely fantastic. I can think of one young officer who I reckon is worth about four normal police officers. He does a brilliant job. Our police are worth more money and we need to see them paid more money. In conclusion, I think the new estimates process was good and I commend it to all members of the House.

 **Hon. NS ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (5.18 pm): I start by complimenting the committee chair on the way in which the proceedings were managed. I think the new arrangements do provide an opposition with ample opportunity to scrutinise government if they are prepared to put the work in and do that. I compliment the chair and the other committee members for that.

I raise a point about the overall process, and that is we had a golden opportunity for the opposition to scrutinise the government. The most important time of the year to do that is in the budget estimates process. However, it was embarrassing for the LNP that during the scrutiny of the Treasurer the LNP ran out of questions. I think that says it all.

I acknowledge the member for Gregory, who made a very positive contribution. I thank him for his recognition of the Police Service and the work it does and, in particular, his recognition of Deputy Commissioner Stewart and the role he played during the floods and cyclone.

A couple of points were made by the member for Southern Downs, who seemed to be suggesting that the government and, indeed, the Queensland Police Service have been sitting around doing nothing when it comes to outlaw motorcycle gangs. I will put some figures on the record. From February 2007 to 31 May 2011, Task Force Hydra has arrested 858 people on 2,098 charges. That is not sitting around doing nothing. From 1 January 2009 to 31 May 2011, under outlaw motorcycle gang offences, there were 378 traffic offences for a range of breaches by OMCG members. Therefore, the member was speaking absolute nonsense about the government and, more specifically, the Police Service doing nothing. They opposed the legislation that the government put into the parliament.

The member for Southern Downs also ranted about the police helicopter issue. I put on the record what the LNP spokesperson for police, the member for Surfers Paradise, said about that. He said that they will look at the trial that the government is partnering with the Gold Coast City Council before making any promises about a helicopter. Again, the member for Southern Downs spoke absolute rubbish in his rants about a police helicopter. That is also the position that the government has indicated in terms of that trial.

The member for Surfers Paradise raised a number of issues in his statement of reservation. He continues to make the false claim that the budgets for police on the Gold Coast have been cut. That is an absolutely dishonest and malicious deception that he has been perpetrating and other LNP members have been pushing, not just on the Gold Coast but in the broader Queensland community. The member knows absolutely what has happened on the Gold Coast. In the south-east region, in the period that he talked about, we moved from having two police districts to having three police districts. When you create three districts within the same geographical region, of course there will be an adjustment to the budget. In addition to that—and he knows this—some of the functions that previously the district had to pay for, such as the police communication centres and the water police, which are significant expenditures, were taken off the districts and given to the regions. As the member for Mount Ommaney correctly pointed out, the budget allocation in the south-east region, which encompasses the three new regions on the coast, increased by almost 13 per cent from 2008-09 to 2010-11. Again, 'Dishonest John', as he is now widely known throughout Queensland, has been telling a mistruth to his constituents and the people of Queensland. The budget for police on the Gold Coast has, in fact, increased.

At the estimates hearing the member also said that I have issued no formal directions to the Police Commissioner. Under the Police Administration Act, if I issue a direction to the Police Commissioner it must be tabled in this parliament, the CMC must review it et cetera. I am not alone in not issuing directions, especially in terms of the past few years. Of course, it was a different story when his party was last in government, particularly pre-Fitzgerald. The Premier used to ring up the Police Commissioner, tell him where to put police, what operations to conduct et cetera. What the member for Surfers Paradise seems to be arguing for is a return to the bad old days of Bjelke-Petersen when police corruption and corruption in government were endemic for a number of reasons, such as understaffing and underresourcing, but also because we had direct political interference in the running of the police service. That seems to be the LNP policy, which the Labor Party rejects outright.

(Time expired)

Report adopted.

Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee be adopted.

Mrs SULLIVAN (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak on the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee's report No. 1 on its consideration of budget estimates. It was a privilege to chair this bipartisan estimates committee, a role that I thoroughly enjoyed. In fact, ever since I was elected in 2001 I have been on estimates committees and I have always found the experience very rewarding. I appreciate the fact that the estimates process was set up under the Goss Labor government. Before then there was no scrutiny of the public purse, certainly not in the bad old Bjelke-Petersen days.

The estimates that the committee considered relate to organisational units within the portfolios of the following: the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities; the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies; the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining that relates to mining; the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure that relates to fisheries; the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts that relates to natural resources; and the Minister for the Environment. Plenty of issues in those portfolios were raised and debated in the times allotted, including expenditure, carbon tax implications, water strategies, Hendra virus, geological exploration and investment to name a few.

Like other committee chairs, I am happy to acknowledge the improvements that the significant reforms and changes to the estimates process provided this year. It certainly made for a smoother and more efficient use of my committee's time to get answers on the widest possible range of issues affecting budgets and the delivery of government programs. I am sure non-government members of the committee and other non-government members not on the committee who sought leave to attend the hearing will also acknowledge the unprecedented opportunities for detailed scrutiny of the budget that the new process offers, particularly for non-government members. Statistics reported by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly earlier this week clearly bear this out. Structured time processes within estimates hearings has been dispensed with. Twenty-minute blocks, one-minute questions and three-minute answers have been abolished. During our hearing on 20 July, for every minute that government members had the opportunity to directly question ministers and their advisers, including the directors-general and chief executive officers, on the budget, non-government enjoyed roughly two minutes. In fact, I believe that was the outcome in most committees. Of course, the onus was on me as chair to ensure there was a free flowing of questions and that they were reasonable and relevant.

At this point I would like to commend my fellow committee members—the member for Hinchinbrook who was the deputy chair, the member for Buderim, the member for Bundaberg, the member for Bulimba and the member for Southport—for the intelligent and considered way they approached the work on estimates. Thanks to their efforts and cooperation the process ran very smoothly. I also recognise the assistance we enjoyed from all six ministers who appeared before us and their departments: the Hon. Tim Mulherin, the Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe, the Hon. Rachel Nolan, the Hon. Craig Wallace, the Hon. Stephen Robertson and the Hon. Vicky Darling. I especially acknowledge the contribution of the House's newest minister, the Minister for Environment, the Hon. Vicky Darling. The minister appeared before us and was clearly across her portfolio and the provisions in the budget for the environment after being in the job for less than a month.

I thank and express my gratitude to the secretariat—research director Mr Rob Hansen, principal research officers Ms Robyn Moore and Ms Sarah McCallan, and executive assistant Ms Rhia Campillo—for their dedication and hard work leading up to the new estimates process, on the day of the estimates hearing and in the follow-up. They admirably rose to the challenge of grasping all the changes in a very short time frame and made my job as chair so much easier. I also appreciate the efforts of all other parliamentary staff, including the Hansard reporters and the attendants on the day, who supported us. I commend the report to the House.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.29 pm): I rise to discuss the budget estimates hearing of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee dealing with the portfolio of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies. The Gillard government's proposed carbon tax is a major threat to agriculture in Queensland. The minister admitted to the committee that the carbon tax would have an impact on agriculture in Queensland. I asked him what the Bligh government's strategy was to overcome the increased cost to farm inputs and loss of market share against imported products. The minister's reply was that yet to be delivered productivity gains as a result of R&D would be relied on to maintain the competitiveness of Queensland's agriculture sector burdened with the carbon tax.

I have every confidence in our research institutions, but it is a huge burden on them to expect productivity gains to overcome the massive cost of Labor's carbon tax. R&D productivity gains should be delivering increasing profitability and sustainability, not attempting to compensate for bad policies. The minister needs to stand up for Queensland agriculture against the impacts of the carbon tax.

I asked the CEO of the AACC about the future management arrangements of the Burdekin agricultural college campus. I was advised that two parcels of production land, one cattle and one sugar cane, would be sold and that the teaching and residential facilities would be gifted to an independent school. The CEO could not advise me at the time of the value of the infrastructure to be gifted. Advice provided subsequently indicates that the infrastructure to be gifted has been valued at \$3.7 million. The gifting of an asset worth \$3.7 million makes a mockery of Labor's so-called de-invest to re-invest strategy. This strategy supposedly involves the proceeds from the sale of AACC assets being used to provide alternative training opportunities. The question is: what additional training opportunities are being forgone by a \$3.7 million asset being given away for free?

Student to instructor ratios have increased at the Burdekin, Dalby and Mareeba campuses of the AACC. Dramatic increases in hours of training in the Burdekin and at Mareeba make it clear that additional instructors are required. It is a serious concern that, despite training hours declining at Dalby, student to instructor ratios still increased.

I asked the minister whether, in view of the outbreak of Hendra virus in multiple locations across Queensland and the logistical challenge facing Biosecurity Queensland in responding to the outbreaks in several regions at once, the Bligh government would support private vets by reimbursing the cost of personal protective equipment used when responding to suspected cases of Hendra virus. The minister refused to commit to support private vets who are on the front line of responding to cases of suspected Hendra virus, insisting that the expenses incurred were simply a commercial cost of doing business. This indicates that the minister has no understanding of the seriousness of the animal and public health challenge associated with the Hendra virus that is unfolding across Queensland.

Biosecurity Queensland does not have the resources to effectively respond to Hendra outbreaks at multiple locations across the state. As such, the responsibility is falling on private vets. I was shocked and appalled when the minister advised the committee that he had undertaken a Google search to determine the cost of personal protective equipment for vets responding to suspected cases of Hendra. Queenslanders need to know how many other important questions relating to serious issues concerning his portfolio are determined by the minister undertaking a Google search. The credibility of a minister who relies on Google to inform himself on issues regarding the response to a serious animal and public health issue must be questioned. The reasonable proposal put forward by the Australian Veterinary Association is about ensuring that there is adequate professional capacity across the state to respond to suspected cases of Hendra virus and to protect people.

I asked the minister if the federal government's suspension of live cattle exports to Indonesia had damaged Queensland's cattle industry. The minister said the suspension of trade would only have damaged Queensland's live export industry if the suspension had continued. It is a real concern that the minister thinks the federal government's knee-jerk and unwarranted decision has not hurt the Queensland industry. This indicates a disconnection between the minister and the reality about how the suspension of live cattle exports to Indonesia has financially impacted upon the cattle industry.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences recently released a survey of 230 farm businesses across northern Australia between 24 June and 1 July this year. A snapshot of the results shows that more than half of the nearly 600,000 cattle destined for live export remained unsold, 326 employees were either laid off or not hired by businesses, including 64 in Queensland, 40 per cent of businesses deferred non-essential spending, 76 per cent have delayed mustering plans and 11 per cent deferred loan payments. Yet this minister says the suspension did not impact Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (5.33 pm): I rise in support of the report of the proposed expenditure of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. I start by thanking the other members of the committee, particularly the chair and member for Pumicestone, who conducted the hearing with fairness and efficiency. I also thank the secretariat—Rob Hansen, Robyn Moore, Sarah McCallan and Rhia Campillo—the Hansard staff, parliamentary staff and also the department and ministerial staff who contributed to the hearing.

The committee's primary areas of responsibility are agriculture, mines, energy, water, natural resources management, management of the environment and fisheries. All those areas fall under the portfolios of the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities; the Minister for Agricultural, Food and Regional Economics; the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining; the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure; the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts; and the Minister for Environment. So there were six ministers involved in this particular hearing.

The new estimates system is certainly an improvement on the previous arrangements. I am, however, of the personal opinion that questions should be asked in equal blocks between the government and non-government members. An unintended consequence of equal time for government and non-government members might be that we save the opposition some embarrassment. This did not happen on this committee, I might add. This was obviously a much more efficient committee than most, particularly when it comes to the non-government members. On more than one occasion opposition

members on other committees ran out of questions. How embarrassing! They had an opportunity to examine budgets and to question ministers and senior public servants and they ran out of questions. I have said it before and I repeat that, even under these new arrangements, the extent to which the estimates committee hearings are effective is related to how effective the opposition is. The fact that they ran out of questions certainly speaks for itself.

Mr Cripps: We did not run out of questions.

Mr LAWLOR: I acknowledge that in relation to this particular committee.

The statement of reservation, which seems to follow each of the estimates reports—and that has not changed with the new procedure—is similar to that of previous years. But for the change of a few names and a few figures, it is exactly the same for all of the dissenting statements. Under general comments on the estimates processes it states—

In addition, it should be noted that concerns are held that the questioning by Labor Members failed to hold the Bligh Government accountable for waste, poor planning, and a lack of transparency.

This should have presented an opportunity for the opposition. Under the new process it has more time, but what happened? On more than one occasion, as I said, opposition members ran out of questions. As is often said, they are the best resourced and laziest opposition in Queensland's history. No wonder they had to go outside the parliament to find someone to lead them to the next election. And look who they came up with! A person who has so much time on his hands that he has taken to rewriting history.

In his dissenting statement, the member for Hinchinbrook referred to the issue of live cattle exports. The other day I ran into a person who was vitally involved with the live cattle exports. In fact, he has a financial interest in an abattoir. He said it is the biggest beat-up he has ever seen in his life. He said six per cent of Australian beef is involved in live cattle exports—six per cent!

An honourable member: A lot of bull!

Mr LAWLOR: A lot of bull, very good point. The other point that should be borne in mind is that in the previous years the Indonesians reduced the number of live cattle that they imported by 30 per cent. So there was a 30 per cent reduction. There is no security in this market. Also, opposition members managed to avoid any criticism of the meat and livestock association, which charges a levy on each head of cattle but obviously does nothing with the money because it let this market in Indonesia deteriorate to that extent.

Other issues were raised at the hearing which I will not have time to go through in detail. They include such things as the progress of the upgrade of the Hinze Dam, which of course is on the Gold Coast. I have been to inspect the raising of the dam wall. There was also the status of water reforms to allow local governments to withdraw from the current retail arrangements for water. Of course, that is also an issue that is very topical on the Gold Coast as the council has just decided to withdraw from that retail arrangement.

(Time expired)

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (5.39 pm): The single greatest policy matter likely to ever affect electricity prices, water prices and cost of living across-the-board is Labor's carbon tax. During budget estimates last month, CS Energy CEO David Brown confirmed that the carbon tax will be the single biggest cost item for electricity generators. The average household electricity bill will bear the brunt of this job-destroying carbon tax. The carbon tax will account for around 50 per cent of electricity generators' operating costs.

The four basic pillars of life are oxygen, nitrogen, water and shelter. In this modern society I think we can add electricity into that mix. There is very little that we do that does not involve electricity. Labor's carbon tax will add to the cost of electricity and in so doing impact on every facet of daily life. We must consider how much the increased power prices will impact upon costs. I am aware that Unitywater uses about \$8 million worth of electricity annually in its operation. Labor will not want anyone to consider the impacts of the carbon tax on water bills arising from the added cost of electricity to water utilities. During estimates the state Treasurer stated in relation to Queensland modelling for the carbon tax—

I expect that such an assessment would take in the order of six weeks and certainly I give an undertaking to provide the results of that assessment to the parliament and into the public arena in due course.

We on this side of the House know that the Queensland government is terrified—yes, terrified—of what the Treasury modelling will reveal and how it will impact on Queenslanders, and so it should be. On the subject of Treasury modelling, here is a newsflash. The New South Wales Treasury released their carbon modelling yesterday and the news is not good. It is going to cost 31,000 jobs in New South Wales, blow a \$3.7 billion hole in their economy and guess what else—

Mr MOORHEAD: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are here before the House discussing appropriations for 2011-12, and the carbon tax for which the member has dedicated the last two minutes of his speech—

Mr Cripps: He is discussing the report.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! Member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr MOORHEAD: This is the consideration in detail of the Appropriation Bill, and the carbon tax, by definition, cannot affect this year's appropriation because it starts on 1 July 2012—

Mr Cripps: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, resume your seat. I am listening to this—

Mr Cripps: I am taking a point of order on his point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am listening to this point of order. I call the member for Waterford.

Mr MOORHEAD: Madam Deputy Speaker, the carbon tax, by definition, does not start in this financial year and has not affected the appropriations. The member's contribution has been entirely irrelevant for two minutes and he is wasting the time of the House.

Mr CRIPPS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to the fact that the current debate we are undertaking is on the report of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. This is the report, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your information. It lists on page 6 of the report the matters raised during the public hearing including 'the impact of the proposed carbon tax on electricity generators and electricity prices'. The member for Buderim is discussing a matter that is contained in the report of the estimates committee. This is the second or third time the member for Waterford has raised this point of order during the course of the day. He is out of order. He has no idea what he is talking about. He is trying to confuse you and the other members of the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, you are debating. Have you finished your point of order?

Mr CRIPPS: I ask you to rule, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, have you finished your point of order?

Mr CRIPPS: I ask you to rule, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am asking you: have you finished your point of order?

Mr Cripps interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, would you listen to my ruling. I will uphold your point of order since this is a wide-ranging debate. Thank you very much. I call the member for Buderim.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, it is going to cost 31,000 jobs in New South Wales and blow a \$3.7 billion hole in the economy. And guess what else? Power prices under this carbon tax will increase by 15 to 20 per cent.

Labor admits that part of the reason for the carbon tax is to find alternative energy sources. In the Australian government's own Productivity Commission report from May this year the costs of both current and alternative electricity sources are detailed. Remember that this is the government's own Productivity Commission. The Electric Power Research Institute in 2010 reported estimates of various sources of electricity in Australia including: coal fired electricity without carbon capture and storage, \$78 to \$91 per megawatt; combined cycle gas turbines without carbon capture and storage, \$97 per megawatt; wind power generated electricity, \$150 to \$240 per megawatt; medium sized, five megawatt solar PV systems, \$400 to \$473 per megawatt. The Productivity Commission's estimated costs of coal fired power and combined cycle gas turbines are estimates without the impact of carbon capture and storage.

Since Labor announced in July the \$23 per tonne price they intend to introduce, Julia Gillard, Wayne Swan and Greg Combet have been wearing out their shoe leather trying to convince the electorate it is the right way to go. And only a couple of weeks ago we saw an enormous crack appear in Labor's armour. The most senior Labor member yet, former New South Wales Premier Morris Iemma, said that the carbon tax scheme will have a limited environmental impact but it will have a significant cost to the economy. Mr Iemma said that action on climate change is important but that, by putting itself at the forefront of global efforts to reduce emissions, Australia has put itself and its businesses at risk of serious damage.

On 24 June 2009 the current Minister for Energy and Water Utilities wrote to the chair of the Queensland Competition Authority. The minister made reference to a direction notice signed by the Premier and the Treasurer to the Queensland Competition Authority requiring it to undertake a two-stage review of electricity pricing and tariff structures. The review was undertaken, and contained within the final report of stage 1 by the QCA we find references to 'carbon', 'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme' and 'carbon price' made no fewer than 58 times—58 times. Even back in 2009 this Labor state government was all about accommodating a carbon tax, which we know will hurt all Queenslanders with cost-of-living issues.

There is one way to fix this—one way and one way only—and that is to vote for a Campbell Newman led LNP government, which will reduce the cost of living, which will look after the people of Queensland and which will not continue to put up taxes like this Labor government.

 **Hon. VE DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (5.46 pm): I had not been minister for long, but I did welcome the opportunity to appear before the committee to address questions regarding the appropriation and operations within the Department of Environment and Resource Management relating to the Environment portfolio. I would refer members to my opening statement at the hearing which offers a comprehensive account of just how active this government has been on the environment and on climate change—the extraordinary period of reform, vision and achievement that we are experiencing in the portfolio at this time—with initiatives like North Stradbroke Island, the Great Barrier Reef, Cape York, wild rivers, coastal planning, national park expansions—the list goes on and on. At no time in Queensland's history have we seen so much activity on so many fronts all around the state to protect our environment.

But today I want to address the committee's budget estimates report tabled this week. Specifically I want to talk about a few of the issues raised in the statement of reservation made by the member for Glass House. Firstly, at the hearing the member tabled a photo of dugong bones in a building and suggested there was some illegal activity going on somewhere in Queensland, without providing any further details. In the report he then expressed his dissatisfaction with my answer at the time. So I would like to offer the following to further assist the member and the committee and the parliament.

DERM responded to a report received in April this year relating to the alleged display of carvings made from dugong bones or tusks for sale in a shop on Thursday Island. We can only gather that this is the same building, because it is not clearly identified in the photo tabled and the member did not provide any other details. DERM referred the complaint to the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol for investigation and also directed the matter to the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water Population and Communities in respect of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

The investigation revealed that the carvings had been brought in from Papua New Guinea and therefore did not breach the Fisheries Act and, as the product was from PNG, there was no jurisdiction under the Nature Conservation Act. I am advised that last month the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service seized the remaining carvings from the shop on the basis that they were items imported into Australia without approval. If the opposition really wanted to make a difference to the welfare of dugong in this state, they should have supported the Moreton Bay Marine Park green zones and the Great Barrier Reef legislation to improve dugong water quality and habitat. Neither measure has enjoyed bipartisan support, and that is a sad indictment on the opposition and where they really stand on this issue.

The member also expressed his confusion about the rollout of management plans for protected areas in Queensland. The Nature Conservation Act 1992 requires a management plan for a protected area, such as a national park, and requires two formal rounds of public consultation which takes time and resources. Management statements, which are a precursor to a plan as one might put it, are developed through a similar process to management plans and will be progressed expeditiously through the statutory process to become formal management plans. While this consultation is underway, management statements significantly improve the number of protected areas with an overall guiding document for park management. National parks also have operational management strategies concerning fire, feral animals and weeds to guide day-to-day management.

The member also raised an issue of Koala Response Strategy funding in the capital statement. More than \$9 million of capital grant funding was transferred to the land acquisition allocation in 2010-11 and hence no longer appears in the total capital grant allocation. This funding, along with funding already allocated to land acquisition, was spent on nearly \$12 million of land acquisitions made in 2010-11, which I comprehensively outlined in my reply to the question when I read out the properties. This is funding that would never, ever be provided by an LNP government.

The deferral of the waste levy—which was agreed to by the government to allow more time for local governments to prepare after the summer of disasters—will also impact capital grants this year only. As members would be aware, when the waste levy was first announced last year, the revenue was intended to be the primary source of the Koala Response Strategy, after the two individual waste funds received their share. More than \$6 million in unspent funding was carried from 2010-11 and is available to continue property purchases in 2011-12.

Finally, there was an issue regarding Australia Zoo's involvement in a crocodile advisory committee. I have provided a clarification on that to the committee which clears that up. I am advised that DERM has since been in contact with the zoo and the channels of communication for future forums have been agreed to.

I thank all members of the committee. I very much enjoyed my first estimates hearing as minister. I thank the parliamentary staff who supported us and the wonderful chairing by the member for Pumicestone. I commend the government's report to the House.

 **Mr DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (5.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill in relation to the estimates hearings of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. Before I run out of time, I would like to thank the Hansard staff for their recording of the process, their diligence and their professionalism. At times, they have a hard task being able to understand our exact words and they do a brilliant job.

As other members have said, the committee process is an improvement. It is not the ultimate process, but from my short time of being involved in estimates committees I can say that it is a definite improvement on the process. However, I do think there needs to be a significant increase in the actual questioning time, particularly in relation to mines, as it is such a large percentage of the overall budget not just for this year but for projected fundings and so forth. Even though we got a substantially greater period of time than the government to ask our questions in the hour allotted, we still ran out of time and we were only able to get through about one-tenth of our questions. I do appreciate that it is a better role and system than previous years.

The minister outlined in his opening statement that 54 coalmines affected by water were producing coal by the end of June. He further stated that a majority had recovered to 80 per cent production and that the rest were producing at about 40 per cent production, lauding this as a strong result. The LNP committee members noted the tonnage over the first six months for 2011 was 40 million tonnes. These words are in my dissenting report.

The report also alludes to the fact that, even though we can use ways to explain why the water was not let out of the dams, the reality is that we had a short period of time but due to the mechanisms of the government and the other departments and obviously the slow response in relation to the expulsion of that water, that water is still in the mines and it is still affecting the overall income of the government. Whilst I understand and the mining industry understands that it needs to completely fulfil the environmental standards, we may have to ensure that when these situations arise where we are limited in our time with high-flow marks and so forth we take those opportunities.

The other issue in relation to the estimates was the massive impact of the carbon tax on coalmining. As previously stated, the budget relied significantly on the carbon tax for its forward projections. It was interesting that not just in our estimates committee but all throughout the other estimates hearings minister after minister, even the Premier and the Treasurer, alluded to the fact that the information on the carbon tax had only come out the Sunday before the estimates committee hearings had started and that the implementation would not be for another 12 months. It is interesting to note this exchange from the estimates hearing. The member for Bulimba stated—

Minister, I would like to ask a question about the carbon tax. Can you please explain the Queensland government's position on the national carbon tax?

Minister Darling replied—

Certainly, and I thank the honourable member for the question. The Queensland government of course has welcomed the release of information from the Prime Minister on the details of the carbon price mechanism—an emissions trading scheme which will commence with a fixed-price period for the first three years. It is pleasing to note that the design of this has actually adopted most of the conditions that Queensland set out in a public submission to the Commonwealth in May this year, including—something that was very important to us—compensation for households and also support for those important industries in Queensland.

Obviously, this government had prior knowledge from way back in May of the effects of the carbon tax on this community and did not listen to that advice. Government members have known all the time and they have continued to take the people of Queensland for granted in relation to the carbon tax.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (5.56 pm): In rising to participate in the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2011 relating to the portfolio committee reports, I would like first to address the issue of the carbon tax which was the focus of much of the opposition's questions during the hearing. Unlike the opposition, the Bligh government recognises that climate change is real and that as a state we are vulnerable to its impacts. We have always supported a national approach to emissions reduction, but we have also sought to ensure that any scheme to price carbon emissions addresses Queensland's unique circumstances and supports our households and businesses.

The Queensland government is pleased to see that the majority of issues raised in our submission to the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee were part of the package announced by the Prime Minister. However, we still have concerns over the assistance being made available to coal fired generators. Our initial estimates, modelled prior to the release of the Commonwealth government's carbon tax announcement, suggested that Queensland government owned generators could face an asset impact of around \$1.7 billion as a result of carbon pricing. Queensland Treasury and the GOC generators are currently modelling in detail the potential economic and accounting value impacts of the new carbon scenario, noting that the Commonwealth's forecast carbon price in 2020 of \$29 per tonne is lower than its previous CPRS estimates, due largely to improved terms of trade.

As indicated at the time of release, the final estimates of accounting impairment will need to be considered by the genco boards and the Queensland Audit Office. However, as it stands, the reduction in value for the gencos' coal fired assets will be very substantial and Queensland generators will receive very little compensation. We have already engaged with the Commonwealth on this issue and we will continue to seek a balanced compensation package for electricity generators.

Now that we have the details of the scheme, a detailed assessment is underway of the economic and fiscal impacts on the Queensland economy, industries and the state budget. This is a complex set of reforms and we need to take some time to assess the detail. The Queensland government's assessment will be reported to parliament and released publicly. The Bligh government supports action on climate change but we also believe it must be implemented in a way that supports Queenslanders.

I now want to address the accusations by the opposition water spokesperson that the Queensland government water reforms have been a waste of money, including the building of Wyaralong Dam. In actual fact, the South-East Queensland water grid is recognised as a world-class solution to water management and an Australian leader in water supply and water security. Wyaralong Dam forms an integral part of this government's response to the worst drought on record and the unpredictable weather in Queensland, which we have seen so recently. Originally it was thought it would take three to four years for Wyaralong Dam to fill. However, the unprecedented flooding rains of early 2011 saw the dam fill almost immediately. We have full water storages across the region and, as such, there is no immediate need for additional water supplies. However, water security will continue to be monitored, including the need for the Wyaralong Water Treatment Plant in 2014-15.

Some 685 jobs were generated by the Wyaralong Dam project and more than 885 businesses supplied goods and services to that project. Wyaralong Dam is a valuable water supply, a recreation and tourist destination and a true economic and environmental asset for South-East Queensland. But it always seems to amaze me that the LNP continues to criticise this vital infrastructure and the water grid as a whole. It was the LNP that agreed with the government when the dam levels were low a few short years ago, calling for a long-term solution to deal with drought. This government delivered. The shadow water minister seems fixated on bagging Wyaralong. I am not too sure why when, as far back as 2003 as a councillor on the Sunshine Coast, he was calling for the government to build more dams, and this government delivered again. Wyaralong Dam is the first dam constructed in the south-east in 20 years. It was the member for Southern Downs, who at the time was leader of the LNP, who made it an election commitment in 2006 to fast-track construction of the Wyaralong Dam. Guess what? This government delivered yet again. This is infrastructure for Queensland's future—completed ahead of time and under budget.

As I noted at the estimates hearing, this was my last estimates hearing. I took the opportunity to thank in particular my staff for over the years working so hard to keep that estimates process going, but I also acknowledge the wonderful work by the chairs and the members of the estimates committee and the staff who assisted them as well.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak to the report for the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee. I will focus my comments on fisheries matters. As with my experience in the Main Roads and Marine Infrastructure sessions, the minister was most uncooperative and rarely answered the questions. The session demonstrated why recreational fishers do not trust this antifishing Labor government: because it just cannot provide a straight answer to fishing questions. The government says it is for recreational fishers, but it does them over at every chance. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet this Labor government imposed annual snapper bans on them. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet after receiving survey data from these fishermen about their catches the government slapped no-fishing zones on their favourite fishing spots. The government says it is for recreational fishers, yet it plans to tax recreational fishers to catch snapper.

Estimates was important as very little public information is made available about the fisheries department, Fisheries Queensland. It is bundled up with DEEDI figures in the budget documents and not separately itemised, so it is very difficult to find anything. The minister's attempt to answer a question on the DPI and Fisheries website about snapper stock reports revealed that the website is five months out of date. The *Help protect Queensland's snapper* report was well out of date. The latest edition of this report on snapper was issue 9, which was published on 17 February 2011—that is over five months ago—and there has been no new issue since. Why is the website five months out of date when there are over 300 public servants in Fisheries Queensland? This is clearly not good enough.

Why did the minister stop producing snapper update reports in February? Is it because the government wants to hide the fact that Labor MPs voted in the parliament to ban snapper in a March 2011 vote and then claimed to have changed their mind at a later date? When asked directly how the minister voted in the snapper ban disallowance motion in March, the minister refused to acknowledge the fact, recorded in *Hansard*, that he did vote for snapper bans, as did his Labor colleagues. For the record, the LNP MPs voted to stop Labor's snapper bans. These are indisputable facts. This government cannot even tell the truth of what happened on that day in the parliament, and if it cannot

own up to that and get it right how can it be believed on anything to do with recreational fishing? The government will continue its snapper bans after an election, no matter what it says before the election. Like the petrol tax and the asset sales, it will be one story before the election and another after. Not only will the government continue its annual snapper bans, but it will increase its no-fishing zones for recreational fishers from 2012 onwards after the election should this Greens-controlled Labor government be returned.

The government has form on this issue. It has shown that bans and closures to recreational fishers are part of its DNA. It has done it before and it will do it again. The pattern last time was that it locked recreational fishers out of their best fishing spots in Moreton Bay after it conducted recreational fishing surveys. It established through those surveys the most frequented fishing areas and then it dropped no-fishing zones on those fishing spots. Needless to say, recreational fishers felt aggrieved that without scientific basis this government deceived them about the intent of the surveys and then used their openness and that data to take from them their favourite fish-rich spots. Now the government is conducting another fishing survey on the eve of another election. No need to guess how recreational fishers feel about this. Despite my encouragement for recreational fishers to support the fishing surveys, as the data is important to have, many refuse to participate because trust in this government has been shattered. The recreational fishers believe that the data collection is a means of the government imposing more no-fishing zones, and you cannot blame them! The recreational fishers are also fearful of the government imposing a recreational fishing licence since it has been considering a snapper tax.

The minister did not really want to also talk about the carbon tax and its impact, because what we are going to find is that the flow-on effect is that the cost to go fishing will go up—bait will go up, ice will go up, tackle will go up, rods and reels will go up, as will the price to buy a boat. No wonder recreational fishermen hate this government! The cost of the Fisheries Queensland department will go up. The cost to buy fresh fish will go up. Why does the government hate our local fishermen when these prices will go up automatically, and it knows it? It is like a wrecking ball to jobs.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (6.06 pm): I take pleasure in joining this debate around the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee's review of the estimates and its hearing. In doing so, I want to thank the member for Pumicestone for her chairing of the meeting and particularly thank the members for Bulimba and Southport for their responsible engagement during the committee process. Equally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge my shadow minister, the member for Bundaberg, for his engagement and the good conversations we had during the free-flowing process that was the estimates committee in July. It is genuinely important that we do look at and discuss the importance of the resources sector and the mining industry in this state. As a simple look towards Queensland's coat of arms above Madam Deputy Speaker there will tell you, you see images of Queensland's agricultural industries alongside an image that depicts the great Queensland mining industry—one of our core industries that continues to this day to play a very vital role in the future of the state and its present.

Not only do we see ongoing development and resources arising out of terrific mines and other projects that are underway, but even in the few days since the estimates committee hearing that the committee is reporting on we have seen a range of huge announcements providing new significant investment in the coal industry, in metalliferous mining and in the coal seam gas industry. It is these big projects that are opening up fantastic opportunities—opportunities for tradies, for school leavers and for apprentices, not to mention the flow-on effects and supply chain opportunities in cities and towns right across this great state. Of course, in the context of this budget estimates process it would be remiss not to make mention of the royalties that flow from these great industries—millions of dollars that we will be able to see invested in vital infrastructure and front-line services such as in our schools, in our hospitals, putting more police on the beat and teachers in our classrooms, those fundamental services that are particularly provided in rural and regional areas thanks to the royalties regime.

There is no need for some sort of fantasy about Royalties for Regions—a populist policy that patently does not work in Western Australia. We have the right approach of the people of Queensland raising their revenue from projects and applying that to where the communities have needs across the state. That is certainly the case in rural and regional Queensland.

These processes have seen a great outcome, but I want to turn to one particular issue that was raised at the committee by the member for Warrego, who took advantage of the opportunity to appear by leave. He raised—

An opposition member: Not again.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I am not going to say anything nasty about the member for Warrego. I am going to refer to his concern about a coal seam gas producer and its draft code of conduct for industry activities on rural residential land. The government's new land access laws, which came into effect in November last year, clearly outline that any activity undertaken within 600 metres of an occupied residence requires a conduct and compensation agreement to be reached between the company and the landholder. That is a groundbreaking framework. Since the matter was raised by the member for

Warrego I have directed my department to meet with the senior management of the company and to reaffirm that it must comply with the state's land access laws. The company has removed the draft code from its website and is revising it so that it complies with the law.

Mining is big business in Queensland, and we are a government that will sit down and work with industry. The ultimate beneficiaries of our partnerships are Queenslanders—not just the people who live and work in the mining regions but also the mums and families right across the length and breadth of this state who are benefiting from the resources boom. In Queensland today, mining means jobs and it means stronger regional economies. The Bligh government is backing investment in Queensland and it is committed to working with the private sector to create a greener, cleaner energy future and new economic pathways for the future.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.12 pm): I rise to address the report tabled by the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee with regard to the 2011 Appropriation Bill. In particular, I address my comments to the Environment portfolio. There may have been some Queenslanders who lived in hope that a new Labor environment minister would actually bring a fresh and outcomes focused approach to managing our richest and most precious resource—our environment. The estimates process quickly dashed that hope. There is a new minister but the same spin. In the short time available at both the estimates committee hearing itself and to me now, I want to touch on perhaps the worst examples of this spin.

What should be the jewel in the crown of our state's natural beauty—our national parks—continues to be a thorn in the side of this Bligh Labor government. The confusion is not on my part; it is clearly the minister who is confused. Despite a damning 2010 report by the Auditor-General and now a new glossy draft master plan called Naturally Queensland 2020 and the promise of consultation, our national parks are in no better shape than they were 12 months ago. Sure, some 100 more national parks have management plans, but at least 400 still do not. Some now have a statement of intent, as if that somehow absolves the government of its legislative responsibility under the Nature Conservation Act. We have a promise of all parks having plans by 2015—four more years before this government has to meet its own legislative imperative.

Meanwhile, even in protected areas that have plans we see waste and disastrous environmental outcomes. I used just two examples to highlight these outcomes during the estimates hearing. I could have used dozens more. On Fraser Island, we can see what happens when common sense is not applied to \$3 million in expenditure on infrastructure upgrades. A year 12 geography student will tell you that when it rains perched lakes like Lake McKenzie fill up. So why build vegetation barriers below the high-water mark? So you can rip them down again? Why build toilets with doors that will not lock? Why build dingo-proof eating areas with gates that do not self-lock? And why build all-access walking tracks with steps in them? Waste, waste and more waste.

In Byfield National Park in the Keppel region we have witnessed what happens when the local voice is drowned out by small Brisbane based lobby groups. In the words of the Stockyard Point Progress Association, there are recurring themes: a lack of consultation about critical decisions, the revocation of good-faith negotiations, the tendency to facilitate allowable damage in parks to drive unpopular management decisions and, most disturbingly of all, unjustifiable decisions that are causing environmental damage in localised settings. So even in the rare situation where there are protected area management plans, they are simply not delivering true environmental outcomes.

This evening I am pleased to hear of the action undertaken by the government regarding the allegations of the disgusting trade in dugong products. It is a shame that the minister was unable to provide this information on the day or even in the time since. I hope that when concerned Far North Queenslanders make future reports DERM investigators will respond quickly and decisively. But I doubt it. Clearly, DERM is struggling under the pressure of reporting to three separate ministers, for not only has it continued to fail to meet its legislative obligations under the Nature Conservation Act but also it has lost touch with even its most intimate and pivotal stakeholders. For Australia Zoo to be overlooked when convening a state-wide crocodile management forum is a travesty. One of the pre-eminent crocodile research organisations in not only Queensland but also the world does not rate an invitation to a crocodile management forum. I will be holding the minister to her word and trusting that this never happens again.

Then there are koalas. The minister in her opening statement waxed lyrical about the continuing support that this government is giving to koala habitat acquisition and partnership programs. With much fanfare, the government announced a \$48 million package of strategic koala habitat purchases and investment in research. Conservationists and koala carers in this state should be alarmed. That funding is now only \$24.5 million. What the Bligh Labor government did not tell us when it first announced the package is that the funding was conditional on the introduction of a new tax and that, because of its ineptitude, the funding is now lost somewhere in the out years—if it is there at all. All I can say is: watch this space.

Time does not permit me to speak at length about more of the LNP's serious concerns. There is the massive underspend in fencing of national parks—yet another example of where this government has dropped the ball when it comes to being a good neighbour. There is the questionable allocation of funds to clean up our waterways following January's funds. There are underspends in rainforest and green land acquisitions. The list goes on. Only one thing is certain following this estimates season: there may be new faces in the Labor cabinet but it is the same waste, the same mismanagement and the same spin.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (6.16 pm): It is my pleasure and honour to speak to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee's estimates committee report. This year I was unable to participate in the estimates process—

Government members: Oh!

Mr MESSENGER: I acknowledge the warm feelings that are coming from that side of the parliament. I know that they missed me. I was not able to participate, partly because of ill health and partly because of a number of matters of urgent public importance requiring my attention in the electorate of Burnett. Nonetheless, I have acquainted myself with the proceedings of the committee and I proudly make a contribution on behalf of the people of Burnett.

Having read *Hansard*, I fervently believe that there is only one way that the people of Queensland will ever find out the truth about how much of their public moneys have been wasted and outright stolen from them. It is not by the genteel estimates committee hearing process. The only way the truth about the level of waste and corruption can be revealed will be via a royal commission into political corruption, staffed by law enforcement officers and assisted by forensic auditors. I will be working and voting for that outcome. Only an independent royal commission will be able to credibly and sincerely answer the important question: how much has political corruption cost the people of Queensland? It is predictable that the Labor government will not support a royal commission into political corruption and, being a conservative member of this chamber, it saddens and disappoints me that the LNP has indicated that it will not support the establishment of a royal commission.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! Member for Burnett, thank you for making that point but I ask you to come back to the question before the House, which relates to the report of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee,

Mr MESSENGER: Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for your direction. Let us examine the cost-of-living pressures. Minister Robertson, in his last appearance before an estimates committee, talked about the cost-of-living pressure. He said—

In today's current environment, cost-of-living pressures are front and centre of most people's minds. The Bligh government is very conscious of the impact that rising electricity and water prices have on Queensland families and their household budgets.

It was nice of the minister to say those words. But did he really mean them? If the Bligh government was conscious of the impact that the rise in electricity prices and water prices have on Queensland families, why have the minister and his Labor Premier not condemned in the strongest terms the federal Labor Gillard government's imposition of a new tax, which will increase every Queensland family's electricity and water prices and deliver nothing except misery, more increases in the cost of living and more job losses, for no benefit to the environment whatsoever? We stand right now on the brink of another worldwide economic crisis. In an article in the *Australian* yesterday Professor Martin Feldstein at Harvard said—

This economy is really balanced on the edge. I think there is a 50 per cent chance that we could slide into a new recession.

This is a very sobering statement. I am continually amazed by the attitudes of those on the opposite side of this chamber. It is as if we are just sleepwalking into another disaster. Should we hit the economic brick wall again—another GFC—this time we do not have the \$20 billion in our national accounts thanks to Mr Howard or the \$14 billion of prime assets that we could sell again to get us out of a financial hole. What we do have, however, is a projected state debt of \$85 billion and a group of traitorous politicians imposing a new tax that will significantly increase every electricity and water bill in my electorate of the Burnett, indeed the whole of Australia, not to mention interest rates as inflation takes off, as I mentioned before, without any hope of delivering one measurable change in the climate or the average world temperature.

As the economic conditions get worse the question that this and future state governments will be asking is: now that we have sold off the best state assets what other state assets are there left to sell off? Try as I might, I saw no evidence in this year's new improved estimates committee that either side of this place, Labor or LNP, would not sell off state owned electricity and water assets. I am disappointed because that is the guarantee that the people of the Burnett, indeed the people of Queensland, want from the major parties. As soon as those assets are sold off then the prices will go up. I can give a guarantee that I will not vote for an asset sell-off.

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies) (6.22 pm): I would like to thank the members of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee for their contributions during the estimates hearings. I would particularly like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Pumicestone, Carryn Sullivan, and also the staff in my department and my office for their work before and after the hearings.

As I stated during the committee hearings, the Bligh government is implementing a strong and positive economic plan to steer us out of the financial crisis and summer of natural disasters. One in eight jobs in Queensland is supported by the agricultural supply chain. More than \$310 million has been allocated to agriculture, food and regional economies by the Bligh government in this year's budget. We are working as a unified government to rebuild, replant and reconstruct rural and regional Queensland in the wake of recent natural disasters. More than \$110 million will also be invested this year in agribusiness research and development to continue to drive productivity and innovation within the sector.

I reject the uninformed views of the LNP contained within the statement of reservation. Once again they have shown that they swim in a very shallow policy pool—actually more like a dry creek bed. Despite having the opportunity to ask more than 60 questions of me and officials, they fail to grasp the very nature of good rural and regional policy. I am particularly appalled by the member for Hinchinbrook, who asked more than 45 questions and then complained that the answers were too long. The member for Hinchinbrook needs to understand that these are complex matters of community interest that deserve a complete response—unlike Campbell Newman, who responds to questions with the benefit of hindsight, unashamedly rewriting history in the process.

I will first deal with the issue of gifting Burdekin campus to the Shalom Christian College. The facts are that gifting Burdekin campus to the college will increase the number of workers for Queensland agriculture; provide agricultural career pathways for Indigenous youth; increase training of existing workers in North Queensland primary industries, particularly sugar and horticulture; allow the sale of farming and grazing land linked to the campus for reinvestment in new training products, including online; and will provide new training locations, more qualified trainers and upgrades of the Longreach and Emerald residential campuses.

I also reject the criticisms of Biosecurity Queensland made by the LNP in relation to the management of Hendra virus. This government takes the threat of Hendra virus seriously. That is why we have established the cross-border task force and instigated the funding arrangements that have recently seen a \$12 million boost to Hendra virus research funded by the Queensland, New South Wales and Commonwealth governments. Biosecurity Queensland is currently managing 12 cases in eight separate locations around the state through a proven approach, including quarantining affected properties, tracing movements to identify any other animals at risk, daily monitoring of animals and human health assessments. I again commend Biosecurity Queensland for the work they are doing in this respect.

I also reiterate for the public record that the Bligh government is funding a prefeasibility study into a North Queensland meat-processing facility. The live-export issue this year has highlighted the vulnerability in the North Queensland beef cattle industry being heavily dependent on a single market. While this is a federal government issue, I have been working to support our North Queensland beef cattle producers throughout the restrictions and will continue to work with them.

In regard to comments made by the LNP in relation to racing, can I make this suggestion: have a party room meeting and get your story straight. Between them, the member for Mermaid Beach, the member for Clayfield and 'Captain Hindsight' Newman are falling over themselves to claim, contradict and correct each other. The combined LNP performance in the Ipswich media recently provides no clarity for the racing community in Ipswich and no confidence for the Queensland racing industry as a whole. If the member for Mermaid Beach, the shadow parliamentary secretary for racing, has his way the Ipswich Turf Club will not see a penny. The government is responding, in consultation with industry, to ensure funding for racing infrastructure across Queensland, even though legal action has required the industry plans to be revised. All negotiations related to any equity-sharing arrangements will be undertaken by Racing Queensland and the race club involved and the outcome will be advised to government as part of Racing Queensland seeking the disbursement of funds. During last year's estimates session the member for Mermaid Beach asked the question repeatedly—no less than three times, in fact—seeking certainty that no taxpayer funds would be provided to the Gold Coast without equity sharing. The member for Clayfield this year was asking the opposite.

Report adopted.

Community Affairs Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Community Affairs Committee be adopted.

 **Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (6.27 pm): *Report No. 1 to the Legislative Assembly: Examination of Appropriation Bill 2011* was tabled on 1 August 2011 and is the first report of the Community Affairs Committee, of which I have the honour to chair. The new committee system represented a major change and scrutinised budgetary spending across multiple ministerial portfolios. I thank the members

of my committee for their work in endeavouring to make the new system work, but I do have some comments about the statement of reservation, to which I will refer later. I am sure that everyone would thank the members of the secretariat who laboured with the new procedures and worked long hours to ensure that all requirements and time frames were met. Many thanks go to them, Hansard and parliamentary staff for their dedication. I would also like to thank all four ministers and their senior staff, including those from the statutory bodies, who appeared before the committee. All witnesses had a good grasp of their policy areas and any claims to the contrary say more about the questioner than the witness.

I submit the recommendation of the committee for the approval of this House and confirm that that recommendation was passed unanimously by our committee. But one could be forgiven for believing something other than that occurred. We have two opposition members who voted in favour of the report, but the member for Maroochydore indicated that she would be filing a statement of reservation. You will note that it has become a statement also by the member for Redlands, who indicated no reservation. I bring to the notice of this House that the statement by various invited members and agreed to by the two members effectively became a dissenting report. I commend to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly a consideration that any reservations to be published by any member of the committee relate to the specific area on which questioning is undertaken. This will show that the people asking the question have some knowledge of their own areas.

The estimates process is an opportunity for all members to scrutinise all spending about which they have queries. On page 5 you will find these words—

In addition, it should be noted that concerns are held that the questioning by Labor Members failed to hold the Bligh Government accountable for waste, poor planning and a lack of transparency.

What intellectual genius believed they were there to pass some judgement on whether government members were there to compensate for LNP lack of knowledge and abysmal failure to properly address any concerns they held? The low level of understanding and genuine failure to address any concerns is shown splendidly in their statement where they indicate agreement with their associates who seem to have no intent other than to turn the whole process into a PR exercise. If members doubt my comments they should read the statement by the shadow minister for communities, housing and women and they will see only three comments which relate to spending. There is a fourth comment that conveyed some suggestion that pensioners are under threat in relation to rent and which did not relate to spending. She also produced an unsupported document containing a column of numbers and has tried to use that to show some failing in the blue card system. She failed to understand that some delays occur when the commission oversees some 502,000 cards.

The shadow minister for child safety raised no questions about expenditure, nor did the shadow minister for multicultural affairs, although in his defence he does mention one spending announcement. The shadow minister for sport tried to attack all the departmental portfolios when he was there for only one area, sport. He seems unable to understand a calendar and was miffed that he had to comply with parliamentary guidelines. I remind everyone in this House that the Appropriation Bill 2011 only relates to 2011-12 and the carbon tax will apply only from 1 July 2012. Members can look at the calendar if they disagree with me. The member mentioned only one budget allocation and made outlandish criticisms of the sports jobs plan, the department and sporting clubs. The sporting community needs to be very wary of this member, particularly in my region, as the LNP wants to be seen to support the CQ NRL bid but are virulently against stadiums.

The shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships mentioned one outlay, but did show some grasp of his portfolio and its aims. Each of these badly performed, best financed and lazy shadow ministers just needed to say something to act as if they were relevant, but they need to heed the words of Plato, who said that a wise man speaks because he has something to say, a fool because he has to say something.

It is a good budget for Queensland and I commend the full recommendation of our committee to the House.

Sitting suspended from 6.31 pm to 7.30 pm.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (7.30 pm): Breaking the cycle of poverty and helping the most vulnerable in the community is an important role of government in partnership with the community. The estimates hearing of the Community Affairs Committee presented an opportunity to examine the expenditure on projects and services for some of the most vulnerable and at-risk Queenslanders and the people who assist them. On delays for blue cards, the impact of the carbon tax, the overall lack of accountability within the department and a lack of effective review of measures, the minister failed to provide adequate explanations. The Community Services budget papers provide next to no information. There are a total of two measures in the Community Services section.

I want to address an issue that the chair attacked me for, which related to a document that I tabled and which was actually supplied by St Vincent de Paul Queensland in relation to the delays in blue cards being processed here in Queensland. This issue is worth bringing again to the attention of the parliament because, despite what was said in the committee and despite what has been claimed in

parliament previously, I am still hearing from organisations such as St Vincent de Paul Queensland that the information they provided, unfortunately, is correct—that is, in some circumstances up to six months can pass before their volunteers receive their blue cards. This situation is making it very difficult for organisations that care for the vulnerable in our communities and look after those communities generally, as they are finding that their volunteers have to wait months and months to get the appropriate blue card protections in place. Since the estimates process I have again raised the issue with Commissioner Elizabeth Fraser, and I will continue to raise it until it is appropriately addressed by the government and by the commission. Voluntary organisations and good volunteers who want to be involved should not be stopped by a government that has failed to address those concerns. I am really disappointed that, instead of addressing the issue, I have been attacked for raising it on behalf of St Vincent de Paul Queensland.

In these documents for the Department of Housing, housing capital costs are not reported in terms of expenditure by year but in rolling budgets. Essentially, this is about avoiding scrutiny of underspends, delays and failures to deliver. I find it extraordinary that in the budget papers for a multimillion dollar department there are no actuals or estimated actuals for the capital program, that we do not see a year-by-year comparison of the actual spend with a summary of supplies and services. I asked for that information during the estimates process, even though one would think it basic information. It is expected in the private sector, it is expected of community organisations when they report to their boards and it is expected of NGOs supplying services, but the government thinks it is above that. We believe that basic standards of reporting should be put in place in respect of this multimillion dollar budget.

What I found out was interesting. I questioned what the actuals were for supplies and services. There had been a 30 per cent increase in the amount spent by government on supplies and services. That was post merger. That is interesting when you compare it with what the government is offering to the NGOs, who are doing the heavy lifting, the service delivery and the caring for people in the community. They have an indexed 3.75 per cent increase per year. It is all very well for the government to turn around and say to the community and the NGO sector, 'Go and be more efficient,' but we do not see that in the way that this government administers the budget that is in its hands. That is unfortunate, because this is a very important portfolio that deals with an area where people's lives are in crisis.

We see a lack of security of forward funding indicated in the budget papers to address the 30,000—an ever-increasing number of people—waiting on the social housing list. I raised the homelessness situation in respect of how the government is tracking the problem and addressing it in the community. Still they point back to the 2006 ABS figures. No funding has been provided or identified for many regions in Queensland. People are living rough in many regions of Queensland, but we have not seen an allocation of homelessness funding. This government does not recognise the homeless unless they popped up in the 2006 ABS census. In real terms, we see no forward allocation once the Smart Futures Fund funds run out or an indication from government as to how it will address this issue.

I have talked about the impact on the building program of the carbon tax that the government wants to deny. That is going to be a significant slug given that it is an \$8,000 cost per home.

(Time expired)

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (7.35 pm): I rise as a member of the Community Affairs Committee to speak on the estimates committee's report concerning child safety, sport, youth justice, community services, multicultural affairs, housing, women and Aboriginal affairs. I start by thanking the chair, the honourable member for Keppel, for ensuring the hearing ran smoothly and efficiently. I thank other members of the committee for their spirit of cooperation. It is inevitable that when representatives from all sides of politics take part in these types of hearings differences of opinion occur. However, it has to be said that we agree often and when we disagree we do so in the interests of the people we have the privilege of representing.

Three ministers took part in the Community Affairs Committee hearing. The first cab off the rank was the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs. I did not ask the minister any questions on the day.

Ms Palaszczuk: Nor did the opposition.

Mr CHOI: Nor did the opposition. As I am the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, I wanted other members on the committee to have time to put their questions to the minister. However, as I work closely with the minister as her parliamentary secretary, I know how serious she is about her portfolio of Multicultural Affairs. I also know how hard she has worked to ensure that multicultural affairs policy is reflected across all government portfolios.

I particularly thank the minister for her work on the recently released new Queensland multicultural policy. The policy, entitled *A multicultural future for all of us*, was launched by the Premier and the minister on Tuesday, 19 July. The new policy outlines how we can continue to meet the challenges presented and benefit from our increasingly diverse population. It outlines priorities, acting on key themes such as multicultural recognition legislation and improving service delivery. We want to

ensure that this state is a welcoming and inclusive place for people from all cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs. The fact of the matter is that Queensland was built on the back of our migrant population. Today we come from more than 200 different cultures and speak more than 220 different languages. As I always say, multiculturalism is about sharing, not dominating; it is about participating, not submitting; it is about accepting, not simply tolerating.

The next minister to appear before the committee was the Minister for Child Safety and Sport, the Hon. Phil Reeves. The harsh reality is that the department of child safety performs a service to our society that it should not have to perform. People should not abuse or neglect their children. That is the bottom line. However, when parents are unwilling or unable to look after their children, we need to step in. The minister outlined the government's commitment to do this very, very tough job. In Queensland we have increased the budget by 400 per cent to \$733 million, almost \$700 million more than when the LNP was last in power.

We have also more than doubled the number of child safety staff. I have visited the Redlands Child Safety office in Cleveland and am always impressed with the dedication of the staff at the centre. The men and women who work for Child Safety Services dedicate their lives to protecting children and young people and they should be commended for their work.

During the hearing the minister also commented on a picture of me that appeared in my local paper. Yes, I did put on my pyjamas and join local Pyjama Angel Michelle Field to call on the community to get behind Pyjama Foundation's PJ drive to help Queensland's most vulnerable children. It is great to see firsthand this government's investment of more than \$240,000 at work. The pyjama drive highlighted what a great sense of community we have across Redland city. The sense of community also benefited from the government's investment in sport and recreation. The Redland sporting community will see more than \$600,000 invested this year.

The last minister to speak to the Community Affairs Committee was Minister Struthers. She has had a tough job this year, and I commended her efforts following our summer of natural disasters. I would like to especially acknowledge the work of the staff of the Department of Communities. The role they played cannot be underestimated. I do work very closely with the officers at my local Department of Communities office regarding social housing. I think they do a fantastic job. They are some of the most dedicated individuals who do their best to help society's most vulnerable people. But government cannot act alone. During the hearing the minister released *Opening doors—Queensland strategy for reducing homelessness 2011-14*. I am looking forward to that partnership with the committee.

(Time expired)

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (7.40 pm): Tonight I rise to speak to the report of the Community Affairs Committee. I begin by firstly acknowledging the chair of the committee, the member for Keppel, for the way the committee was chaired. I also extend my thanks to the secretariat, the Hansard staff and the support staff from all of the departments for their help and guidance and the congenial way in which the whole thing came together.

The new committee structure and estimates process has, by and large, been supported by both sides of the House. I think members will concede that most committee members and ministers were forthright and open in the answering of questions. Some obviously could not help themselves and were less than relevant and some time wasting certainly occurred. That did not happen so much in our committee, but it was something that I witnessed throughout the process. I was fortunate to be involved in two committees. I was involved in the Finance and Administration Committee and also the Community Affairs Committee. Interestingly, they were the first and the last estimates committees.

I also wish to comment on the positive and cohesive way my fellow committee members engaged in the process. I have already acknowledged the member for Keppel as chair. I also mention the member for Maroochydore, the deputy chair, as well as the members for Capalaba, Cook and Beaudesert. I will limit my comments to a few areas across some of the ministerial portfolios.

The Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women answered questions about rehabilitation programs for young offenders. There is an old adage that if you cannot measure it, you cannot count it, you cannot manage it. She answered questions about such issues as the drug testing of young offenders both in detention and on probation. It was difficult to understand why a more proactive approach was not taken. I take on board the response that the minister gave. It was honest and open. It surprised me that we were not a little more proactive in that area. Questions were also asked in the area of conferencing where there seemed to be no real baseline data. There is very good anecdotal evidence that conferencing works, but there is no hard, baseline data. So again, it is difficult to manage.

There were questions about programs for re-engagement of young people into education. I was heartened in talking to the minister about that issue. There is a program in my area called RAMPS, Russell and Macleay Pathways. The minister was kind enough to take some of my comments on board. Yesterday my office received correspondence from the Minister for Education suggesting that I was incorrect in my assertion that the RAMPS program had ceased. Unfortunately, the school principals are

telling me that it has ceased, the lady who ran the program is now employed elsewhere and her assistant is out of work. I am also mindful of the fact that this program crosses a number of areas. The process highlighted some areas of conflict and possible cross-purposes. I do acknowledge and thank Minister Struthers for her interest.

Then we had the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. There are still questions outstanding in my mind. One centred around Olympians. Every time I meet with athletes or representatives from Australia's Olympic family they assure me that there is no state funding. Yet the minister suggested there is and he went on to talk about—

Mr Reeves: We are the only state that gives them \$5,500.

Mr DOWLING: I would also like to know why there are such opposing views. I take the interjection from the minister. I hear one thing from the minister; I hear other things from Olympians. Somewhere in the mix someone is not being completely forthright.

I also echo some of the sentiments contained in the statement of reservation. The process has improved, as I said earlier. Most ministers operated in a professional and bipartisan manner, but some could not help themselves. Other issues raised in the LNP statement of reservation included the many new announcements made since the budget was handed down and which were not included in the budget. So we have to determine what projects have gone to make way for them and where the extra money comes from.

The Community Affairs portfolio covered a number of ministers yet only one or two DGs and a few CEOs. In some areas this led to confusion or uncertainty when answering questions. Sometimes answers provided by the director-general crossed some of those ministerial portfolios. They were not being deceptive but simply providing a broader answer to the question. It raised other issues and questions were ruled out of order.

There is also the issue of the waiting time for obtaining blue cards which is in excess of six months. That has been reinforced tonight. There are also issues concerning the overloaded workload of child safety officers.

(Time expired)

 **Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (7.46 pm): I love estimates. It is a fantastic opportunity for members of parliament to scrutinise the executive. I look forward to it every year. It is the highlight of the parliamentary calendar for me. As parliamentarians we have an important responsibility to scrutinise the activities of the executive here in this parliament. Whether we are on this side of the House or that side of the House, it is our responsibility to bring the executive to account. That is the important responsibility of the estimates committee. That is why it was an unbridled pleasure to participate in this year's Community Affairs Committee.

It was interesting to see the new process. This is the seventh year that I have participated in an estimates committee. This year, under the new arrangements that were put in place, it was interesting. It was disappointing for me as a government member that we asked fewer questions this year than we would have had in the past. That obviously gives me less opportunity to scrutinise the executive and to put forward some of the issues that I want to see highlighted in terms of that process. Scrutinising the executive does not always mean just looking for the negatives in government. There are lots of positive things that the government does. In fact, the vast majority of things that governments of all persuasions do are positive and have a positive effect on the lives of people, especially here in Queensland. Part of this process should also be to make sure that those positive stories are also given the attention and the detail that they deserve. People want to know that. People do not want to only know about some AO6 level bureaucrat who has made a mistake and lay blame for that on the minister; they also want to know some of the positive things that the government is doing and they want to know the details of those and how they affect them in their day-to-day lives.

We had a very long estimates hearing. I want to congratulate the ministers who appeared before us. I do not want to dwell on that. I want to pay particular homage to the director-general Linda Apelt who appeared before that committee. I think she had a broken arm. She handled herself with great aplomb and great dignity in dealing with the vast array of responsibilities that she has. She dealt with the questions efficiently and effectively, whether they were government questions or questions put forward by the opposition.

I want to turn briefly to some aspects of the report, particularly the dissenting report, that affect my electorate and that I found a little bit disturbing. These are the dissenting reports that in particular deal with the policy area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and some of the questioning that was put forward by a visitor to the committee in the member for Moggill. In the report he has criticised the government for its welfare reform program and for the resources that it is putting into the welfare reform program on four communities on Cape York Peninsula. All four communities are in my electorate. Dr Flegg is quite contradictory in his report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Make sure you use the member's correct title.

Mr O'BRIEN: Sorry. The member for Moggill criticises the government for spending money on the welfare reform program and then he criticises the government for not putting more resources into the welfare reform program. So it is hard to get a win. I note that the Director of the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership, Noel Pearson, has come out and criticised Dr Flegg for his lack of understanding of these issues. Dr Flegg is the recent shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. He has made one foray into the Cape York Peninsula. He has seagulled those people. He refused to stay a night in an Aboriginal community. He went to Weipa—no doubt went into the Albatross Hotel and had a great night in Weipa—but would not spend a night in one of those communities. He went up there with his so-called leader and seagulled those people without showing any real regard for what they need and what they want.

(Time expired)

 **Ms DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (7.51 pm): I rise to speak to the report of the Community Affairs Committee, particularly in the area of child safety. There are 8,000 children in care throughout Queensland. These are children of all ages who are living in foster care, residential care or other situations because their own families are deemed to provide unsuitable environments. It is a tragic situation and one which is getting bigger and worse each year. In 2010-11 there was a further three per cent growth in the number of children in care. While the minister told the estimates committee that the growth in the number of children in care was a national and international trend, the fact remains that Queensland has the unenviable title of national capital in terms of the proportion of children in care. This is distressing and surely an indicator to the minister that urgent improvements need to be made.

The minister is presiding over a department of hardworking, dedicated staff, yet the reward that these staff get is unimaginable case loads and underresourcing. In boasting about the reduction in case loads per staff member, the minister ignored the fact that there are still officers working under the burden of up to 32 cases. Many officers run high above the state average of 22 cases per officer. The minister expected an announcement of new staff, particularly child safety officers, to alleviate the problem of short staffing and the temporary filling of long-term vacancies. But, if the department is struggling to fill dozens of positions now, creating new positions does not seem to be the answer. With 18 child safety officer positions alone unfilled at the time of estimates, that means other officers are having to fill in, increase their workloads and increase their stress in an already demanding job.

The lack of continuity and the pressure on staff are fundamental problems within the department and lead to a less effective level of service. An example of this is the completion of investigations and assessments within their two-month time frame. The minister could not provide an answer for the processes that were undertaken when up to 100 per cent of cases were not completed in the target time frame. The minister simply blamed families and children 'actively avoiding' child safety officers. Many processes seemed beyond the grasp of the minister, including the placement of children with unlicensed out-of-home services. The minister admitted that there were 24 such services accepting placements but would not acknowledge that it is a great concern that licensing cannot be undertaken in time to meet placement demand.

There are few measures reported in the budget papers, and this year saw the further discontinuation of many important measures. The functioning, direction and efficiency of the department has to be questioned when many of these discontinued measures were themselves just 12 months old. The director-general stated that the measures needed to be an 'actual reflection of issues that are within the control of the department'. This hardly explains why the number of children in care and the type of placement is not going to be reported in future years. This is surely as central to the operation of the department as you can get. How is it even possible to have a report of the department of child safety and omit the number of children in care?

There are other essential items that are missing both from the budget papers and from the minister's knowledge—for example, a simple breakdown of the notifications, whether children were taken from their families into care as a result of neglect or abuse. If the minister is not aware of why children are taken into care, how can he hope to tackle the underlying causes and issues? How can funding be targeted to best use? How can the non-government sector receive the resourcing and support they need to continue their vital work? The non-government sector is already bearing a great burden of costs and delays as a result of government bureaucracy and mismanagement. Whether it is an escalation of utility costs or a six-month wait for blue cards, delays in paperwork or the cost of compliance, these imposts are costing our non-government sector significantly. This is a sector that already runs on tight budgets and compassion.

A trend that is of great concern to me is that of self-placement for children in care aged 11 and under. This is a potentially dangerous practice made even more risky by the minister's admission that there is no compulsory checking of the person with whom the child self-places. The rules and checks for foster carers is stringent and need to be to ensure the best outcomes for the children. The lack of similar enforcement for children who are self-placing is very troubling. Unfortunately, again, the minister could

not offer any reassurance that this troubling trend would be addressed. There is no excuse for allowing bureaucracy and mismanagement to negatively impact on our children in need, the people who care for them and those who work so hard to protect them.

Hon. KL STRUTHERS (Alger—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (7.56 pm): Budget estimates is essential for a healthy democracy. This scrutiny of ministers through budget estimates did not happen in the dark days of conservative rule in Queensland. It was introduced by the Goss Labor government and is now even stronger under the Bligh Labor government. If the mob opposite ever snuck back into government in Queensland, they would wind back this scrutiny. They would probably even scrap it.

Our government has laid out a clear plan of action in this budget to build jobs and prosperity in Queensland. We are optimistic about the future of Queensland and want as many people as possible to share in this prosperity. We have made tough decisions, unlike those opposite who simply say what people want to hear. If they are in the boardrooms of Brisbane, they say yes to more coalmining and yes to the growth of the CSG industry. When they are out in the country towns of Queensland, they are the great defenders of cropping land. In the privacy of the party room, they really want to slash jobs and cut back working conditions. But in front of the cameras they are the great defenders of the battlers. Those opposite are fiscal fakes. They are promising the world to Queenslanders but fail to cost those promises. They are promising but cannot deliver. They need to come clean to the people of Queensland on what they will cut to fund their promises.

Dr Flegg interjected.

Ms STRUTHERS: What budget estimates exposes is more about them—their inadequacy to govern and their lack of understanding of the budget papers.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Both the member for Moggill and the member for Gympie, you are on the list so you will have a chance shortly. Please allow the minister to speak.

Ms STRUTHERS: Our budget demonstrates fiscal discipline, fiscal responsibility. We have been upfront with the people of Queensland. We are on track through our record building program to meet and exceed our 100,000 jobs target. The best way to ease the cost of living on households is to generate jobs and economic growth, and that is what we are doing. For those on fixed or low incomes and who are not sharing in the prosperity in Queensland, our government is providing increased concessions and rebates and more housing assistance than ever before. We know every dollar counts and we offer the broadest range of concessions for seniors and concession cardholders than any other state or territory. We have increased concessions to almost \$1.4 billion across government in this budget.

With unprecedented state and federal investment in housing, we have delivered well over 4,000 new units of social housing over the past two years, and in this budget we expanded the very popular National Rental Affordability Scheme to \$93 million over five years, supplying more than 12,000 units of accommodation at 80 per cent of the market rent. In contrast, the shadow minister had said in June that the LNP would not commit to fund more social housing, and that sent alarm bells through the housing sector in Queensland, and so it should. At a time when housing affordability is at a real—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House. I find it offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): I am sorry, I was taking some instructions and I did not hear the comments, but I understand there was no personal imputation, was there?

Ms SIMPSON: She mentioned 'the shadow minister'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would probably ask the minister to withdraw that comment—and I do not have the transcript in front of me—if in fact it was a comment made in relation to the shadow minister.

Ms STRUTHERS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to take your direction. Those opposite have no housing policy other than to have said—and to have been quoted in the *Courier-Mail* in mid-June—that they will not commit to more social housing. We have known for a long time that they do not like social housing, and that sent alarm bells through the housing sector in Queensland. What do we need? We need more housing, and that is what this government is delivering. Those opposite do not have a policy on concessions. They do not have a policy on women. They do not have a policy on housing, other than that comment that the shadow minister made as was reported in the *Courier-Mail* in mid-June.

The shadow minister was light on—and that is a kind comment—in her analysis of the budget papers. She did her own maths on the salary budget of the Office for Women, for example, creating mischief in her assertion about salary levels in that office. She dusted off questions from last year and she was running out of puff. In fact, in a number of areas I was being asked questions that I had answered last year, so she had obviously got a bit of help from the former shadow minister, the member for Burdekin.

The public of Queensland deserve to know what the opposition's policies are. We have come clean in our budget. We have a comprehensive plan of action in our budget. We have had to make some tough decisions. We went through the estimates process defending those tough decisions and talking about the initiatives we are going forward with this year. It was very disturbing that what the budget estimates exposed was more about them than us. It exposed their gross inadequacy and their inability to govern in Queensland. The great shame of all that is that the public of Queensland do not fill the galleries and see them in action.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (8.02 pm): As a visitor to this committee in my capacity as shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I would like to express my thanks to the committee, to the chairman, to Minister Pitt, to Acting Commissioner Rod Curtin and to Director-General Linda Apelt.

I am a bit incredulous that government members here and some others would be expressing such grief that we would question issues relating to the budget for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and particularly the Family Responsibilities Commission. The Family Responsibilities Commission costs taxpayers over \$15 million—\$7,000 for every man, woman and child in those communities—and services four communities with a total population of around 2,200 people. The three-year trial is due to finish on 1 January, and this is the time to ask questions about whether this was value for money, whether it has delivered tangible results and whether it is something that should be taken forward. I look forward to participating in that debate.

Towards the end of the trial we need to have a look at the figures. We have a staff of 17 in an office in Cairns which services communities with about 2,200 people. It was estimated that there were 1,100 school attendance notifications when in fact there were 1,392 in a year, and this figure exceeds the number of children in those communities. It was estimated that there were 1,300 offence notices for matters that have come through the Magistrates Court and the like when in fact there were 1,987 offence notices in communities with a total population of 2,200 people. It was estimated that there were 1,300 conferences when in fact there were 1,734 conferences in four communities that only have 2,200 people between them. In an eight-week period there were 399 conferences in the settlement of Aurukun alone which has some 1,200 people. These are very important social measures. The Family Responsibilities Commission measures four things: poor school attendance, violence and crime, child safety issues and tenancy breaches.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Dr FLEGG: Madam Deputy Speaker—

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Dr FLEGG: The member for Cook ought to have a closer look at these communities, because each one of these—

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Dr FLEGG: Each one of these notifications for child safety for non-school attendance is a human being whose future is being damaged by the fact that they are not able to attend school—

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Dr FLEGG: We still have huge issues among child safety.

Mr O'Brien interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order!

Dr FLEGG: Thank you finally, Madam Deputy Speaker. The people who live in these communities are real, genuine Queenslanders who deserve the same chance at life as every other Queenslanders. These figures tell you they are not getting that.

Mr Dick interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I look forward to participating in the debate about what happens when this commission ends on 1 January, Minister. On 1 January next year it finishes with these sorts of statistics.

Mr O'Brien: Stay the night. How many nights have you spent in Indigenous communities?

Dr FLEGG: I hear the bleating of these people opposite, but I can say that I in fact worked in the Northern Territory and in Indigenous communities for a couple of years.

We went on in this area and talked about homeownership. The answer about homeownership for Indigenous people in these communities is that zero people achieved homeownership. This is something that the member opposite, every other Queensland and I take as a basic right, but this government will not allow it to Indigenous Queenslanders. On the issue around school attendance, we found it very difficult to get answers. We could not even find out how many children, if in fact there are any, have full attendance.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (8.07 pm): I rise this evening to respond to the Community Affairs Committee's report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and the Family Responsibilities Commission. I congratulate and thank the committee members including guests, particularly the chair, the member for Keppel, and the departmental, parliamentary and ministerial staff for the time they dedicated and the hard work they put into this important process.

As the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, I play a significant oversight role in the development and implementation of Indigenous policy and partnerships in Queensland to close the gap in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. This is supported by the activities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services within the Department of Communities, which has a whole-of-government role in terms of policy leadership and coordination of government initiatives to close the gap. My department takes this role very seriously, as do I, and is undertaking extensive work across government on initiatives such as the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office, our Reconciliation Action Plan, the recently launched LEAP strategy and the ongoing development of a new Indigenous justice strategy.

Making a difference in the lives of Indigenous Queenslanders is not something that one minister or one portfolio can do on their own. That is why all Bligh government ministers take this issue seriously and are committed to developing and implementing key strategies to turn around Indigenous disadvantage. This is done in a coordinated manner across government to ensure we get the best outcomes for all Indigenous Queenslanders.

I reject entirely the suggestion levelled at me in the LNP's statement of reservation that I experienced difficulty in answering questions in areas such as housing and education because they did not fall within my portfolio. When the member for Moggill asked me a question regarding housing and employment in relation to his recent visit to Aurukun, I very clearly said that I was more than happy to respond even though these matters do not fall within the principal responsibilities of my portfolio. It was the suggestion of the chair that it may be better directed to another minister for response. I offered to answer the question because, as minister, I take a leadership role in Indigenous policy issues in this state. It is because I understand the intricacies of the often difficult issues faced by both myself and my colleagues in making a difference in this area and, most importantly, by Indigenous Queenslanders on the ground who want to work in partnership with the Bligh government to make a real and lasting difference in their lives.

Even with the changes to the standing orders this year, members of the opposition comprehensively failed to ask the sorts of questions that may actually help them better understand this area of policy, and their lack of understanding was reflected in their statement of reservation. I take this opportunity to remind them about how the government is making a difference in certain areas.

The Cape York welfare reform trial has been operating since 2008 and has seen innovative service and policy responses in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. The trial is being seen by these communities as having a positive effect—more children going to school, people regularly paying rent and communities generally quieter than before the trial commenced. To date, improvements in school attendance and reductions in levels of violence in Aurukun, Coen and Hope Vale have all been seen. Local Indigenous authority is being restored through the work of the Family Responsibilities Commission and local commissioners and families are being rebuilt. While it took a little time, community members now understand that the FRC can assist them in addressing their problems. People now know where to access help. The trial has created new avenues including the FRC local offices, the local program offices and the village opportunity hubs for people to seek assistance.

At the estimates the member for Moggill spoke quite negatively about the costs of the trial and about Aurukun, and again here this evening. I do not think there is anything additional I can add on top of those comments provided by Noel Pearson in response to the member for Moggill. Aurukun is a community that has come a long way over the past four years. School attendance has improved and assault rates are down. Mayor Neville Pootchemunka has been absolutely proactive as a supporter of the trial and has said that the changes that the government wants to see are generational and has asked why the trial would stop before these changes are realised. Work is continuing to ensure that vulnerable members of the community are supported. The outcomes of the independent evaluation currently underway will inform the nature of the trial from 2012.

In closing, I want to remind honourable members that the Australian, state and territory governments are investing \$9.51 billion over 10 years to 2017-18 across eight Indigenous specific national partnership agreements in the areas of early childhood, remote service delivery, public internet access, economic participation, remote Indigenous housing, health, the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse and the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement. The work that the Bligh government has done in the area of Indigenous policy in Queensland has been a long road and, as one community leader in Aurukun was quoted as saying, 'We are on the way, but we're not there yet.' The opposition provided bipartisan support for the FRC. I repeat: it provided bipartisan support for the FRC. While this was certainly welcomed, it must not lose sight of the fact that while these changes are working they will not work overnight. This comes with a price tag, but it is not about the money though. It is about the people. The outcomes we are seeing are proof positive that we are heading in the right direction.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (8.12 pm): I rise tonight to make a contribution to the report of the Community Affairs Committee. I thank the committee for its granting of leave to enable me to attend the committee as the shadow minister for sport, and I will be addressing my remarks to the Sports portfolio. In particular, I note that this portfolio was the last to be considered by the committee on the last day of estimates and by then the director-general had had a very lengthy day and I express my appreciation to her and to her departmental staff and the chief executive officer from Stadiums Queensland who attended. Whilst there have been many improvements with regard to the estimates process, I do believe that we should be willing to grant more time across these portfolio areas. Some 45 minutes for the examination of this area—

Mr Reeves: You wouldn't ask me a question!

Mr GIBSON: The 45 minutes that was available was not enough. I take the interjection from the minister because it highlights the ignorance of this minister in that the estimates process was about examining expenditure—not about examining the minister, not about asking the minister questions but about the departmental expenditure. I note with some concern that the minister felt the need to keep jumping in at the end of his director-general's comments and adding further comments, which was not the aim of the day. However, the estimates process was of value and it did reveal some important things. For example, a direct question to the CEO of Stadiums Queensland revealed that the Queensland government was seeking to remove the cap at Suncorp Stadium without any limitation at all. That was not revealed prior to estimates. It was certainly not in the member for Mount Coot-tha's media statements; they were simply about a review of those numbers. But very clearly the government was looking at removing the cap in total, and that I think highlights the value of this estimates process. With regard to the Rockhampton stadium commitment, we have seen many comments in the media speculating about this Labor government supporting a stadium—in some cases, almost making it sound like a done deal—but again questioning revealed that from Stadiums Queensland's perspective the government had made no request to it to conduct any preliminary consultation. That highlights the value of this estimates process.

One of the concerns arising from the estimates process that I want to flag is the lack of disclosure of KPIs for government sports coordinators. In principle we support the Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan under which \$38 million has been allocated to employ local sport and recreation coordinators. We note that their role is to provide advice and support to local organisations on fundraising, volunteer support, promotional activities and sponsorship. What we are concerned about is this failure by this minister and indeed by the department to actually highlight or outline what these KPIs would be. We believe that \$38 million is a significant expenditure and there should be appropriate KPIs associated with that. It was only after significant questioning that we did get a commitment—and I acknowledge that—from the minister that we will see the KPIs and outcomes included within the departmental annual report.

Mr Reeves: Don't put words in my mouth.

Mr GIBSON: If the minister is backing away from that commitment, I note that as well, because that is what we find from this Labor government. It comes back to the point that we need to ensure that this estimates process holds the expenditure to account. With regard to the questioning, it is worthy to note that sporting clubs and volunteer organisations are in most cases made up of volunteers and they have no financial capacity to undertake any economic or social modelling with regard to issues like the carbon tax. Questions were asked. It is disappointing to note that this government does not take that expenditure seriously and has not done any work as to the impacts of the carbon tax on our local sporting groups.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I rise to a point of order. The questioning on that day in relation to the carbon tax—and I made the point in my speech—related to a period of time outside the Appropriation Bill. We are not now debating, as was suggested earlier, the appropriation because it is in the report. We are now debating the decision on whether or not this shadow minister could ask questions about the carbon tax.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): There is no point of order.

Mr GIBSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. That highlights the sensitivity of those opposite when they feel so sensitive about this issue that they do not wish it to be examined within the portfolio process. I conclude by saying that, whilst the consideration of this government's expenditure within the Sports portfolio, particularly the grants and funding area, has occurred, we will continue to monitor it closely based on the government's poor performance in the past with regard to sporting grants and funding. That has been borne out.

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (8.17 pm): Our investment of \$733 million in Queensland's child protection system dwarfs the budget of the LNP when it was last in government. We are investing in new and innovative programs to help parents and their children stay together. We are also investing in a range of placement options for children who cannot live at home and we are investing in our staff so they are better trained and better able to respond to families in crisis. Unfortunately, the member for Aspley continues to show a total lack of understanding of the Child Safety portfolio. I am concerned by the member for Aspley's comments in the report relating to discontinued measures. The member for Aspley was upset that a number of substantiations and notifications were not on hand during the committee hearing.

I had not expected a question asking for data that is available publicly in a number of forums. Nonetheless, we quickly printed that off the internet and relayed this information to the member for Aspley. This information is also broken down into different categories on the internet. It is a shame that the member cannot be bothered to do some simple research of her own. She criticises reporting in the annual budget papers but clearly has not done any research for information that is available to her and the public on the website, which is updated quarterly. If the member for Aspley actually did some research she would find that the data she continues to request is available online and is regularly updated. Not only this, the Service Delivery Statements also include the fact that this data is reported publicly—on our website no less—as a reason for measures being discontinued.

This government has overseen some of the most significant enhancements to reporting for child safety in Australia. Today in Queensland the Bligh government reports on over 150 data measures annually, with more than 80 of these being reported on a quarterly basis. This data is reported publicly through many forums, including the Child Safety website. When the former incarnation of the LNP was last in government it reported on state-wide measures. However, only one measure was reported on a regional breakdown and that was the number of children in care. I have stated previously in parliament, including in answers to questions on notice, that the LNP reported on only one measure. I should clarify today that that was only one measure broken down on a regional basis. I am correcting the record today as I believe it is important that there be no confusion about that issue.

In relation to the Sport portfolio, I am concerned about the statement included in the report and the words that we just heard from the member for Gympie. Not only does he reflect on the chair, he also criticises me for failing to answer a question he did not even ask me. As is shown clearly in the *Hansard*, that question was just one in a series of questions directed to the director-general. In fact, the director-general even thanked the member for the question. Additionally, the member for Gympie has clearly misinterpreted my statements in relation to reporting under the Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan. I make it clear to the House that I have full confidence in this valuable funding program, which is creating jobs for Queenslanders and helping out our sporting clubs.

We have strict reporting guidelines and the recipients of funding under this program are required to report regularly to the department to acquit their funding. As is the normal practice, and as I advised the estimates committee, I will report on this program and all other funding programs in the department's annual report, not on what the member for Gympie had to say. It is disappointing that the LNP has chosen not to support the Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan. In fact, that very week I went to Gympie with the Brisbane Broncos and committed \$52,000 per annum for the next three years for a great partnership with Gympie Rugby League.

Obviously, the member for Redlands was listening to the member for Beaudesert, who got it all wrong as well. Queensland is one of the only states, except for the Northern Territory, that funds its Olympians, Paralympians and Commonwealth Games athletes. This year the Special Olympians will receive \$5,400. We are the only state that does that. We have a track record. I table for the House a media release about the Delhi Commonwealth Games athletes and a media release from the former minister for sport regarding the Olympic athletes.

Tabled paper: Copy of a media release, dated 14 september 2010, by Hon. Phil Reeves MP titled 'Government's parting boost for Delhi athlete' [5035].

Tabled paper: Copy of a media release, dated 25 July 2008, by Hon. Judy Spence MP titled 'Bligh delivers boost for Beijing-bound Qld athletes' [5036].

Tabled paper: Copy of an article from webpage of Queensland Academy of Sport titled 'Athletes invited to Parliament House to receive Bonus Grant' [5037].

When it comes to funding sport at the local level and at the elite level, we are head and shoulders above any other state. With the Queensland Academy of Sport, we are only second to New South Wales in funding. We are the only state, with the exception of the Northern Territory, that funds a bonus grant to our Olympic athletes. The member is completely wrong. That just shows how lazy the opposition members are. They get one person whispering in their ear who says that that happens. That is wrong. It is false.

Mr DOWLING: I rise to a point of order. I find the comment offensive and I ask that the minister withdraw it.

Mr REEVES: I will withdraw, but let the record show that the member has said that Queensland Olympic athletes do not get any support from the government. We are second to none in Australia. That is why we are the champion state, that is why we are the events state and we will continue to be so under a Labor government.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Finance and Administration Committee

Report No. 1

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! The question is—

That report No. 1 of the Finance and Administration Committee be adopted.

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.23 pm): As everyone knows, I am the chair of the Finance and Administration Committee and, as part of that role, I was also the chair of the estimates committee. During yesterday's sitting we spoke about report No. 2 to the House, which concentrated on the portfolios of the Premier and Minister for Reconstruction, the Treasurer, the Minister for Government Services and the Minister for Finance and Arts. Tonight we are debating report No. 1, which deals with the expenditure of the Speaker's office. I will not go through all of the details that we went through yesterday in relation to staff, support and so forth. I will confine my remarks to the particular questioning of the Speaker on the day, which I found to be quite good. The Speaker was able to provide the committee with a great deal of information in relation to a number of issues.

The Speaker was quizzed about issues involving the review of the accommodation offered by the parliament. I am aware that many members are interested in that particular aspect. There was some discussion on the day about a possible survey being provided to members. I know that some of us will be keenly looking forward to seeing such a survey being done of members, which may involve quite a number of aspects of this parliamentary precinct.

One of the other matters raised on the day concerned issues surrounding members' electorate offices. I am sure I am not alone when I say that our electorate staff make a great effort in our offices. While we are all down here they are still slaving away answering phones and attending to people at the counters. One of the big issues that arose related to IT and telecommunications. We all know that telecommunication services are becoming faster every day, but they are also a huge impost on our offices as well. There was a great deal of discussion about this issue. The head of IT Services was there on the day answering questions in relation to this issue. There were also discussions in relation to the further training of our electorate staff, which I think is an important issue, and safety issues associated with our office in relation to security.

Overall, I think the Speaker did a great job on the day. I know that people were keen to talk to him even about things like the regional sittings of parliament in Mackay. I would certainly commend the report to the House. I do not believe there is much more I can say at this point.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.26 pm): I am pleased to rise to make a contribution to the consideration of the report of the Finance and Administration Committee. As the chairman of the committee indicated, a number of issues were dealt with at the estimates hearing relating to the parliamentary precinct and the operation of the Parliamentary Service, foremost among which was the issue of the overcrowding of this precinct. I think this was the first time at an estimates committee hearing that this issue was discussed properly. It was brought out into the open for the first time and that is a good thing. I think too often the issue of accommodation for members, the services for members, the maintenance of this building—the things that are necessary to make this parliament operate properly—become political issues and they should be above politics. I expressed the hope that in the future, irrespective of who sits where in this parliament, irrespective of the composition of this parliament, every member of this parliament understands their responsibility to maintain this place for the generation of parliamentarians who will come after us, to maintain the standards of accommodation and the esteem that this House should have to a level that is worthy of the parliament of Queensland.

There is no doubt in my mind that for many years this precinct has been overcrowded—not just in the opposition office, I might add. I have been to see ministers on deputations and I have seen the working conditions in ministers' offices. I would say without a shadow of a doubt that the working conditions that the staff here work under would not be tolerated in very many other workplaces in the

city. In fact, I sometimes wonder whether they comply with the workplace health and safety standards that other employers are required to meet for their employees. I suggest that in the opposition office they do not. This is a situation that has developed over a period of time, but it has to be addressed.

So it is that the issue of the accommodation that is provided on this precinct becomes part of that consideration. When we start to consider the options for addressing this chronic overcrowding, when we bring the issue out into the open and start to talk about it, we start to look at the options that are available to us. One of the options that is available to us is to consider the long-term wisdom of continuing to provide accommodation here in the way in which we do. The accommodation precinct here is average, to say the best. I have seen it described in my early days here as five-star accommodation. If it ever was, it is not now. It is tired, it is dated and sooner or later it is going to have to have a major overhaul if it is going to continue to be used as accommodation for members.

We as a parliament have to consider whether or not we continue to provide that accommodation in the way that we have. Part of that consideration needs to be an attempt to ascertain firstly the needs of the members but secondly the cost of meeting those needs. I would hazard a guess that the cost of providing me with a room tonight would frighten most ratepayers if it was actually worked out. We have an accommodation precinct that has a very low occupancy rate. If the Annexe was an hotel it would have a 20 per cent occupancy rate. I think that is probably conservative. The cost of providing accommodation for me as a member here on a per night basis would be considerably more than any five-star hotel uptown.

The issue has to be brought out and discussed amongst us all in a non-political way. It cannot be a political football. There are enough journalists who will take cheap shots at us as a group. I believe that as a group of parliamentarians we need to address this issue without turning it into a political football, without providing those people in the media who love to take cheap shots with any more opportunities than we possibly can. It is about ensuring that this parliament can provide the functions that it must provide to the generations of parliamentarians who will come here in the future and continue to serve the people of Queensland whom we all represent in this place irrespective of our political philosophy.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (8.31 pm): I rise to make brief comments on the estimates for the Finance and Administration Committee in relation to the Parliamentary Service and the Speaker. Firstly, I congratulate the Speaker on his magnificent management of the parliamentary precinct of the parliament of Queensland in the period that I have been here. I think he has done an excellent job. Whilst we all have particular issues with the parliamentary precinct, I think that it has been run very, very well. The matters that the member for Callide has raised are matters that I noted in the estimates committee will be circulated and, with commitment from the Speaker, canvassed with all members. This is a non-political matter. For my own part, I would caution different agendas that are being driven in relation to the alternative use for the Parliamentary Annexe as opposed to accommodation. I think it should be canvassed widely with all members and I think all matters, including the long-term results of making such a momentous decision, should be raised.

I take issue with some of the ranting and raving I heard earlier from the member for Southport and certainly the Treasurer in terms of the quality of the opposition's comments and how the opposition questioning at estimates time failed. I look forward to next year when there is a high quality of opposition questioning from the members from Southport and Mount Coot-tha. I believe that they were held to account in terms of good questioning. For the majority of people I think the estimates committees worked well this year. I think our particular committee was chaired very well. I have already made that comment in a previous speech. I find it objectionable that some people are talking about this matter from a political aspect. I look forward to the member for Southport's opposition questioning at next year's estimates. I think he will do a very good job.

The other matter that I would draw the attention of the House to in terms of the Speaker's comments in the estimates is that the costs around the parliamentary precinct are rising and a lot of the areas are being overused and face damage because of that overuse. The Speaker makes reference to an inordinate increase in the entertainment that goes on and the number of visitors to the precinct. That is a fact. I understand that there are Parliamentary Service budgetary matters that rely on that, but the government has been utilising this as an election preparation field. It very rightly gives to many groups in the community the opportunity to come to Parliament House and see its parliament in action. Quite clearly there is a price to pay for that. The Speaker has correctly pointed that out. I would like to know the number of visitors in terms of how much this building is being used as an entertainment venue to try to boost the stocks of what I see is a failing Labor government.

Another issue I raise is the regional parliament and the imposed and very expensive movement of the parliament. Some of those costs were not identified. We understood \$650,000 from the Speaker's budget went towards it. There were many costs involved in that regional sittings. I would like to see the question asked to that community: do you want this regional sittings of parliament in your backyard?—in other words, the money or the box. They should be asked whether they would prefer something major to the area. It was very successful. I am not arguing with that. Perhaps the cities could choose whether they have parliamentarians on their doorstep or not.

The final point I would like to make is that my shower is always tepid and I would appreciate it if the Speaker would look into this matter at his convenience.

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (8.36 pm): It is a privilege to rise to speak in favour of report No. 1 to the Legislative Assembly by the Finance and Administration Committee. It is a marvellous report. I extend my congratulations to the chair, the member for Ipswich West, and all of the members of the committee for producing an insightful and informative report.

Although I am not a member of the Finance and Administration Committee, I am pleased to be provided with an opportunity to speak to the report about the actual and proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. This report by the committee examined the performance of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the 2010-11 financial year and the proposed expenditure for the 2011-12 financial year. It is important for me to take this opportunity to commend the staff of the Parliamentary Service. To the attendants, to the support staff, to the Hansard reporters, to the committee staff, to the library staff, to the cleaners, to the IT staff, to the property services staff, to the HR and financial services staff, thank you for your hard work and dedication to our parliament and to the people of Queensland. Without you our parliament and our democracy would not operate effectively and efficiently.

I should take this opportunity to particularly commend the ladies in the cafeteria from our catering service for making the most marvellous strawberry thickshakes. I would say that they are the best strawberry thickshakes in all of Queensland and I encourage all members to take the opportunity to enjoy one of the strawberry thickshakes from the cafeteria. I am sure they will be pleasantly surprised. I extend my thanks to all the parliamentary staff.

I would also like to extend my thanks to all the staff connected to the Legislative Assembly, especially my electorate staff, Russell Vieritz, Kris Day and Kirsten Burnett who is on maternity leave. Their hard work in the Morayfield electorate is not only appreciated by me but is essential to continuing our proud tradition of supporting the good people who call the Morayfield state electorate their home.

The Finance and Administration Committee heard during this year's estimates about some of the outstanding achievements of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. I particularly note the rollout of new computers and new fast speed broadband internet services in the electorate offices, the new parliamentary website, the on-demand public access to video recordings of members' speeches and the very successful regional sittings in Mackay. I thought that was a particularly marvellous highlight of the last financial year.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Speaker on his superb performance during the estimates hearing. I acknowledge, with a sense of history, that this will be the last time that the Speaker appears before an estimates hearing. I commend the report to the House and encourage members to support it.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (8.39 pm): I, too, was merely a guest of this committee and I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the report of the estimates hearings. If there was one issue at this finance estimates hearing that showed the manifest incompetence of the incumbent Bligh Labor government, it must be the issue of the failed Queensland Health payroll system rolled out in the last financial year of government. It was probably the most salient issue raised in both this estimates hearing and the hearing of the Health and Disabilities Committee. The estimates hearings provided just a little more information on what really went wrong. In summary form, the total cost to date—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! Member for Gaven, we are considering the Finance and Administration Committee report on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I do not think the Health payroll is relevant.

Dr DOUGLAS: It was part of it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is about the Speaker.

Dr DOUGLAS: I did not know that, I am sorry. I appreciate that advice. I must have missed that. I did not realise that it was changed.

I endorse the comments made by the member for Morayfield. This is the last time the Speaker will come before the House in the estimates process. I wish to discuss at length the members' survey. This is a wonderful initiative. Basically, it is like an exit poll of sorts. It is an exit survey which members can fill in anonymously or they can put their name to it. It is a very general survey using a tick-the-box approach. In some ways it allows people to make comments about a process that they might not otherwise make.

I would like to raise the significant issue of the time limits for questions. I know that everyone would have their own opinions. I think the use of block questions was excellent. Issues have been raised about whether we should have an abolition of time limits and questions en bloc. Even though the form provides only limited space, I would endorse the fact that these sorts of questions are valid and people need to consider them. We must remember that the estimates process is an evolutionary process. Next year's estimates process will be a completely different process because the portfolio committees will have been running for a significant period by that stage.

It will be interesting to compare the responses from this year's survey with those that are taken after further hearings. Even though the Speaker will not be responsible for this form in later time—no doubt it will be the CLA—I would ask that committee to consider having this form again and maybe expanding it a little. Then we could compare the forms submitted this year with those submitted in subsequent years. I think this initiative by the Speaker is an excellent one. I congratulate him for undertaking it.

I apologise for making a little error earlier on. I must have missed the new report being called on for debate. As I say, I did attend the committee hearing as a guest.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: I have to put it down to the dinner. Maybe on the final night of the parliament sitting, I have overlooked that.

I thought the process was excellent. I think the estimates process this year was a far better process than in previous years. I certainly think the chairs did an excellent job. It was very difficult, because they were much longer days. It was wonderful to be able to ask questions of the CEOs and heads of department. By and large, the questions were answered within reasonable time frames. They took questions on notice. They did attempt to answer the questions reasonably. I thought it was a successful process. It shows the evolution of the process.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (8.44 pm): It is with great pleasure that I speak tonight in relation to the estimates hearing of the Finance and Administration Committee. Firstly, I congratulate the committee chair, Wayne Wendt, and all members of the committee for the superb job they did in examining the estimates. I also place on record my thanks to the Speaker for the professional way in which he runs this parliament. I thank Neil Laurie, the Clerk of the Parliament. When my electorate office was flooded earlier this year, we saw firsthand the excellent work that they and Property Services do. In fact, the Speaker, Neil Laurie and other members of the team came out to look at the devastation around Goodna. We were very thankful for their care and commitment. Peter Morris and his team in HRM, the Employment Assistance Service and all of their counsellors were absolutely wonderful to me and my electorate officers, Steve Axe and Tracey Bradley. It certainly was a time when we needed to be well so that we could look after our constituents during the terrible summer of tragedy.

I place on record my thanks to the committee staff. They have done a wonderful job over the years with all of the previous committees. They are going to have to adjust to the new committee structure, but I am sure they will do that very well. The library staff are always very professional. They look at all of our requests for information and research and they get back to members of parliament in a timely manner. I thank the gardeners of the parliamentary precinct, because they do an excellent job.

Mr Ryan: Great roses.

Mrs MILLER: They do have great roses and wonderful flowers of all kinds.

Mr Lawlor: What about gerberas?

Mr MILLER: I have not seen any gerberas, but the Speaker's Green always looks great. I thank the cafeteria staff. What would we do without Jaakko, the chefs and all the wonderful staff in the cafeteria? I thank a wonderful member of staff who looks after us in the Strangers' Dining Room, Mary. I wish her the most wonderful retirement. She has been here for 30 years. Mary has seen many of our children grow up. She has been wonderful to our spouses and our children. She has never forgotten any of their names. Mary and her team look after all visitors to Parliament House wonderfully. I thank Barb, Ellen, Margaret, Colleen, Carol, Mario and all of the catering staff. I must say that Jonno also does a wonderful job in looking after us. I thank everyone. The estimates committee was a wonderful process this year. I look forward to being chair of a committee under the new system.

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (8.47 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the estimates hearings for the Finance and Administration Committee as they pertain to the parliament. All honourable members in this place are aware of the impact that the widespread serious flooding had in Central and Southern Queensland earlier this year and the impact Cyclone Yasi had on communities in North Queensland. My electorate of Hinchinbrook was badly affected by Tropical Cyclone Yasi. The electorate of Lockyer was particularly badly affected by the very serious flood event that occurred in the Lockyer Valley.

Whilst the communities of many members on both sides of the House were badly affected, the member for Lockyer and I had some particular circumstances to encounter in our own communities. I want to say a few words during the course of the debate on the budget estimates for this committee because I want to place on record my gratitude and the gratitude of the honourable member for Lockyer to the Speaker for the personal attention that he paid to the circumstances of my electorate staff and the electorate staff of the member for Lockyer, and for the particularly generous way in which the Hon. Speaker paid particular attention to my circumstances and the circumstances of the family of the member for Lockyer.

It was very much appreciated by both me and the member for Lockyer. I acknowledge the fact that the member for Bundamba also thanked the Speaker for the particular attention that he paid to the circumstances of her Bundamba electorate office staff and to her circumstances. We have to understand that, in many ways, the 94 electorate offices across the state of Queensland are extensions of the parliament. It was quite clear to me from the contact that I had with the Speaker that he considers the welfare of the people who work in those offices as important as the welfare of the people who work in this House. I relay my gratitude and that of the member for Lockyer to the Speaker.

Mr MESSENGER (Burnett—Ind) (8.50 pm): I rise to make a comment on the estimates committee process. I acknowledge once again that I did not attend this year's estimates committee hearings due to ill health and other matters of public importance in the Burnett. I acknowledge that the estimates hearings play an important role in our democratic process. I acknowledge that there have been some improvements in the estimates hearings which have increased slightly the level of transparency and accountability for the expenditure of taxpayers' funds.

A relaxation of the time limits for questions and answers has been an improvement. The fact that members can directly question directors-general and nominated chief executive officers is also a small victory for a better system of government. Having said that, a slightly improved estimates committee process in a unicameral parliament where one party has an overwhelming majority is far from an ideal situation for lovers of democracy and open government.

While proponents of the new CLA and a rejigged estimates committee want to call it historic parliamentary reform with great benefits for the taxpayer, it is not real democratic reform but just a rebadging and a repackaging of a deeply flawed model of democracy that we inherited in 1922. No state or federal authority in Australia other than Queensland attempts the dangerous highwire act of democratic government without the safety net of an upper house.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. What is the relevance of this to the estimates procedure? The gentleman concerned has said that he was not present at them. He is now going on with some rambling rot about democracy. I ask you whether or not this is relevant in view of the Speaker's ruling over the last couple of days.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! The member does not necessarily have to be present in the hearing to talk to the report and the report is about the Office of the Speaker. There is no point of order.

Mr MESSENGER: Because we do not have an upper house, which forces a greater level of transparency, checks and balances on the excesses of the executive government, both sides of this House have been allowed as a matter of routine to pass bad legislation, waste taxpayers' money and turn a blind eye to corruption. Sadly, the unnecessary loss—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I must rise to another point of order. We do not have an upper house in Queensland and have not had one since 1922. So I fail to see what it has to do with the operation of the Office of Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member did, in fact, say that we do not have an upper house. Therefore he was making comment about the changes that have been occurring. There is no point of order.

Mr MESSENGER: The re-establishment of an upper house is the only way that we can have true reform in the Queensland political process. When compared with the waste for which this government is responsible, the cost of establishing an upper house would be minuscule. An amount of \$40 million for the re-establishment of an upper house is money well spent. It is the cost of one unwanted and failed desalination plant at Agnes Water.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett, I am trying to give you some latitude. We are talking particularly about the appropriations for the Office of the Speaker. I think you are now going outside of that. I ask you to come back to the actual appropriations before the Finance and Administration Committee.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you for your direction, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to talk about the accommodation on site. During the debate the opposition leader, Mr Seene, asked—

In your view can the parliament continue to provide those accommodation facilities in the way that we have up until now given the critical shortage of space in this precinct and taking into account the comments you have already made about the fact that the parliament needs to grow and the staff here will continue to grow with it?

Mr Speaker replied—

My own view is you need another building on this site. When this issue was raised in the Speaker's Advisory Committee by a member, what we did was went away and did some initial work. My recollection, without verballing the member, was that at the subsequent meeting the member came back and we did no further work on it. That was my recollection.

I know from comments made in *Hansard* that there is a push by some members to find accommodation away from this place. I think Mr Speaker is not in favour of that option. I would have to agree with him. While the rooms we have been supplied with are not all that flash, I believe that they

serve the purpose well. After a late-night session it is very comforting and handy to be only a lift ride away from a bedroom, instead of fighting your way through the late-night traffic. I suspect that on-site accommodation is more than likely the best value for money for the Queensland taxpayers. It will be up to proponents of off-site accommodation to prove that their course of action will be the best value for money.

In relation to IT services provided to the electorate offices and staff, I would like to congratulate the IT providers, especially Mr Coburn. I would, however, mention that there is a slight deficiency. I think that our electoral officers should have the ability to remotely access their work so they can work off site.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.58 pm): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 23 August 2011.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.58 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Keys to Drive, Seminars



Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (8.58 pm): Tonight I rise to bring to the attention of the House a program about to be conducted by a school in my electorate, Faith Lutheran College. It is a free seminar for parents and guardians who are being called upon to teach their children how to drive. The seminar, Keys to Drive, is an initiative of the Australian Automobile Association. It is funded by the federal government.

There are two seminars, the first to be held on Wednesday, 24 August at 6.30 pm for a 7 pm start. It will be held at the Faith Lutheran College grounds on Link Road at Victoria Point. The guest presenters will be Milton Kolas, a driving instructor, Sergeant Ben Brown from Wynnum Traffic Branch and Constable Nathan Vaughan from the Queensland Police Service. The event is an interactive seminar to give parents the tools that they require to accurately instruct their children to drive correctly.

They will go through scenarios in how to handle different situations and also go through updated road rules and answer any questions that the parents might have. My test was conducted in 1978, and I cannot begin to imagine how many rules have changed since then. This, however, will be followed up by the free hands-on driving instruction day on Saturday, 17 September at 9 am. Again, it will be held in a Faith Lutheran College car park but this time at the Beveridge Road campus in Thornlands.

This is not the first time, however, that Faith Lutheran has been engaged in safer driving programs for young people in the Redlands. It has also supported the RYDA program, which is an awareness program coordinated by the local Rotary clubs in our area. RYDA provides quality road safety information to youth to help ensure that when they commence driving they have the best road safety education possible.

RYDA is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. It is an organisation that has developed a road safety education program delivered to the youth of our community through the Rotary clubs. It is an event that I have attended and I have seen the results. It is very positive and uplifting. The program is directed towards our young people and is about road safety as they approach the period in their life when they start driving a car.

It would be remiss of me not to also acknowledge the commitment to the Faith Lutheran community by their Director of Development, Catherine Williams. Catherine has been instrumental in bringing both of those initiatives to the school and making them a reality. That has also been with the support, I hasten to add, of Principal Anthony Mueller and Acting Principal Deb Oslan. Congratulations to Catherine and the Faith Lutheran community. Good luck with the events. Bookings are essential. I table the flyer for the information of all members.

Tabled paper: Copy of a flyer for Faith driving seminar [\[5038\]](#).

Greenslopes Electorate, Education

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (9.01 pm): A good education is the cornerstone of a happy, successful life and good schools are the building blocks of cohesive, caring communities. The Greenslopes electorate is well served by a number of excellent schools staffed by hardworking and dedicated teachers educating bright and inquisitive students.

The last couple of weeks have been a blue-ribbon period for Greenslopes schools, and I have been lucky to attend a number of great local events. At Coorparoo State School I presented badges to the green team class representatives. The green team work closely with the school's science coordinators, Christine Barker and Jenny Rienks, to lead the school on environmental and sustainability issues. This is a great initiative, and congratulations must go to Principal Keith Warwick, his staff and students.

I have also been privileged to attend two Building the Education Revolution building openings. The BER program has been a fantastic initiative which has given a once-in-a-generation boost to schools right across Queensland. Mount Gravatt East State School and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School have both benefited from new multipurpose halls and resource centres. Both openings were wonderful events, but I would like to make special mention of Mount Gravatt East State School's fife marching band and its conductor, Sandi Meibusch, and the choir, conducted by Sophie Hodgson. The performance of both groups is further proof of the wonderful music programs on offer in Queensland state schools. On the subject of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School, I would like to congratulate the girls under-12 AFL team, which yesterday won the grand final of the Carol Berry Cup at the Gabba. This follows on from a runners-up performance in 2010. Congratulations to coach Luke Thomson and all the students.

I also had the opportunity to participate in ABC 612's Student Press Corps. This unique program gives school students the opportunity to grill industry experts, businesspeople and politicians about issues that matter to young people. I was questioned by four tenacious Coorparoo Secondary College students—Lewis Webb, Josh Nicol, Temika Ahsam and Jordanah Chan. The students had all done their research and it was almost as tough as question time. I am sure the students have great careers in journalism ahead of them.

The Greenslopes community is not just producing budding journalists. Our schools are also producing some fantastic musicians. Over the school holidays three of our best young musicians took part in workshops as part of the state schools Creative Generation extravaganza.

Ms Jones: A fantastic program.

Mr DICK: I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove. It is a fantastic program. I had the opportunity to listen to Jenna Brown, a backing vocalist from Coorparoo Secondary College; Jarrod Chambers, a trombone player from Cavendish Road State High School; and Elizabeth Jackson, a violin player from Holland Park State High School.

Finally, congratulations are in order for everyone involved with C&K Coorparoo Kindergarten. The kindergarten celebrated its 50th anniversary on Saturday, 23 July 2011. I was pleased to be able to attend the celebration. Particular congratulations must go to Mr and Mrs Bob and Olive Thacker of Holland Park who helped build the kindy back in 1961 and who were present at the celebration. The kindy was a linchpin of our community back then, and it is just as important today.

Australian Institute of Country Music

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (9.04 pm): Many people are already aware of Gympie's strong connection to country music through the Apex Club of Gympie's hosting of Australia's largest outdoor music festival, the Optus Gympie Music Muster at the Amamoor State Forest each August. This year the muster will be celebrating its 30th birthday. I am proud to be a member of the Gympie Apex Club and, in a small way, to be involved in the muster.

Whilst the Gympie muster is acknowledged as being a very successful and significant event in increasing the national profile for the township of Gympie as a centre for country music, its duration is brief, with only six days each August. Therefore, I am proud to announce to this House that Gympie also has the Australian Institute of Country Music, or the AICM, which now has a stunning new home in the refurbished original courthouse and the old Lands Office. Thanks must go to a great work undertaken by another local organisation SkillCentred, with the works initially funded by the Apex Club of Gympie and then supplemented by a further grant under the previous Howard government's job creation fund.

I do not have enough time to list all of the features of the AICM in what it offers for training, but suffice it to say it covers all aspects of music performance and production, from music lessons to stage presence or songwriting. The institute offers so much including formal qualifications. I must make mention of the old World War II bomb shelter out the back that has been turned into a modern recording studio, and the old courtroom is now the Apex Auditorium.

This vision of the Australian Institute of Country Music would never have become a reality if not for the tireless efforts of Dr Geoff Walden, who was introduced on the night as the 'father of the AICM'. His passion for creative industries is well known. The evidence of his and many others' hard work was achieved and seen on the night during the performances of the AICM's successful student band Aiming High. There were also performances on the night by Graeme Connors and new bands Sista Burley and The Duke Wilde Band. In all, a great time was had by those who had gathered.

The AICM tag line is 'Don't assume you know us', which sums up the diversity of the institute. Country music is not what many people assume it to be. There is so much more that is available, and the AICM is filling that as a creative new approach for Gympie and for Queensland, making Gympie the centre of country music. I encourage all members to drop by the AICM when passing through Gympie.

Aged Care

 **Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (9.07 pm): Last year I did my 'walk a day in my shoes' experience as a cleaner at the Blue Care Nazarene nursing home in Rothwell. I thank the human dynamo and cleaner at the Nazarene home, Debbie Wright, my supervisor on that day; Leoni Thurgood, the acting manager; Sheree Low, who briefed me on workplace health and safety; and Miscellaneous Workers Union organisers Jeanette Temperley and Alison Kaldi, who introduced me to a number of their members on site and spoke to me of their 'fair share for aged care' campaign.

There are over 3,000 aged-care centres, with more than 150,000 beds across Australia, costing the federal government \$6.5 billion. This massive undertaking is run by a workforce of whom 60 per cent are aged over 40, 90 per cent are women and most are low paid, even when they have a certificate III. Forty-four per cent of staff in an Institute of Labour Studies survey said that their job was more stressful than they ever imagined, and 53 per cent said they do not have enough time with each resident. The workers knew that they could earn more than the \$16 per hour wage paid to support staff if they worked in a shop instead. They were there because they loved old people. From my experience I learned a lot about keeping a positive attitude while engaged in repetitive tasks, and I learned a great deal more about cleaning latrines than I ever learned when I was in the Army Reserve.

I have previously argued in this House that nurses had too much paperwork. Nursing homes are federal but workforce shortages are largely state matters. I think the problem is not staff shortages but that staff have too much paperwork and insufficient time with their residents. A little research reveals that to get funding for one resident in the nursing home you need eight or nine forms. There has to be a comprehensive medical assessment form, a continence record, a seven-page cognitive impairment scale, a verbal behaviours report, a record of physical behaviour over a sample week, the eleven-page Cornell scale for depression report, a medication form describing how long it takes to give the medications to the resident. Then there has to be a care plan which has to marry up with all these other documents. Only then is the aged-care facility allowed to fill in the Aged Care Funding Instrument booklet to apply for funding.

The facility's internal checklist can itself be pages long. There is a disconnect between the federal government's reporting requirements and the objectives of staff. The nursing staff and carers want to keep the residents safe and happy. The department wants the reporting requirements met so they can make a judgement as to whether to fund a person for high care or low care.

If a little more faith was placed in the clinical judgements of nurses, the department would not need to know exactly where on the Cornell Scale a person falls in terms of depression or precisely how continent they are and they would not need to have seven pages on the cognitive functioning of residents. These things are not essential to determine if a person needs aged care, whether high or low care, as this is already determined by aged care assessment teams prior to admission. It is a doubling up of assessment data. I urge the federal authorities to consider again ground truthing their reporting requirements.

Southern Downs, Bus Service

 **Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (9.10 pm): In the Mackay regional sitting of parliament, I tabled a petition from more than 2,500 southern border residents around Goondiwindi calling for the state government to assist in the implementation of a return bus run from Goondiwindi to Toowoomba each day, principally to assist those people who have advanced medical issues that require a greater intervention. Some of those people might require services from haematology, oncology, psychiatry or even advanced imaging. I also recently put a question on notice to the Minister for Transport, which has been answered, asking the minister to detail if such a bus service had been considered by her department and if preliminary work had been done on funding such a service.

The really disturbing thing for me was that, whilst the petition and the question I asked in this place were related, the minister gave exactly the same answer to both. The minister went on with some answer about how a Greyhound bus went from Brisbane to Melbourne twice a week and that the government provided some degree of assistance to a bus that ran twice a week from Toowoomba to Lightning Ridge and returned on different days. However, that did not answer my particular question with regard to whether the government had done a feasibility analysis of the implementation of such a subsidised bus service. I am reliably informed they had done that and they had discontinued that particular proposal.

The problem with the minister's proposition that patients use these two bus runs which currently exist is that they do not overlap in an appropriate way. For example, you might be able to catch the Greyhound bus as it goes through from Brisbane to Melbourne on Wednesday and return on Thursday on the Lightning Ridge to Toowoomba bus service, or you could catch the Coach Queensland bus from Toowoomba to Lightning Ridge on Tuesday and then catch the Greyhound bus as it goes through from Melbourne on Wednesday, but the big problem with this is that it necessitates an overnight stay. We are talking here about a community which is large and quite dynamic and it is only about 200 kilometres from Toowoomba. This service should be implemented.

I take the current minister back to what her predecessor said last year. When the government abolished the fuel subsidy scheme in a very, very covert way, the minister said that the money would be used to provide public transport services to people such as this. We are still waiting for that.

World Ranger Day

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.13 pm): It was my privilege last Sunday to represent our Minister for Environment, the Hon. Vicky Darling, at Daisy Hill Conservation Park to celebrate World Ranger Day. It was a day of special significance, given the huge impact on our rangers and volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout our summer of floods and cyclones. As we all know, those in the front line of these disasters faced horrendous conditions, and our Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers were right there helping with rescues, some of them as their own homes were being engulfed by floods. Extensive damage was done to our national parks and the repairs are ongoing. A ranger's job is very diverse and often dangerous, dirty and very complex. There are fires to manage, burning off to do, recreational areas to protect and maintain, feral animals and weeds to control and equipment to operate often in very remote places.

The day in Daisy Hill Conservation Park gave our community the opportunity to speak face to face with our rangers and a number of volunteers, to have their firefighting equipment demonstrated, to hop into their marine craft and discuss the marine environment and to view displays such as that by David Fleay's Wildlife Park. The children thoroughly enjoyed the reptile presentation and puppetry and meeting Herbie, our Parks and Wildlife Service mascot. Families enjoyed the sausage sizzle provided, and Acting Senior Ranger Andy Dutton spoke about the important role rangers play right throughout the state and also outlined the great dangers faced by rangers in the line of duty, especially in areas of conflict throughout the world.

There is a very solemn message at the heart of World Ranger Day. It is the day when we commemorate the many rangers throughout the world who have lost their lives in the last 12 months. Sadly, from August 2010 to July 2011, 50 rangers have lost their lives in the line of duty. It makes very sobering reading. In Africa, there are homicides, sometimes rangers shot by poachers, vehicle accidents and others killed by rhino and buffalo. The most dangerous country is the Congo, where 11 rangers were killed. Other parts of the globe saw rangers also killed in plane crashes. Sadly, one ranger lost his life in Australia in a bushfire.

So it is at this time, on World Ranger Day, that we not only celebrate the work our rangers do throughout the state but also seek donations to the Thin Green Line to honour the memory of the fallen. Rangers are highly skilled, brave men and women upholding the very highest ideals of conservation and are at the front line in many of the most dangerous places throughout the world. I wish to thank our 800 Queensland park rangers and our volunteer rangers for their efforts to care for our national parks and wildlife and for the educational services they provide.

Cyclone Yasi

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.16 pm): Yesterday marked the six-month anniversary of category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasi crossing the coast at Mission Beach in my electorate in the early hours of Thursday, 3 February. The eye of the cyclone, with wind gusts up to 285 kilometres an hour, proceeded to move over the town of Tully before heading across the Great Dividing Range and out into north-western Queensland. Such was the intensity of the storm that it was incredibly still a category 1 cyclone when moving south-westerly between Georgetown and Mount Isa later in the day.

Cyclone Yasi was one of the most powerful cyclones ever to hit Queensland causing unprecedented damage. The scale of the devastation to public and private property and to the natural environment was massive. The emotional impact on the people of my electorate has been just as significant and will linger in our memories when the repairs are complete.

As a local, born and raised in Tully and now living in Ingham, I do not mind telling honourable members that it has been an extremely difficult experience for me personally to see my local community, including many people close to me, suffer so badly. Many people have genuinely struggled to pick up the pieces of their broken lives. I have been proud to represent the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate in view of the tremendous effort put in by the local community after Cyclone Yasi. Families have stuck together, friendships have strengthened, neighbours have helped each other and there has been an army of volunteers who have opened their hearts to people struggling to cope in difficult circumstances.

The reality is that, in many respects, it is difficult to plan for a disaster like Cyclone Yasi. No one can say what will be left after the storm has passed. Earlier this year, what was left shocked and distressed us. I pay tribute to the emergency services workers, the Ergon Energy workers, defence force personnel, community service clubs, church organisations, charitable organisations and the many other people who contributed so much to the recovery effort. On this six-month anniversary of Cyclone Yasi devastating my electorate, I urge my constituents to take a moment to acknowledge the people who supported them during those very difficult days, weeks and months since 3 February this year. I recall all too vividly the anxious time leading up to the evening of 2 February and the morning of 3 February, when the massive category 5 storm bore down on my electorate leaving a trail of destruction. For many people, our experience that awful night is something we would rather not have had or would be pleased to forget.

There is still a long way to go to rebuild my electorate. However, we need to recognise just how far we have come in six months. Governments have spent and are still spending money to rebuild the community. We can debate how these funds should be spent and how well they have been spent, but there are some things that governments just cannot do. The success of our recovery will be determined by those of us who live in the Hinchinbrook electorate and how we work towards repairing the spirit of our communities.

Cerebral Palsy

 **Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (9.19 pm): Every 15 hours a child is born in Australia with cerebral palsy, making this the most common childhood physical disability. I therefore urge Queenslanders to support people with cerebral palsy, particularly during National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week. The week provides an opportunity to promote a better understanding and acceptance of people with cerebral palsy.

In Queensland, the Cerebral Palsy League provides support and services to more than 5,000 children and adults, and this year the Labor government will provide more than \$37 million to help the Cerebral Palsy League continue its fantastic work. In Queensland under Labor, state funding alone for disability services has increased more than 495 per cent since 1998. I have been blessed to see firsthand the impact of this funding in my electorate at the Capalaba Cerebral Palsy League day service. The service ensures that people with cerebral palsy receive the personal care and support they require and deserve. It provides interesting activities like arts and crafts, gardening and computer work and caters for a wide range of client needs. To see the staff at work in the centre is inspiring to say the least. It is not just a job or a career for them; it is about making a real difference to the lives of people with a disability.

Last year I took part in this government's 'walk a day in my shoes' program at the centre. It was an invaluable experience. More recently I joined them to encourage members of the public to hold a picnic in the park and take part in National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week. While we all recognise the seriousness of this week, the one thing that stands out about the Capalaba Day Service in my electorate is that everybody involved, from staff to clients and their family members, has a great sense of fun. In the past this sense of fun has led them to ask their local member—me—to take part in preparing a giant paper fish for their art competition, and I even put on an apron and prepared lunch. Most recently I got to inspect the centre's new pond for frogs. As part of their endeavours to encourage clients into the great outdoors, the day centre, in conjunction with the local Bunnings store, have established a frog pond that will soon be officially opened. Queensland's frogs, like those around the world, have faced increasing pressures and have seen a decline in some species. By establishing a frog pond the day service reflects the fact that people in Capalaba and across Redland City take great pride in their natural surroundings. It is this pride that I encourage, and I commend the work of this particular centre and encourage their work with people with a disability.

South Kolan Community Kindergarten; Gladstone Electorate, Mining Industry

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (9.22 pm): I rise to raise concerns on behalf of the South Kolan kindergarten regarding a proposed plan to ensure that all kindergartens implement a 15-hour-a-week kindergarten program in 2012. The president of the South Kolan kindy, Kate Giles, wrote to me recently to outline her concern. She writes—

There are numerous reasons why this poses a real threat to the continued operation of the South Kolan Community Kindergarten.

First and foremost the additional cost to operate and maintain the Kindergarten will far outweigh any additional enrolments or funding received from the Government.

I am very concerned for the South Kolan kindy, which of course is in my electorate and was established by my mum, Mrs Betty Peterson. The South Kolan kindy has proven to be a great asset not only to the South Kolan community but also to neighbouring communities such as Sharon and Bullyard. Many parents rely heavily on the kindy for their children, as the only other alternative is to drive 30 kilometres or more into Bundaberg so that parents can give their children the introduction to education. I am concerned that if this 15-hour kindergarten week is imposed it will be impossible for the kindy to continue operating without further government funding. The proposal will not only affect my community's kindergarten but also affect many other rural and part-time kindies across the state. It may suit city kindergartens, where there is a much bigger base to fundraise, but it seriously threatens the viability of our rural kindies.

Earlier today the member for Gladstone outlined some of the real social pressures that are being brought to bear on Gladstone because of the economy there going gang busters, and it is being driven of course by the mining industry. First of all, I want to thank the staff of Queensland Rail. I will always vote to oppose any future asset sales and I was proud to march with the union members against the sale of QR. The reason that I mention Queensland Rail is that I believe that, as a very quick way of easing the social pressure on Gladstone, we should greatly improve and increase rail services between the Burnett, Bundaberg and Gladstone so that people can live in the Burnett and work in Gladstone. We have heard anecdotally how people are paying \$400 for a room in Gladstone and now the normal cost of hotel rooms has risen from about \$130 or \$140 to \$300 a night. It is good to see that those small businesses are making money and indeed the workers in the mines are making money, but we need to find creative solutions to lessen the pressure on that social infrastructure.

Coates Hire Ipswich 300; Brisbane Valley Rail Trail

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.25 pm): Last Friday morning I had the great pleasure of attending the Ipswich go-cart track at Willowbank with four mates and had the pleasure of carting around the track for most of the morning. The four mates I was with are fellows members might have heard of once or twice—Mark Winterbottom, Jonathon Webb, Tim Slade and Jack Perkins. Mark Winterbottom particularly is a good mate of mine. Members might know him as 'Frosty'. The whole idea of the morning of course was to promote the Coates Hire Ipswich 300. Some people might realise that the V8s will be back at Ipswich in two weeks from this weekend—the 19th, 20th and 21st. They will be there to race around the track as normal and we have secured the V8s at Ipswich for the next three years. I welcome all members, if they have the opportunity, to drop by the racetrack. We will make sure we look after them.

The funny thing was that these guys, even though they were good cart drivers, all came up through carts and the varying degrees of racing before they were able to graduate into the V8s. They were such good guys that they gave me quite a few tips on different things. I must say that they thoroughly enjoyed coming to Ipswich, as one would expect, and they look forward to doing the race in a couple of weeks time. For those who do not know, the Willowbank precinct has not only the cart track but also the V8 Supercar track, which is going gang busters, and it also has the drag strip. Again, I was there only a couple of weeks before that. We had the delayed Winternationals. They are normally held in July, but because of rain they had to be postponed until about two weeks ago. Again there were some problems in relation to the weather on that particular weekend, so it was cut a little short.

While I have the chance, I also want to raise a couple of issues in relation to the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail. Most would know that I am the chair of that rail trail. It is a trail of 160-odd kilometres from the Wulkuraka Railway Station in Ipswich right through to Blackbutt, which is up in the Blackbutt Range, and members may have heard the member for Nanango talk about that area. We had 160 kilometres of track. We had 100 kilometres of the 160 kilometres open earlier this year. During the rain in January we actually went back to zero. The rain was so bad across our whole area that in fact we could not open any of the 100 kilometres of track that we had open prior to the rain. Since then, through work with the state and particularly some of our local councils and our community groups, we have been able to open up about 60 kilometres again. On the weekend I was lucky enough to open the section between Toogoolawah and Esk.

For those who have not had an opportunity to get up there, we run VIP days which mean that people can come up to the trail and I will escort them with a group of other people by four-wheel drive, so they do not actually have to use their bike on the day. So we have special dispensation. I invite everyone along at their earliest opportunity.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.28 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