



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2011



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

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

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

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

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

Date of assent: 29 August 2011

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, the Liquor Act 1992, the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act 1978, the Local Government Act 2009, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, the Right to Information Act 2009 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 for particular purposes, and to make minor and consequential amendments to the Auditor-General Act 2009, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Information Privacy Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for purposes related to those particular purposes"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

29 August 2011

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 August 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor regarding assent to a bill [\[5187\]](#).

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

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

Date of assent: 1 September 2011

"A Bill for An Act relating to local government elections, to amend this Act, to amend the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, the Building Act 1975, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009, the Mixed Use Development Act 1993, the Neighbourhood Disputes Resolution Act 2011, the Public Trustee Act 1978, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Sanctuary Cove Resort Act 1985, the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999 and the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2000 for particular purposes and to make consequential and minor amendments to the Electoral Act 1992, the Criminal Code and the Information Privacy Act 2009"

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

Yours sincerely


Governor

1 September 2011

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 1 September 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor regarding assent to a bill [\[5188\]](#).

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege regarding the sale of property of the estate of TH Taylor raised in this House by the member for Rockhampton on 24 August 2011. This property was listed with a local real estate agent on 26 September 2006 and it was publicly advertised. The property was sold at a public auction on 4 November 2006. It was sold by a local real estate agent in Hervey Bay. The highest bidder at the public auction was Wide Bay Water Corporation, owned by the Hervey Bay City Council.

On 22 November 2006 a letter was written by my solicitor. It states—


We are writing to confirm that we act on behalf of your Mayor Edward Sorensen who has instructed us to write to you to place on record particulars of a transaction involving our client and more particularly for purpose of openness and as regards any Pecuniary Interest Register maintained by your council in relation to elected representatives.

The document that the member for Rockhampton tabled on 24 August 2011 that had a handwritten note on it saying that the pecuniary interest was declared only on 13 December 2006 may be an attempt to mislead parliament. It appears that the member for Rockhampton may have deliberately misled the parliament by attempting to conceal or not disclose the solicitor's letter, a letter of disclosure to council. I believe that this matter is worthy of referral by you, Mr Speaker, to the Ethics Committee and I will be writing to you in this regard.

Mr SPEAKER: The member will present that to me under standing order 269.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Gardiner, Mr J

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it is with enormous sadness that I inform the House of the passing of a long-serving officer of the Parliamentary Service. Mr Jason Gardiner, the manager of Property Services, passed away on Friday of last week. He was only 39 years old at the time of his death, having been born in Brisbane in December 1971.

Jason commenced employment with the Department of Public Works in 1988 and completed his apprenticeship as a refrigeration mechanic in 1992 with some of his apprenticeship time being served at Parliament House. Jason occupied a number of positions with the Department of Public Works including leading hand, job foreman and Project Services officer and was located at Parliament House from the early 1990s. Jason left the Department of Public Works in 1996 and joined Honeywell Pty Ltd as a senior service technician.

In January 1997 Jason joined the Parliamentary Service and was appointed as the Maintenance Supervisor, Property Services for the parliamentary precinct. He commenced studying part time in 2004 and was awarded a Diploma of Business Management in December 2006. In August 2007 Jason was appointed to the position of Manager, Property Services and worked in this position until commencing sick leave in April 2011. Jason, as we all know, was passionate about this parliament and in particular the building—about conserving the stonework, the furniture and even the old clocks in the building. Many of the lovely old clocks in this building would have been lost were it not for the conservation efforts of Jason.

Jason was one of the first people to put up his hand for additional work and volunteered for numerous events including Parliament House open days, regional parliaments, Queensland Day functions and the P150 celebrations. Jason was awarded the Parliamentary Service Meritorious Service badge in 2002 for his work on the Queensland Day celebrations and regional parliament and again in 2005 for his work on workplace health and safety issues within the Parliamentary Service and regional parliament. Jason was very passionate about his staff—the staff of Property Services and also the Department of Public Works staff under his control, including the trade staff, gardeners, cleaners and stonemasons.

Members may not be aware of Jason's great love of trains and his work with Queensland Rail Heritage Volunteers. He devoted a lot of his time to Queensland Rail Heritage and in 2004 was awarded the Centenary of Ipswich City Medallion in recognition of those efforts. He was much loved by many of the staff within the precinct and also electorate office staff. I acknowledge the presence in the public gallery of his fellow workers who are here today. Needless to say, his death is devastating for his family and also for the Parliamentary Service family. I am sure that this House joins with me in passing on condolences to his family.

I had the melancholy duty of speaking with Jason's father this morning and I conveyed to him and his wife our sincere sympathy on behalf of all honourable members and the parliamentary staff. Jason's funeral service will be held at the Holy Trinity Church, 352 St Vincents Road, Banyo this Thursday at 1.30 pm and thereafter at the Nudgee Cemetery.

PETITIONS

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

Deagon Deviation Upgrade

Ms Darling, from 209 petitioners, requesting the House to support Option B of the Department of Transport and Main Roads plan for the upgrade to the Deagon Deviation [\[5189\]](#).

Baal Gammon Copper Mine

Mr Knuth, from 261 petitioners, requesting the House to designate that the Baal Gammon Copper Mine find an alternative route away from the main street of Herberton for trucks transporting copper [\[5190\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the honourable members indicated—

Criminal Code, Defence of Provocation

Ms Grace, 2 petitions, from 4,662 petitioners in total, requesting the House to pass legislation eliminating completely 'non-violent homosexual advance' from the ambit of evidence considered in establishing if the partial defence of provocation is justified in cases involving murder [\[5191\]](#), [\[5192\]](#).

Gumdale and Wakerley, Bus Routes

Mr Kilburn, from 266 petitioners, requesting the House to review current bus routes to provide improved connections to the central business district and Carindale Shopping Centre from the Gumdale / Wakerley area [\[5193\]](#).

Stanbrooke Estate

Mr Kilburn, from 44 petitioners, requesting the House to include Stanbrooke Estate in the suburb of Gumdale rather than Tingalpa [\[5194\]](#).

Alan Fletcher Research Station

Mr Emerson, from 268 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that the Alan Fletcher Research Station in Magazine Street, Sherwood is preserved as green space and to protect this piece of river front land for community use and parkland to provide greater connectivity to the Sherwood Arboretum [\[5195\]](#).

Firth Park, Clover Hill Estate

Ms Bates, from 52 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a trial of a 'kiss and ride' public transport facility at Firth Park, Clover Hill Estate so parents of children attending Clover Hill are able to drop their children off to buses to and from school, supervised by lollipop volunteers [\[5196\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS

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

29 August 2011—

[5159](#) Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Speaker (Mr Mickel) to London from 21 to 28 July 2011—Report on the 57th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, London, 21 to 28 July 2011

31 August 2011—

[5160](#) Government response to the independent review of the Queensland police complaints, discipline and misconduct system, August 2011

[5161](#) Criminal Organisation Public Interest Monitor: 2010-11 Report

1 September 2011—

[5162](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1725-11) presented by Ms Darling, from 1,119 petitioners, requesting a go card top up facility at the Taigum Newsagency, Centro Taigum Shopping Centre

[5163](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to an ePetition (1690-11) sponsored by Mrs Bates, from 22 petitioners, requesting the House to increase funding to provide a bus service for local school students from the Bonogin Valley to St Michael's College, Carrara; St Vincents School, Clear Island Waters; and All Saints School, Merrimac

[5164](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1728-11) presented by Mr Wettenhall, from 702 petitioners, requesting the House to reinstate Sunbus direct services between Yorkeys Knob and the city at non peak times

[5165](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1730-11) presented by Mr Nicholls and an ePetition (1696-11) sponsored by Mr Nicholls, from 327 and 91 petitioners respectively, requesting additional bus services between Garden City and Carindale via Creek Road

[5166](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1726-11) presented by Ms Darling, from 86 petitioners, requesting an extra bus pick up/drop off service outside Golden Downs Village during business hours

[5167](#) Response from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (Mr Reeves) to an ePetition (1661-11) sponsored by Dr Robinson, from 152 petitioners, requesting the design and construction of a pontoon suitable for use by the general public to launch canoes and kayaks into Endeavour Canal, Ormiston at Raby Esplanade Park

- [5168](#) Response from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (Mr Reeves) to a paper petition (1729-11) presented by Mr Gibson and an ePetition (1684-11) sponsored by Mr Gibson, from 84 and 148 petitioners respectively, requesting that any review of the Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Act 1988 retains the current procedure with respect to appointment of trust members
- [5169](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to an ePetition (1651-11) sponsored by Ms Grace, from 194 petitioners, requesting the House to take various measures to ban smoking in public places, vehicles and licensed premises
- [5170](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to an ePetition (1721-11) sponsored by Mr Dowling, from 1,242 petitioners, regarding overpayment claims, outstanding underpayments and other issues in relation to the Queensland Health payroll system
- [5171](#) Response from the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities (Mr Robertson) to an ePetition (1691-11) sponsored by Mr Crandon, from 401 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a price cap at the rate of inflation (March CPI) for annual increases in the State Government bulkwater charges for at least two years
- [5172](#) Response from the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities (Mr Robertson) to an ePetition (1674-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 50 petitioners, regarding a 10 year community water reform strategy and a timeframe for the elements of this strategy to be implemented
- [5173](#) Ecofund Queensland Pty Ltd: Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2011
- [5174](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to a paper petition (1727-11) presented by Mr Lucas, from 301 petitioners, requesting Quarantine Jetty repairs to accommodate river traffic wishing to land passengers at Lytton Heritage Park
- [5175](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to an ePetition (1711-11) sponsored by Mrs Cunningham, and a paper Petition (1736-11) presented by Mrs Cunningham, from 18 and 4,467 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to prevent further netting activities in the Boyne River and surrounding inlet area to protect the aquatic species including the dugong and marine turtles
- [5176](#) Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011: Replacement Explanatory Notes
- 2 September 2011—
- [5177](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr C R Dick) to an ePetition (1668-11) sponsored by Mr Shine, from 1,095 petitioners, requesting a high school in Highfields to be built on land purchased in 2010 for this purpose by the Queensland Government
- [5178](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr C R Dick) to an ePetition (1699-11) sponsored by Dr Robinson, from 438 petitioners, requesting the provision of a multi-purpose hall for the new Bayview State School
- [5179](#) Response from the Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade (Mr Fraser) to a paper petition (1733-11) presented by Mr Hopper, from 1,017 petitioners, requesting the House to reject the application of New Acland Coal Mine Stage 3 Expansion Project encroaching within a radius of 12 kilometres from the township of Oakey
- [5180](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr C R Dick), pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Education (Overseas Students) Regulation 1998
- [5181](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1732-11) presented by Mr Pitt, from 47 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate, fund and progress the construction of an all weather category 5 rated hospital in the Cairns region
- [5182](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1735-11) presented by Mrs Cunningham, from 440 petitioners, requesting that Health Community Councils are retained or that strong community representation is included in any restructured Queensland Health system
- [5183](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1731-11) presented by Mr Pitt, from 205 petitioners, regarding the recent modification of bus service route number 150 through Golden Grove Drive, west of Idalia Road, in Bentley Park
- [5184](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1734-11) presented by Ms Johnstone, from 106 petitioners, requesting the construction of a turning lane, with appropriate signage and speed limit, at the intersection of the Bruce Highway and Hencamp Creek

5 September 2011—

- [5185](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 2—Examination of the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011
- [5186](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 3—Annual Report 2010-11

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Witness Protection Act 2000—

- [5197](#) Witness Protection Regulation 2011, No. 159
- [5198](#) Witness Protection Regulation 2011, No. 159, Explanatory Notes
- Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990—
- [5199](#) Fire and Rescue Service Regulation 2011, No. 160
- [5200](#) Fire and Rescue Service Regulation 2011, No. 160, Explanatory Notes

Transport Infrastructure Act 1994—

- [5201](#) Transport Infrastructure (Public Marine Facilities) Regulation 2011, No. 161
- [5202](#) Transport Infrastructure (Public Marine Facilities) Regulation 2011, No. 161, Explanatory Notes

Land Title Act 1994, Water Act 2000—

- [5203](#) Environment and Resource Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 162
- [5204](#) Environment and Resource Management Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 162, Explanatory Notes

Child Protection and Other Acts Amendment Act 2010—

- [5205](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 163
- [5206](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 163, Explanatory Notes

Queensland Heritage Act 1992—

[5207](#) Queensland Heritage Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 164

[5208](#) Queensland Heritage Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 164, Explanatory Notes

Statutory Instruments Act 1992—

[5209](#) Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 165

[5210](#) Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 165, Explanatory Notes

Recording of Evidence Act 1962, Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

[5211](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 166

[5212](#) Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 166, Explanatory Notes

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace)—

[5213](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure to a paper petition (1740-11) presented by Ms Jones and an ePetition (1714-11) sponsored by Ms Jones, from 50 and 43 petitioners respectively, requesting the temporary closure of the T-intersection of Ardentallen Road and Lloyd Street, Enoggera until construction work at Gallipoli Barracks Enoggera is completed in 2014

Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[5214](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to an ePetition (1612-11) sponsored by Mr McLindon, from 59 petitioners, regarding the definition of roads which require designated pick-up and drop-off points and the introduction of flashing lights

[5215](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1739-11) presented by Mr Bleijje, from 210 petitioners, requesting a reduction in 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

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[5216](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any Bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010'

Insert—

'Aboriginal Land and Torres Strait Islander Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011'.

Local Government Electoral Bill 2011

Amendments made to Bill

Long title—

At page 21, line 6—

Omit—


'Public Trustee Act 1978,'

Insert—

'Public Trustee Act 1978,'.


LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL BILL

Error in Bill Presented for Assent

 **The CLERK:** Honourable members, it is my duty to advise the House of an error in a bill presented to Her Excellency for assent, such error being discovered after assent had been granted by Her Excellency. The error was contained in the Local Government Electoral Bill, which received assent on 1 September 2011. New clauses were inserted into the bill during consideration in detail. After the bill was passed by the Legislative Assembly, the clauses in the bill were renumbered to reflect the insertion of the new clauses. However, because of an administrative error, the provisions mentioned in section 2(2), the commencement clause, were not updated to reflect the new clause numbering. Thus, the commencement clause in the bill which received assent did not reflect the commencement clause in the bill as passed by the House. This error occurred in the amending process between the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel and the Parliamentary Service and was not the result of departmental or ministerial actions.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Gardiner, Mr J, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.40 am): Mr Speaker, I wish to add a few words to your comments this morning about the passing of Jason Gardiner, a long-serving and very valuable employee of the Parliamentary Service. Most members and their staff will have known Jason through his many roles here in the Parliamentary Service. The work that he did, working with our electorate offices, is well known not only to ourselves but also to our electorate staff. He also worked to facilitate the infrastructure and technological requirements for all of our regional parliaments. Jason was, as you noted, always very willing and able to assist, often above and beyond what was required and it was always done with a smile and a very cheerful attitude.

In serving this parliament, Jason Gardiner served our democracy, and his many achievements have strengthened that democracy, bringing elected members closer to their constituents and helping the community have more of a say and more access to our parliament. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that Jason gave to the parliament of Queensland, and I take this opportunity to extend the sympathy of myself and the government to Jason's family and his friends, especially those here in the Parliamentary Service who I know will mourn his loss. I move—


That the House take note of the statement.

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.41 am): I, too, would like to join with the Premier and the Speaker of the House in expressing our condolences to the family of Jason Gardiner and our appreciation for the great work that he has done over so many years as part of this parliamentary precinct. It is with enormous sadness that we mark the passing of a man who was well known and well respected as part of the parliamentary family who work in this precinct. There are few words that can express the passing of someone at such a young age. We can but express our condolences to Jason's family and note the contribution that Jason has made to this parliament during his years of service.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Infrastructure Projects; Sansom, Mr G; Lockyer, Mr D; Campbell, Mr P; Pearson, Ms S

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.42 am): Yesterday we saw another massive plank laid down in the economic development of Queensland. QR National has committed a \$900 million investment in expanding the coal export network to feed the proposed Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal—or WICET, as it has become fondly known—that is to be built at the Port of Gladstone. This investment, underpinned by solid commitments from mining companies, will expand the overall coal network capacity of Queensland by more than 11 per cent—from 241 million tonnes a year to 268 million tonnes a year.

Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal itself will be funded by the coal companies and it will bolt in another 27 million tonnes per annum of export capacity. This \$2 billion investment is now not just a step closer; this project took a giant leap forward yesterday with the sign-off on the rail network upgrade necessary to support the new capacity. These actions speak volumes. They show that companies are prepared to commit to long-term investments in our state and in the mining sector. This is a vote of confidence in the Queensland economy. Actions, as ever, speak louder than words.

The real story in these developments is that it will be the companies, not taxpayers, who are investing in this commercial infrastructure. The taxpayer stands to get the benefit of increased royalties of up to \$500 million a year from increased exports into the future, while it is private capital at stake, leaving the state's balance sheet to make investments in our priorities in areas like schools and hospitals and roads and other services for the people of Queensland.

Under our economic reform program we have comprehensively overhauled the state's balance sheet. We have chosen to invest in a new *Sunlander* over new coal wagons, in new busways over new coal ports. We have deliberately created the opportunity for private sector investment in Queensland, and money talks. That investment is now flowing, despite the campaign of negativity being waged against our state's interest by some of those opposite. Our commitment to this policy principle—to drive private investment into Queensland's development—will continue.

Today I am pleased to announce that two new major investment opportunities will be put to the market for assessment for private sector investment. The infrastructure projects assessment team in Queensland Treasury has been tasked with going to the market to investigate opportunities to source private sector funding for the Connors River Dam and the proposed multicargo facility at Abbot Point. Of course, relevant industry stakeholders will be consulted during this process.

The proposed \$2.6 billion Connors River Dam and pipelines project will involve a 49,500-megalitre dam and two pipelines—a 133-kilometre pipeline from the dam to Moranbah and a 265-kilometre pipeline from Moranbah to Alpha. What these projects will do is deliver reliable water supplies to the Bowen and Galilee coal basins, including the townships of Nebo, Moranbah and Alpha. This is a massive project that will underpin the water supply needs for the development of this resource industry corridor and the towns that support it.

With the continued development of the Bowen Basin, and indeed the opening up of the Galilee Basin, there is also strong demand for additional export capacity in the north of our state. Abbot Point represents a prime opportunity for additional export capacity. Already the government has awarded development rights of up to 60 megatonnes per annum to BHP and Hancock at the sites known as T2 and T3. The framework agreements are currently being negotiated with the proponents. The next step—the T4 to T7 expansion—is already in the expressions-of-interest stage as companies look to secure future capacity as they move to prepare for the massive expansion opportunities that lie ahead. There is an opportunity to combine these developments—from T2 to T7—in an offshore multicargo facility that will provide for up to 12 cape-sizeable berths and tug harbour. A business case for developing the port in this way is due before the year's end, with construction targeted for commencement in 2014-15.

The \$2 billion-plus multicargo facility proposed at Abbot Point is expected to provide the base plate for the development of this part of the state. What this can, in effect, be in this part of Queensland is the next Gladstone—providing the opportunity for significant industrial development and export capacity, bringing growth, prosperity and opportunity to the Mackay-Whitsunday region.

We have taken many far-sighted decisions. Removing the funding obligation on taxpayers for commercial projects that the private sector has shown that it is ready, willing and able to invest in means that the state's balance sheet is better placed to deal with the challenges of the future. Actions speak louder than words, and we are getting on with the task. Business is investing in our state at an unprecedented rate, creating export capacity, developing our natural wealth, securing a much brighter future for Queensland, with more jobs and future prosperity.

Of course the flow-on effect from this economic development will be felt in all industries including agriculture. Today I would like to place on the record my thanks to someone who has devoted his life to our agricultural industry. Gary Sansom AM is well known to many on all sides of this chamber and, as members will know, he has announced that he is stepping down from the role of president of the Queensland Farmers Federation. Gary's skills, knowledge and advocacy have delivered great outcomes for Queensland agriculture, and I am sure he will be missed by all in the industry.

During his tenure our government has enjoyed a productive working relationship with QFF, and this year Gary's contribution during the flood and the cyclone recovery was invaluable in helping to get Queensland's food supply chains back up and running. I pay tribute to the efforts that he has made over many, many years to represent and to be a champion for the farmers of Queensland. I wish him and his wife, Julie, all the best in the next phase of their lives, although I cannot imagine him retiring quietly.

Mr Speaker, I would like to also thank another retiree who has made a special contribution to Queensland life. Last Sunday before a sell-out crowd at Suncorp Stadium, Queenslanders honoured Darren Lockyer. We will see more of Darren at Suncorp in finals footy, but his last regular season game was certainly a time to recognise an extraordinary career. Darren Lockyer has played more NRL games, more State of Origin games and more tests, both as a player and captain, than any other player. He has played more games and scored more points for the Broncos than any other player. He has won four premierships and a Clive Churchill Medal, and he has won the Rugby League World Golden Boot Award on two occasions. A Darren Lockyer statue, jointly funded by my government and the *Sunday Mail*, will ensure his continued presence at Suncorp.


As the Titans' No. 1 fan, I could not conclude my comments without also paying tribute to foundation player Preston Campbell, who played his last NRL game on the weekend.

Mr Watt: How did they go?

Ms BLIGH: The member for Everton will keep, Mr Speaker. The man who was once told he was too small has enjoyed a sensational career, winning a Dally M medal and a premiership with Penrith, and yesterday he was named in the Kangaroos train-on squad. Preston is a hero to Indigenous Australians and embraces the responsibilities that come with being a role model. He was the driving force behind the highly successful Indigenous All Stars game and will continue to work with Indigenous communities in his new role with the Titans.

Finally, a huge congratulations goes to Gold Coast track star Sally Pearson—Australia's newest world champion. Sally Pearson ran a flawless race and she simply blitzed the field in the 100-metre hurdles. Her effort has been described as one of the greatest track performances ever by an Australian athlete. As an advocate for our 2018 Commonwealth Games bid she is absolutely world class. Congratulations to great Gold Coaster Sally Pearson. Bring on the London Olympics and the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Gardiner, Mr J; Way to Grow Forums

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (9.51 am): Could I also associate myself with the remarks of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition with respect to Jason. To put it briefly, he was a good bloke.


From the Gold Coast to Cairns, this government has been out and about listening to Queenslanders as part of our planning for a prosperous future for our state. Using medium-level projections, the Queensland population is expected to reach 9.1 million by 2051 as economic opportunities created through opportunities like the LNG industry continue to grow. That is why it is important we have a strong plan in place to cope with demands on infrastructure in our communities and local economies.

We released three very important documents for public comment in July: the Queensland Regionalisation Strategy, the Queensland Infrastructure Plan and the Bruce Highway Upgrade Strategy. In recognition of the important role Townsville is playing in the economic future of Queensland, we also released the Townsville Futures Plan and sought public comment. Since the release of these documents for public consultation I have joined the Minister for Agriculture and Regional Economies and the Minister for Main Roads as well as members from both sides of the House who have been out and about listening to Queensland communities through more than a dozen Way to Grow forums.

The themes have been diverse and include people in Mackay wanting to export innovation from the mining and sugar industries, ensuring appropriate skills training is available in Townsville, developing the inland highways of the west into alternatives to the Bruce Highway, upskilling the Gladstone community to keep pace with the LNG industry, retaining Bundaberg's unique character, developing a knowledge precinct on the Sunshine Coast, making the most of the local workforce in Toowoomba and diversifying the Cairns economy.

I would like to remind members and Queenslanders that submissions as part of the Way to Grow forum series close on Friday. That means that, counting today, Queenslanders have four days left to have their say about the future of Queensland and our state's infrastructure priorities. Details about how to make submissions through this very important process can be found through the dedicated website, www.waytogrow.qld.gov.au. I urge all Queenslanders to join the Way to Grow conversation and have a say about the future of their communities.

Queensland Economy; Sansom, Mr G; McTaggart, Mr D

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (9.53 am): Ahead of today's Reserve Bank board meeting and tomorrow's national accounts, new data over the last fortnight has demonstrated that investment continues to flow to Queensland. The ABS release on new private capital expenditure showed an increase of just under five per cent across the nation in the June quarter 2011. In Queensland the result was an increase of 21 per cent, reaching an historic high and climbing to be 52 per cent higher over the year. Spending on buildings and other structures was up 25 per cent for the quarter, and capital expenditure on machinery and equipment was up by more than 15 per cent. Mining capital expenditure in 2010-11 was up more than 60 per cent on the previous year.

As I detailed at the last sitting, total construction work done in Queensland increased by just under 15 per cent over the June quarter. Private sector non-residential construction increased by six per cent while total engineering construction increased by more than 25 per cent. On any measure, an investment surge is underway and it shows no signs of abating.

As the Premier has just outlined, money talks. The decisions by businesses to invest in Queensland are underpinning a massive economic turnaround as we climb out of the effects of this year's natural disasters. We have put in place a reform program, taken the difficult decisions and set about rebuilding our economy and strengthening the state's finances.

This much was acknowledged yesterday by Standard & Poor's as they affirmed our stable outlook. Standard & Poor's pointed to 'the state's robust and diversified economy, excellent financial management and very positive liquidity'—their words, not mine. Its report picked up on our reform program and noted that it would benefit the state's finances, which remain under pressure particularly from the natural disasters at the start of this year. Tomorrow the national accounts will be released, which provide a read on state final demand. This is a partial measure of economic activity at the state level, with jobs data due on Thursday.


There remains huge volatility, globally and at home. But there is an economic recovery taking place here, building a relentless momentum. We remain committed to the task, building infrastructure for the future, supporting investment and new industries and delivering jobs—just like we said we would.

Can I also join the Premier in recognising Gary Sansom. Along with colleagues from both sides of the chamber, I was at the QFF dinner last night which recognised his decade of contribution to the Queensland Farmers Federation. Congratulations must go to Gary and, at his insistence, commiserations to his wife, Julie, who is a little sceptical about having him around a bit more over the next 12 months.

I also want to acknowledge the announcement yesterday by QIC that Dr Doug McTaggart would, after 14 years, step down on 30 June next year from his position as the head of QIC. Doug never suffered from the common affliction of many economists of hedging his bets. One never thought to refrain from the task of wishing for an economist with just one hand when Doug was around. I wish him well as he steps down from full-time executive life. I wish him well for what comes next, including a bit more time in the big green office—the golf course—which he so fondly likes.

MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Allocation of Time Limit Order


 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (9.56 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill be declared urgent and that standing order 136(5) be suspended to enable the bill to pass through all of its remaining stages at this week's sitting.

Motion agreed to.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE


Report

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.56 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Finance and Administration Committee annual report for 2010-11. This report covers the period from 16 June to 30 June 2011. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 3—Annual Report 2010-11 [[5217](#)].

NOTICES OF MOTION

Disallowance of Statutory Instrument

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (9.57 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.1) 2011; Subordinate Legislation No. 166 of 2011, tabled in the House on 6 September 2011, be disallowed.

Carbon Tax

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.57 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes that:

1. It has now become apparent that the proposed carbon tax will increase the cost of living for all Queenslanders and
2. The proposed carbon tax will have a devastating effect on the state budget and the Queensland economy and
3. The compensation provisions offered to Queensland and Queenslanders are grossly inadequate

And therefore on behalf of all Queenslanders who will be so detrimentally affected this parliament categorically opposes the introduction of Julia Gillard's carbon tax.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Before I call question time, today we will be visited by teachers and pupils of Belmont State School in the electorate of Chatsworth, by the Dalveen State School in the electorate of Southern Downs and by the Thallon State School in the electorate of Warrego.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Minister for Child Safety

Mr SEENEY (9.59 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the answer given by the Minister for Child Safety to the member for Aspley on the last day that this parliament met regarding the deaths of children in the department's care and the refusal by the minister to release the findings of the subsequent investigation. What actions did the Premier demand of the Minister for Child Safety? What counselling and advice was provided to the Minister for Child Safety following the question from the member for Aspley?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. This area of government activity is a very, very sensitive one. That sensitivity has been recognised by all sides of the parliament in recent years as we have moved to make sure that in the political hurly-burly we protect the identity and the confidentiality of children and their families in these circumstances in the way that we ask questions, whether on notice or without notice.

The answer given by the Minister for Child Safety in the last sitting was an accurate answer. The laws of this state, which are supported by all sides of politics, provide for the protection of confidential information relating to children who are or have been in the care of the department or of the state. Members will be aware that, in relation to a shocking case at Bribie Island a number of years ago regarding the tragic death of a very young child, a decision was made that the public interest should prevail to the extent that that part of the report that did not contain confidential information should be made public. So there is a precedent for that happening. It is not the whole report. At no stage has the government made public or would the government make public any part of a report that would breach the privacy of children who have been in these very private and sensitive circumstances.

Everybody who knows Phil Reeves knows that he cares deeply for children and that he takes his responsibilities as minister very, very seriously. Not only is he deeply aware of his responsibility to ensure the confidentiality of information about children in the care of his agency; he is also deeply aware that it is important that the public have confidence that the system works and that when a mistake is made the system looks at it, is honest about it and works to correct it.

The Minister for Child Safety had a number of discussions with me about whether we could make some parts of this report public in the same way as had happened with the Bribie Island report, and that is what has happened. I am also aware that the Minister for Child Safety has sought further advice from the children's commission about how in the future, given the reasonable public interest in the system-wide issues as opposed to the personal and confidential information, the child death reports could be prepared in a way that provides legitimate public information into the public arena, while at the same time protects the privacy and confidentiality of those children who are the subject of those reports and their families. So I congratulate the minister for considering how this can be dealt with in a way that balances the privacy of individuals and the legitimate public interest better in the future.

Minister for Child Safety

Mr SEENEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety. Does the minister now accept that he was wrong to refuse to answer a legitimate question in this parliament from the member for Aspley regarding the deaths of children in the care of his department? Can the minister explain why his initial refusal to release the findings of the department's investigation was subsequently overturned?

Mr REEVES: The death of any child is an absolute tragedy. As a father of three young girls, I cannot think of anything more heartbreaking. Children in care or in contact with Child Safety Services often have serious medical conditions or disabilities. Most of the children who come into the care of Child Safety do so because they have been abused or neglected by their families. It is Child Safety's job to try and amend the damage. Sadly, as I informed the House in November last year, that did not happen in one case.

The Bligh government has one of the most thorough and transparent systems in Australia for seeking to understand and prevent child deaths, including that whenever a child dies and was known to Child Safety Services in the three years prior to the death a two-tier review process gets underway and we implement all recommendations that are made. This review process, which was conducted into the deaths of two young people, saw documents released publicly on the department's website last week. The public disclosure of any information of this nature has been subject to crown law advice. These reports focus only on the role of the department because they are the matters that are in the public interest. Following legal advice, information about the families which would provide a full context of the case has not been included.

Children come to Child Safety because they have been either abused or neglected by their families. Unfortunately, some cases are so complex and so much damage has been done to the young person that tragedies can happen. It is not the government's intention to weaken the confidentiality provisions of the Child Protection Act which exist to protect the children and young people.

I accept that valid, rational and reasoned criticism of the child protection system must occur within the community. With this in mind, as the Premier mentioned, I have written to the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian asking the Child Death Case Review Committee to consider ways in which it can publicly release a summary of all cases it investigates, including publishing its recommendations. Additionally, as child safety minister I will release summaries and recommendations from the department's systems and practice reviews each year. We are doing this because I want the community to have confidence in the child death case review process. By publicly releasing as much information as we can, people will see that we can fully investigate the department's involvement in each case, and we can act immediately and implement all recommendations to help further improve the system. I hope this will not only see the public confidence in the system continue to grow but also discourage those opposite from using a child's death to score cheap political points.

Brisbane Festival

Mr WATT: My question is directed to the Premier. Brisbane has had a tough start to the year. Can the Premier please inform the House how the government's \$5 million investment in the Brisbane Festival is giving Brisbane residents a reason to celebrate again?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. Given his determination to rub some salt into the wounds of Titans fans, I am tempted not to answer it. But it is a good question and he knows as well as any other member who represents those people, whether they are in Brisbane or any part of the state, who experienced flooding or cyclones just how important it is for the community to come together in community events and to celebrate their recovery.

I was very pleased to join the member for Hinchinbrook at an event at Tully State High School in opening a new multipurpose hall there on the weekend. It was another opportunity for many members of that community to come together, as indeed is the Brisbane Festival. This year's Brisbane Festival is bigger and better than ever. Probably just as importantly, it is a festival that is an artistic and cultural event designed to help the people of Brisbane reclaim our river. While the river was a terrible beast earlier this year and brought havoc, devastation and misery to so many, it is at the heart of our city. We are a river city.

We saw on Saturday night the festival begin, as it always does, with thousands of people out on the river enjoying spectacular fireworks as part of Riverfire. It certainly set the tone for what I think will be a great festival over the course of the 23 days. The next night saw the beginning of the Santos City of Lights, which I know, Mr Speaker, you were at and I have no doubt you enjoyed it as much as I did. I certainly encourage all members while they are here this week to have a look at this event. This is unique to Queensland. It will play twice nightly, at 7 pm and 8 pm, every single night. It is a laser and music show that I think says very, very clearly in a most beautiful way that Brisbane is indeed back and shining.

But there will be more, with a world premiere of a symphony that was commissioned for this festival. The festival organisers commissioned the composition of a Brisbane symphony, which after the summer of disasters now focuses on Brisbane being a river city and all of the beauty and fury of that river both in flood and in more peaceful times. There will be eight free events, five Australian premieres, four world premieres, 70 productions and more than 400 performances crammed into 23 days.

Festivals like this unite communities. They are opportunities for people to be out with their children, their families and their friends. More than ever, Brisbane needs to do that not only for ourselves, each other and our neighbours, but we need to be out there showing the world and the rest of Australia that we are undefeated by these disasters—and a cultural and artistic demonstration of that through this year's festival is a great thing.

Minister for Child Safety

Ms DAVIS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Child Safety. Doesn't the minister's belated release of reports into the deaths of children in care, after being overruled by the Premier, prove he was attempting to cover up the findings all along to avoid scrutiny? Is this not another example of cover up until caught out?

Mr REEVES: I refer to my previous answer and to what the Premier said. With regard to the member for Aspley's questions during the last sitting of parliament, on both occasions she referred to specific cases in her questions. This line of questioning restricts my ability to respond. As I said at the time, I have full confidence in the child death case review process, and that remains the case. Queensland has one of the most rigorous review processes in Australia and looks at systems and practices in Child Safety Services to identify opportunities for the Department of Communities to continually improve. However, when it became clear that a series of media articles could undermine public confidence in the child death review process, the Premier and I discussed it and asked that advice be taken as to what non-confidential material could be released. I worked with my colleague the Minister for Community Services, who has legislative oversight for the Commissioner for Children and

Young People and Child Guardian, and considered crown law advice on the material in terms of what could be released. As the House would be aware, legally approved versions of the reports were made available late last week. As I have announced this morning, I give a commitment to annually providing deidentified summaries and recommendations from all systems and practice reviews that are undertaken. I have also written to the children's commission with regard to material that it could release.

Ms Davis: Why did you wait for my questions? Why wasn't it done before?

Mr REEVES: I remind the member for Aspley that the way she posed the question the last time made it impossible for me to respond.

Opposition members interjected.

Infrastructure Projects

Mr MOORHEAD: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the importance of infrastructure delivery for Queensland's economy and job delivery?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for his question. The member knows, as every member of my team does, that we are a government driven by a determination to build Queensland and to deliver infrastructure to communities right across the state, and that is for a very simple and straightforward reason: we believe that prosperity and wellbeing follow infrastructure construction. We know that in the construction of these projects we create thousands of jobs and that is why we acted when we did in the middle of the global financial crisis to preserve our infrastructure program, and we are seeing many rewards and benefits from it now. These are indeed exciting times. As I outlined to the House this morning, QR National will be making a \$900 million investment in a new port terminal in Gladstone and there are potentially more projects going out to market such as the Connors River Dam and the multicargo facility at Abbot Point. That expansion of the export network cannot be underestimated. That expansion will drive further prosperity, further growth and further opportunity for the people of the Mackay, Whitsunday and North Queensland areas.

But these are just on top of many other achievements. Over the last decade our government has spent \$2,381 per capita on building the capital assets of Queensland. That compares to an average of \$1,467 for the rest of Australia. We have built one of the best busway networks in the world and we have upgraded the Gateway Bridge and built the Sir Leo Hielscher Bridges. We are creating new railway routes around the city in Springfield, in Darra and in Richlands. But it was Labor that built the Cairns cruise ship terminal, Labor that is building the Townsville ring-road, Labor that built the new Forgan Bridge in Mackay, and Labor that is building the new hospitals in Rockhampton and in places right across this state. Since the last sitting of parliament I opened the new section of the Eastern Busway and on the weekend opened the new Jubilee Bridge in Innisfail. We have upgraded the Horn Island airport and announced a new road construction package for north-west Queensland.

As I said, prosperity and wellbeing follow infrastructure. We have had one of the biggest investments in hospital rebuilding and in providing our doctors and nurses with the best facilities in Australia for a number of years, and what is that doing along with our other commitments to health? What it is doing was captured in the COAG report on elective surgery waiting times. This report published today shows that elective surgery long waits in Queensland are the lowest they have ever been in Queensland and our elective surgery waiting lists are now the shortest in the nation—the shortest in the nation!

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: I can hear those opposite whingeing. We will get on with building Queensland.

Minister for Child Safety

Mr GIBSON: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport. Why should Queenslanders have any faith in this minister's ability to protect vulnerable children when he still has not recovered the \$12 million lost through Labor's bungled handling of the A1GP disaster over two years ago?

Mr REEVES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I find it amazing that he is trying to link sport with regard to this child death.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left! The question has been asked. I am listening for the minister's answer.

Mr REEVES: Those opposite should remember that Queensland's child protection system has had significant reform and is continuing with that significant reform.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much crossfire. The minister has the call.

Mr REEVES: It was this government that implemented the child death review process. It was this government that has had 150 reports and reviews which made it more clear and more transparent than any other government in the history of child protection services—unlike those opposite, who only reported on one state-wide service and one regional zone service when they were last in government. They did not have any idea how many children had died in the child protection system. We ensure that every child who is known to Child Safety Services within three years of their death is reviewed. Obviously one death is one death too many, but it is important that we do not just forget about it like you did when you were in government.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left will cease interjecting and the minister will address his comments through the chair.

Mr REEVES: We quite clearly look at all of the reviews and implement them. In the last seven years we have increased the budget by more than 400 per cent and more than doubled the staff with a key focus on front-line services. We work closely with advocacy bodies such as the CREATE Foundation to ensure that children's views and wishes are considered when case planning is done. Today in Queensland we have greater coverage than ever before. We have more support programs and a greater range of placement options to help our children and young people feel safe and protected from harm. I remind those in the House that children become known to Child Safety because of abuse and neglect by their families. Child Safety has to pick up the pieces for these children. Child Safety has to find those great people who open their hearts and homes for these children—the foster carers. In Child Protection Week we should acknowledge those foster carers who open their hearts and homes to the most vulnerable children and young people who have unfortunately been abused and neglected by their families.

Way to Grow Forums

Ms JOHNSTONE: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier please inform the House about any important milestones as part of the Way to Grow consultation process and of any alternative plans he is aware of?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for her question. Just last month I was in Townsville for one of the Way to Grow Forums where we talked with local residents, the community and the honourable member about the Queensland Regionalisation Strategy, council futures plan and, importantly, the Bruce Highway Upgrade Strategy and the Townsville Futures Plan. This week we closed consultation in relation to those documents. The important thing is that that is about a plan that is there and laid out for everyone to see and to consider, giving an opportunity for people to have their say. Of course, there is an important milestone in Townsville at the moment with the commencement of the NBN being rolled out at some 3,000 premises in Aitkenvale and Mundingburra going live on Thursday. That is wonderful news for putting Townsville on the hyperspace map.

Of course, when it comes to broadband, it is important that we have a look at some of the alternatives. Who could forget Campbell Newman's sewer broadband—the 'Khyber space' model of internet delivery that was so good that it never even got out of the starting blocks? That, of course, is what one would expect. We have a tunnel that went broke and went into receivership that nobody uses, a bicycle scheme that is famous for being storage space for bicycles rather than a place to use them, rates massively increasing more than the rate of inflation and a King George Square renovation that in summer you can cook eggs on like a barbecue and that is more suited to the tarmac at Eagle Farm airport.

We have the alternative opposition plan whereby those opposite announced 90 days of listening. They sent the member for Callide out and around the state to listen. Out and around he went listening to everything and announced in the space of a day that they are going to have a Bruce Highway plan, they are not going to have a Bruce Highway plan, they are going to have one and now they are going to have one again—I think on the 'yeah, but no, but yeah' principle. Then they came back and we finally saw their plan. What do we get out of it? About 40 or 50 per cent of it was a copy of the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors plan. It was like Pauline Hanson when she stapled a supporters club membership list and put it in claiming it was her political party membership. That is how considered it was.

It does not matter whether he is promising the Bruce Highway or not promising it, promising Cross River Rail or not promising it; he has a record of not delivering what he promises and delivering things that do not work, cost too much and are never used. Whether it is a road worth \$773 million of ratepayers' money or bike racks that are never used—it does not matter what he promises: it will not work; it will not do the job.

Minister for Child Safety

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Premier. One of the charter priorities of the Minister for Child Safety is to 'safely and appropriately place children in care in stable care arrangements, including with family members'. Why does the Premier continue to support her Minister for Child Safety, who was responsible for the A1GP fiasco, who tried to cover up reports into the deaths of children in the care of his department and who failed to ensure children in care were placed in stable care arrangements as required by the Premier's own charter to the minister?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever, and nor has it been produced here this morning, that there has been any attempt by the Minister for Child Safety to cover up anything. When these children tragically died, their cases were immediately referred to the Child Death Case Review Committee. They are external independent experts who are overseen by the children's commission to look into the circumstances that led to these tragic events. There was no cover-up. It was a thorough investigation according to the laws of Queensland. What happened to that report and its recommendations? They were fully implemented. The children's commission has issued public statements. It is not up to the minister or the department to determine whether or not they have done the job properly. We bring in the independent children's commission to tell us whether the department, under the leadership of the minister, delivered the recommendations as it was required to do. The answer in this case is, yes, it did. That is not my assessment; it is the assessment of the independent children's commission.

In this case, when there was a great deal of public interest about the case and the circumstances that led to it, what did the minister do? He sought advice on what parts he could release while at the same time meeting his legal obligations under the legislation—that is, legislation passed, as I recall, with the full support of both sides of this parliament. What we have is a minister meeting his obligations under the act to have a matter, a tragic circumstance involving the deaths of children, fully and comprehensively investigated, implementing all of the recommendations and then making public all parts of the report that he was legally able to without compromising the privacy and confidentiality of the families concerned.

I am not sure what it is the opposition believes should have been done. I can only draw the conclusion that they believe the confidential and personal details of these children should be put into the public arena. That will not happen.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have been listening to the answer. The Premier is answering the question.

Ms BLIGH: I remind members just how sensitive these issues are and the incredibly complex decisions that have to be made by child safety officers. Again I endorse the comments of the Minister for Child Safety. Child safety officers only ever have to make these decisions because the children's families have neglected, abused or in other ways failed them. At the front line of our child protection system are an incredible army of good people who work very hard to make the right decision, but ultimately they are human and there are times when they do not, and then we will have that investigated.

Queensland Economy

Ms CROFT: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade. Can the Treasurer advise the House of any recent private sector reports on Queensland's economic forecast, and is he aware of any alternatives?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Broadwater for her question and for her commitment to ensuring there are jobs and investment on the Gold Coast, which she so well represents in this parliament. I am aware of the investment surge that is now coursing through the veins of the Queensland economy. Our economy is muscling up as that investment continues to flow through. When it comes to economics, there is one thing you cannot argue with and that is cold, hard cash. If you want to look at what is going on in the Queensland economy then you can do no worse—you can do no better, in fact—than to follow the money. That is exactly what the Commonwealth Bank Global Markets Research report has done in following the money. What has it said about the Queensland economy? It said—

Watch out for Queensland's economy over the coming years. The Queensland government's five per cent state growth forecast is very credible given export rebound and investment spending underway.

What that tells us is that the investment surge is flowing through our economy. While those opposite have questioned this forecast, and 'little Napoleon' has described the five per cent forecast as heroic, what is heroic is the performance as detailed in the report, which points out that the capital expenditure outcome last week shows that growth in Queensland accounted for—wait for it—99.3 per cent of the national growth outcome in the June quarter. That is, 99.3 per cent of the action was here in

Queensland. What does it say is on the horizon? It says that that investment upswing has only just begun. It will continue with the opportunities for the Abbot Point cargo facility and the Connors River Dam. We have made our choices, taken the decisions and put in place our priorities, and that is our reform plan in action.

In contrast, we see nothing from those opposite. In fact, the Henny Pennies opposite will go to the next election with a plan for free umbrellas as they run around chanting that the sky is falling, yet to produce a single economic plan. I refer to the so-called infrastructure plan, the much awaited infrastructure plan—the late, half-baked, incoherent, plagiarised infrastructure plan that came out last week. What did that tell us? It did not mention education. Those opposite are happy to rip \$400 million out of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and tip billions of dollars into the Connors River Dam and the Abbot Point Coal Terminal—the wrong priorities from those opposite.

The future of health and education infrastructure investment is at risk under Campbell Newman. I say to the people of Queensland that that plan shows that there is risk stamped all over Campbell Newman's attitude towards Queensland. That plan was just a series of unrequited urges. Ultimately, what we have here is a plan for the future. You need to look no further than Campbell Newman's \$2 billion cost blow-out on the tunnel now in receivership and the boiler plate that is King George Square. When it comes down to it, he is all risk and ego and it is this side that has the plan.

Public Service Appointments

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Minister for Government Services. I refer to the question I asked of Premier Bligh last sitting in parliament seeking confirmation that the senior public servant responsible for ICT projects in the public works department has since been promoted to director-general. Given the fact that independent ICT industry experts warned this public servant and this government that the Health payroll system would be catastrophic months before it went live, I ask the minister: how can the state's health workers have any confidence that the government has the ability to fix this debacle?

Mr FINN: I thank the honourable member for the question. The matter that the member refers to is the Health payroll system, which has been extensively reviewed in a number of cases and extensively reported on in this parliament a number of times. In fact, the Auditor-General himself has reported that the system has stabilised, is now operating as an effective payroll system and is delivering the objectives that it set out to deliver on. The question the member asks relates to the Director-General of the Department of Public Works. Recently I was delighted to appoint Natalie MacDonald as the director-general of public works. She is the first woman in the history of the Department of Public Works to be appointed to that senior position. Natalie MacDonald is an experienced public servant. She is a leader in the Public Service. She does a fine job and I was delighted to appoint her. I think the shadow minister for women should acknowledge the strength of that appointment.

In relation to the matter that the member refers to that was reported in this morning's press, in September 2009 a company met with Natalie MacDonald before she was the director-general. It was a consultancy company led by a person who had formerly been working for CITEC. When his contract with CITEC was not renewed, he sought opportunities to promote his product within government. He did what companies do: he met with the deputy director-general to promote those opportunities. As we see from the speaking notes that they allege they raised, they say they raised an issue about the Health payroll. This is in September 2009. That is no surprise. The payroll system had already been delayed prior to that meeting and the then minister for public works had reported that at an estimates committee prior to the September meeting. It was no secret that there were issues and delays with the Health payroll at the time of that meeting with the deputy director-general. There was another go-live delay post that meeting. There was no secret at the time that there were issues being worked through that payroll system. That has never been denied. It has been apologised for in this House on a number of occasions. All you do with this question is attempt to cast a slur on a good director-general.

Samford Road-Wardell Street Intersection Upgrade

Ms JONES: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads. Can the minister update the House on plans by this government to upgrade the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street, and is he aware of any other—

Opposition members: Oh!

Ms JONES: Wait till you get this answer. You got sold a pup.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to repeat the question, please. I am trying to get the gist of it.

Ms JONES: I was actually asking the Minister for Main Roads for an update on the commitment that, as a government, we have made to fix the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street. I am asking if he is aware of any other options put out there by others.

Mr WALLACE: Again I congratulate the member for Ashgrove on her plans to fix that intersection. She is working positively with the local community and the Department of Transport and Main Roads to fix it. The member for Ashgrove asks if there are any alternatives. I have spoken about alternatives in this place before. Last week, the quasi-leader of the lets-do-nothing party, Campbell Newman, released his long-awaited infrastructure plan for Queensland. I had a good gander at that plan. I wanted to see all the goodies that that Newman character would offer the people of Queensland.

Unfortunately, like his other plans, it was high on rhetoric and low on detail. Incredibly, as the Deputy Premier said, over half the document was simply photocopied from the council of South-East Queensland mayors. It was a cut-and-paste job. Even more surprising was the absence of one of Mr Newman's grand projects. His \$200 million concrete monstrosity overpass at the intersection of Samford Road and Wardell Street at Enoggera did not even appear. As I have said before, that 10-metre monstrosity, which was to tower above the streets of Enoggera, has been scrapped by Newman.

Why has Newman scrapped it? It is in his character and it is in his DNA to deliver crazy infrastructure. His tunnel has gone bankrupt. There is his western suburbs tunnel that the private sector refused to fund. He could not deliver the duplication of Kingsford Smith Drive. Of course, his piece de resistance is King George Square where, as the Deputy Premier said, you can fry eggs. I reckon Newman has those eggs scrambled. However, his flip-flops get worse.

Mr Lucas: He's the Sun King!

Mr Wallace: The Deputy Premier makes a good point: he thinks he is the Sun King shining over King George Square, King Louis himself. I note from today's *North-West News* that we have another flip-flop from this man Newman. Now he is claiming that, instead of building his towering freeway overpass, he will deliver a cheaper upgrade of the intersection without any resumptions. He has gone from planning to decimate every property at the intersection with his concrete monument to himself to saying that he will deliver something, but he will not tell the people of Enoggera what it is. Is it a magic elevator? Is it a toll tunnel? We know he is happy with tolls. Come clean, Campbell! Tell the people of Enoggera and the people of Ashgrove what you are going to do at this intersection. Is it the \$200 million monstrosity? Is it a toll tunnel? We do not know. Unlike Kate Jones, who has a plan for the people of Ashgrove, all Campbell Newman has is a crazy policy and crazy engineering ideas. We will fight him every step of the way to deliver a better infrastructure program for the people of Ashgrove.

Hospital Bed Numbers

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister confirm that his department is considering what it calls 'bed nonutilisation' of up to 60 beds at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital due to its budget constraints? Is this Labor's new code for bed cuts?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The challenge facing Queensland Health is to continue with the resolute strategy that we have of delivering more beds, sooner and closer to home to Queenslanders. That is what we are going to do. The challenge for Queensland Health, which as a government we have reiterated to Queensland Health, is that not only do they have to build on the quality of health services that they are providing while maintaining the quality of care but also they have to spend as wisely as possible the record budget that has been provided to Queensland Health this year. This year there is a 10.6 per cent increase in the Health budget, which is providing up to \$11 billion. That means more money for metro north, more money for metro south and more money right across the state. We have more than doubled the Health budget in the past five years. We have employed 5,200 extra medical, allied health and nursing staff since September 2009. On behalf of all taxpayers, the Queensland government is driving more and more funds into providing more health services sooner and closer to home for every Queenslander.

Why are we doing that? Because we want to make sure that the absolute entitlement of folk in Queensland to get the best health quality service in our public health system is being delivered. Does that provide some challenges? It certainly does, with increasing population, increasing chronic disease, an ageing population and many other factors. However, the obligation on Queensland Health is to ensure that they are making the most of every dollar that is provided to health services. That is why major rollouts of infrastructure are being undertaken right across the state. This year there is \$1.8 billion for the expansion of emergency departments, for the expansion of medical wards and for the expansion of surgical wards.

I contrast that to the alternative provided by the opposition. They will rip \$400 million out of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. They say one thing here in Brisbane, which is that they will pull \$400 million out of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, and they are telling people on the Sunshine Coast that they will deliver a Sunshine Coast University Hospital for \$2 billion. Campbell Newman says one thing in Brisbane and another thing in the regions. He says one thing in the regions and another thing here in Brisbane. Where is the \$400 million coming from for Campbell Newman's election promises?

Education, Infrastructure Projects

Mrs KEECH: My question is to the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. Can the minister update the House on how the government's massive building program is benefitting the education sector?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Albert for her question and for her commitment to that mighty part of Queensland that is growing down in Albert and her support for schools there.

Labor knows the importance of infrastructure in delivering the future of Queensland. This year alone we will spend \$14.9 billion supporting jobs, building new infrastructure and supporting communities around Queensland. In the Department of Education and Training alone we will spend almost half a billion dollars—\$487 million will be our capital spend this year. That will build on the 54 new schools that the Labor government has built since coming to power in 1998—and we have opened five alone this year and there are another two relocated schools. There will be more to come in 2012 with a new high school at Murrumba, schools at Bundilla and Mango Hill, the relocation of the Mer campus of Tagai State College in the Torres Strait and the relocation of Wynnum State School.

Education infrastructure is central to what we do. That is why it is in the Queensland Infrastructure Plan. That is why we set out our plans for education in the Queensland Infrastructure Plan. So I was interested to see what other plans were out there, including the plan released by Campbell Newman last week in relation to infrastructure. The word 'education' appears twice in that infrastructure plan. It has been 155 days since Campbell Newman became the de facto Leader of the Opposition in this place and what has he said about education? Nothing, except two words in an infrastructure document.

Mr Wallace: Shame!

Mr DICK: It is a shame. When the crunch comes, we have heard it all before. 'The plans are coming,' the member for Moggill says. 'We have ideas, we have policies,' but when the crunch comes we all know this: Campbell Newman cannot deliver. That is just as it was when he was Lord Mayor.

I have been thinking that surely there is something that schools can get out of Campbell Newman. Let us look to his legacy. There is something that schools could get out of Campbell Newman. We could look at his record for maths. He increased rates by 700 times for some ratepayers. We could use that for maths. Physics students can go down to the bankrupt tunnel and work out how sound travels in a completely vacant space. My personal favourite is the 'Sun King' in his square, the deserted and barren King George Square. Of course science students can go there to conduct experiments involving extreme heat. That is what they can do in King George Square.

One experiment is failing and that is the Newman experiment, and those members opposite know it. Every time he puts his head up now in the media he is stumbling and bumbling from one thing to another, 'Just let me cut in.' He does not let members of the opposition speak. This is a man who has no feel or understanding of state government and no feel or understanding of education.

Police Helicopter

Mr LANGBROEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. I refer the minister to the government's \$50 million plus purchase of the three AW139 helicopters, and I ask: Given the latest grounding of the AW139s, again over tail and tail rotor problems, will the minister finally admit that this purchase amounts to yet another very costly disaster for Queensland taxpayers?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. He is a member who wakes up every morning, reads the newspaper and later in the day issues a press release. He is a member who is known as one of the laziest and sneakiest shadow ministers in this particular portfolio. The record speaks for itself. You read the paper in the morning and later on in the afternoon the member puts out a press release about some so-called new issue.

Let us look at the issue of the AW139s. The Labor government purchased these helicopters for good reason. They are recognised internationally as having more capacity in terms of the load they can carry and the distance they can travel and the sophisticated technology that is on them. We have three of these helicopters in operation in addition to two Bell 412s.

There has been an issue identified internationally with the tail boom rotor of these helicopters. The issue is that the tail boom rotor needs to be replaced after a set period of time. At the time of the international notice on these helicopters, EMQ grounded them as a precautionary measure. The Cairns AW139 is, in fact, back in the air. The rotor blades needed to be tested and checked. That has happened. There were insufficient rotor blades not only within Australia but internationally for all of these helicopters to fly. But as they come on stream the other AW139s will be put back in the air.

As I have said, these are helicopters which have been recognised internationally for their sophistication and capacity in terms of search and rescue operations and particularly aeromedical responses. There are several hundred of them in operation across the world in emergency services operations as well as in Australia. The capacity and the distance they can travel is recognised as far superior to the Bells, which we currently have.

These are the helicopters which received international recognition through the very brave EMQ pilots when rescuing over 40 people at Grantham. These are the helicopters that the opposition is criticising. These are the helicopters which have served Queensland well and which will continue to serve Queensland well in terms of aeromedical responses and search and rescue capacity because they have the facilities and the capacity that is required to do the job that they have been employed to do.

Health, Infrastructure Projects

Ms van LITSENBURG: My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister update the House on recent milestones in the hospital building program and whether there are any alternative ideas for priority health infrastructure projects?

Mr WILSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. The government is rolling out a record Health budget. There is record spending in our Health budget and much of that is being rolled out for infrastructure. Only last week we announced a joint venture with the Queensland University of Technology and University of Queensland joining as partners in establishing the academic and research facility at the new Queensland Children's Hospital; secondly, we turned the sod on the commencement of construction of the precinct for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital; thirdly, we announced another milestone in the move of the Southport hospital to the Gold Coast University Hospital.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left will cease interjecting. I have listened to the question. The question dealt with milestones. As I understand what the minister is saying, he is talking about milestones. The honourable minister has the call.

Mr WILSON: They do not like hearing about the positive progress taking place throughout Health, do they? The next milestone only fell last week, when we announced more beds and services for Ipswich and for the Metro North area, particularly in relation to paediatric palliative care.

I would like to talk about another milestone, and this is the milestone—also from last week—of the LNP's alternative infrastructure plan for Queenslanders and for Queensland Health. What we have here is an 80-page document, which they do not want to hear about, that is all about infrastructure, but there are no new beds, no new wards, no new hospitals, no new multi-healthcare facilities, no new community health centres. However, it does have a section that deals with the LNP's vision for the resource community, but no new hospital or health facility there. They deal with a section on tourism, but no new hospital or health facility there. They deal with a section on regional centres, but no new hospital or health centre there. In case you thought they had missed it—critical priorities, no new health facilities there. This infrastructure plan is about as helpful as an ashtray on a motorbike. It is about as useful as a public square that has no shade. It is about as valuable as a bankrupt tunnel. It is about as broken as Campbell Newman's promise to cut the rates of the Brisbane City Council.

State and Local Government Elections

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the last sitting of parliament and the fact that the Queensland Electoral Commission now has the responsibility of coordinating the next local government election and also the next state election. Will the Premier save Queenslanders months of wasteful election campaigning by holding both elections on the same day?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. He is not the first one to ask this question of me. Every now and then, because we have a three-year term at the state level and a four-year term at the local government level, we end up with a year in which both levels of government face an election at the same time. This actually happened, if I recall rightly, in either 2001 or 2004—I am sorry, I would have to go back and look at the books—when there was a state election held within about six weeks of a fixed local government election.

Mr Hinchliffe: 2004.

Ms BLIGH: It was in 2004, I am being reliably informed by the caucus pedant and history buff.

I appreciate the sentiment behind the question being asked by the member for Nicklin. I do not have any desire to put taxpayers to any unnecessary cost, but I do think the issues that are dealt with at both levels of government and the lack of any traditional history of combining different levels of government probably mitigate against that and the need for us to allow people to think carefully about

the state issues and about those issues that face them in their local area, which are vastly different. It is not something that I believe is appropriate for Queensland, and it is something that I think is very unlikely to happen here. But I do appreciate the question. I have no intention, however, of revealing what the exact date might be. If that was the intention of the member for Nicklin, it was a nice try.

Cross River Rail

Ms GRACE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister please advise the House on the status of the Cross River Rail project and whether there are any alternative plans to boost capacity on the network?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for her question and also for her commitment to the Cross River Rail project. Members will be aware that last week the government released its comprehensive EIS on the Cross River Rail project. Here it is; it is very comprehensive. It is a comprehensive plan for South-East Queensland—a comprehensive plan for our rail network in South-East Queensland. However, we have had some conflicting views from Campbell Newman. I would like to share those with the House.

On 6 July last year, Campbell Newman, as Lord Mayor, was supporting Cross River Rail when he said—

If we don't get the inner-city rail project done, it affects the ability to run rail services right across the region.

Then when he was in charge of the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors he said—

It is time for all South-East Queensland residents to show their support of the Cross River Rail upgrade.

That is what he said on the public record.

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Indooroopilly, you have had a fair go.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Then last week what did we see? We saw the release of their so-called infrastructure plan. What did they have to say in relation to that? Well, it was more of a mess. When he was asked to clarify whether he supported Cross River Rail, Campbell Newman said—

We are totally supportive of a project that deals with the capacity problems across the Brisbane River.

But then he went on to hedge his bets again when he said—

I'm not going to pre-empt our solution. But the point is that we will deal with it at some time.

Yes, but what did they come up with? What was their alternative?

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Indooroopilly.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Their alternative was to upgrade South Bank and South Brisbane stations. You might think that is a good idea—something that perhaps could be sounded out and looked at. But guess what? It has been ruled out. The government has completely ruled that out as an option. Why can't it be done? Because there is something called a busway right next door and something called the convention centre. So their infrastructure plan simply cannot work.

What we do know about Campbell Newman is that everything he touches does not work. King George Square is a complete debacle—no-one can use it; no-one can walk across it. The Clem7 is another complete disaster—no-one can use it. And how can we not talk about CityCycle, Campbell Newman's vision for getting people active in Brisbane city?

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member for Indooroopilly, I warn you now under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: How successful has that been? Campbell Newman—no can do. Everything he touches turns to dust. Every infrastructure plan he touches simply cannot work. You cannot risk Campbell Newman.

Advertising Material, Political Parties

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Attorney-General. I refer the Attorney-General to a question asked previously by the member for Ashgrove to the Minister for Main Roads and also to a misleading flyer being distributed in the Ashgrove electorate which was authorised by J Seekers of 42 Cairo Street, Enoggera. Given that the flyer has been authorised by the daughter of a state Labor president whose union car is clearly visible in a Google maps image, which I table, will the Attorney-General confirm—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. The honourable member for Kawana has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Attorney-General confirm that this is an example of why he gave special treatment to unions spending money on election campaigns rather than ensuring this expenditure was deducted from the Ashgrove Labor expenditure cap, as would apply to every other political party?

Tabled paper: Flyer titled 'Campbell Newman's Enoggera', authorised by J. Seekers, and associated photographs [5218].

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I indicated earlier, as Gough Whitlam observed of Billy Snedden, he reads the Lord's Prayer like he wrote it himself. That is certainly the way the honourable member delivers his deliberations in this House.

The honourable member would well know that the provisions of the Electoral Act specifically acknowledge the right of individuals in their private capacity or members of political parties to campaign for those political parties. It comes as no surprise that, indeed, there may be some unionists who are members of the LNP who are entitled to be campaign directors and authorise material. It comes as no surprise that there may be members of employer organisations who are members of the Labor Party who are absolutely entitled to campaign in their private capacity for individuals.

What this makes absolutely clear—and we know this already—is that this thin-skinned LNP opposition are already drawing up the hit list. They are already drawing up the hit list. We know what happens every time something is raised in this House or in the public domain daring to question Campbell Newman: the instructions come down from on high. If he is not out the front getting up his staff—like he was caught out doing the other day to Mike D'Arcy—he is issuing edicts to people like the Leader of the Opposition. The day the Treasurer got under his skin, I am told that three media releases went out firing back.

This would have to be the most thin-skinned leader of the LNP in the history of Queensland politics. Every time there is a question about his ability to deliver things—and, of course, why wouldn't there be questions about it? Why wouldn't you be asking questions about a bike scheme that is more important as a place to store excess bikes as they come off the ship? Why wouldn't you be asking about King George Square, which is all there ready to take his statue—the statue of 'Ozymandias'—when the 'Sun King' in his own mind becomes both mayor and Premier in the one go? And we know that he wants to do that because his adoption of infrastructure policy was a South-East Queensland Council of Mayors policy. He actually wants to bring them together. As the Sun King said, 'L'État, c'est moi.' That is certainly the way that Campbell Newman believes this state should be run.


They will be combing through every document for anyone who dares question what they say, anyone who dares ask anything about the harebrained schemes—about the tunnel that you can play cricket or soccer in without any fear of being near a car. The only thing the speed cameras in the tunnel will be booking are the ants crawling through it, because they are not going to get run over! We have this opposition—lazy, well-funded, indolent and now with a leader extraparliamentary because they are so incompetent that they cannot do it themselves. The dogs are barking. It is on the wood: they are going down.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for question time is over.


MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Further Answer to Question; Hospital Bed Numbers

 **Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (11.00 am), by leave: Earlier a question was asked by the shadow minister for health in relation to an alleged proposal regarding the Metro North Health Service District of Queensland Health. I can advise the House that last week the CEO of metro north released to the media a statement saying that he has not authorised any proposal to close 60 beds at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and that there are no plans to reduce services at RBWH.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Liberal National Party, Infrastructure Report

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.01 am): This morning in the parliament we have seen an extraordinary event. The government asked itself eight questions about a single issue. Every question that the government had an opportunity to ask itself it asked about the infrastructure report that we released last week. It asked eight separate questions about a report that I prepared for shadow cabinet. Every question about a shadow cabinet report indicates the extent to

which this government is embarrassed by its record. At the end of this contribution, I will table the report I prepared for shadow cabinet so that everybody can see what it is that has worried the government so much.

The report was a discussion paper that was compiled after a 90-day consultation process involving extensive travel by shadow ministers and me throughout the state. We met with local governments and industry groups right across Queensland. The report's purpose is to outline a plan to address the infrastructure deficit that is constraining economic growth and service delivery in Queensland after almost two decades of Labor government, which has left the state in a perilous financial state with ballooning debt and the loss of its long-held AAA credit rating. This plan and the feedback received will be the basis for policy commitments from an alternative LNP government at the next state election. But it has already galvanised the government. It has already stirred the government into action, going by its reaction today.

The plan proposes that the provision of infrastructure should be a key role of any state government and that it is indeed a defining failure of the state Labor government in Queensland. Driving economic development is the only way to regain our financial strength and to generate the revenue that is required to provide the social infrastructure and services that Queenslanders need. The plan proposes that, to make the investments into roads, schools and hospitals and all the other services that state governments provide, there is a need to maximise the economic potential of our state by addressing the infrastructure constraints that hamper economic development and reversing the infrastructure deficit that has been the legacy of this Labor government.

The plan proposes that an LNP state government will play a much stronger leadership role in driving growth in the Queensland economy by taking a lead role in planning, prioritising and delivering the infrastructure that will drive the economic development of Queensland. There is, we believe, an absolute necessity for the state government to work closely with local governments across the state, but particularly with the large local governments in South-East Queensland, to address the deficit in infrastructure resulting from two decades of Labor government. That deficit will never be addressed until the toxic relationship that currently exists between the state government and the large local governments in South-East Queensland is reversed. The inability of successive Labor governments to recognise the importance of those local governments and to work together in a harmonious, respectful relationship towards shared infrastructure goals has been a major contributing factor towards the infrastructure deficit that is constraining economic growth and impacting on the lives of many Queenslanders today.

There is a universal recognition among local governments from regional centres from Brisbane to Cairns along with industry and community leaders that Queensland's major north-south road link, the Bruce Highway, is approaching a state of crisis. Safety concerns and access constraints were identified as major problems for almost every community. Federal funding for the Bruce Highway has been used as a political football, an excuse for political point-scoring and buck-passing by the Labor government with the attitude of the current main roads minister in particular causing frustration and anger in communities and industries that recognise the importance of this most critical road infrastructure.

The main roads department in an LNP government would immediately begin a six-month planning process to provide a credible basis for a 10-year crisis action plan to address the developing Bruce Highway crisis. That is something that this Labor government hates to hear because it illustrates the fact that it has no plan. It has no engineering based plan that would provide a basis for funding applications to the Commonwealth. They have a political plan. After 12 years in government they have a glossy political brochure which is all about having meetings up and down the coast in seats that they are frightened they are going to lose.

We would do what the government should have done long ago. We would task the department of main roads to formulate a proper engineering based plan that can be the basis for proper funding applications to the Commonwealth—the type of thing that only the department of main roads can do and which should have been done many years ago. A Bruce Highway crisis management group would be formed to bring together state and federal members with regional local government leaders, regional economic development groups and representatives from groups such as the RACQ and heavy transport operators to work together instead of throwing insults at each other, as the Treasurer and current minister do. We will work together to make a concerted case to the Commonwealth for funding for Queensland's most important road infrastructure.

The economy as a whole and every Queensland individual can benefit enormously from the expansion of the existing mining, agricultural, tourism and construction industries if the necessary infrastructure is in place to facilitate economic growth and to strengthen local communities. The development of the coal seam gas industry to export liquefied natural gas to the world provides particular infrastructure challenges right throughout Central Queensland. Funding the infrastructure that Queensland so desperately needs to facilitate economic growth is a major challenge, primarily due to the parlous financial position with which the Labor government has burdened our state and which has resulted in the loss of our prized AAA credit rating.

The LNP would establish within Treasury a unit called Queensland Projects to develop and administer the innovative funding models that maximise the opportunities for private investment capital to be invested in infrastructure construction in Queensland. The LNP state government would seek to maximise the level of available state funds committed to infrastructure. However, given the deficit that is the legacy of this Labor government, there would be a new focus on maximising the use of private investment as a method of funding infrastructure in Queensland rather than as an option of last resort, as is the philosophically driven approach of the current Labor government.

It would be important to establish a long-term commitment to a pipeline of investment opportunities in Queensland to ensure that private enterprise has the certainty to invest the time, people and finances that are required to be involved in funding and operating critically needed public infrastructure. Financing models accessing private sector investment funds should provide returns to investors primarily based on availability and service standards set by government rather than requiring investors to accept the entire patronage risk of public infrastructure.

An LNP government would provide proactive leadership, an understanding of the importance of long-term planning, firm commitments to a continual pipeline of projects and a flexible approach that matches the right financing option with the right project. We would take a new approach—a new approach that would bring some dividends for the people of Queensland.

It is important that the minister and the department of state development should be focused on driving the economic development of the state and ensuring the benefits of economic growth are spread across all of Queensland. We have previously said that the role of the Coordinator-General would be strongly focused on coordinating and delivering major projects, rather than just being reduced to the role of a regulator.

Longer term planning for infrastructure requirements would be undertaken collaboratively with local government and community groups through an organisation called Queensland Infrastructure. We would work in tandem with the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors and local governments everywhere to deliver the infrastructure projects that they have identified. In particular, the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors have done the work that the state government could not do; they have done the work that this Labor government have failed to do. We endorse the work that they have done. We will support the program of projects that they have laid out. The state Labor government would do well to work closely with the council of mayors and local government leaders across the state. They would do well to recognise the importance of local government. They would do well to recognise that local government leaders know their communities best. We will do all of those things as we seek to address the infrastructure deficit that this government has left.

An LNP government would establish a roads to resources fund to address the deficit of road infrastructure in regional Queensland. I think you really have to live in regional Queensland to understand the importance of regional roads, and it would be a major focus of our infrastructure plan. I table the infrastructure plan that has caused the government so much consternation and has been the subject of every question this morning.

Tabled paper: Discussion Paper for Public Consultation titled 'How an LNP Government would address Labor's long term failure to build infrastructure in Queensland—Building Queensland's future together': Report by Leader of the Opposition, Jeff Seeney, for Shadow Cabinet, 1 September 2011 [[5219](#)].

Fortitude Valley, Drink-Safe Precincts



Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.11 am): Recent statistics released regarding the Fortitude Valley drink-safe precinct trial—which is a fully funded, two-year \$8.5 million investment in the drink-safe precincts—are continuing to show that we are delivering strong results to make the Fortitude Valley night economy most enjoyable for those who attend on a regular basis. The results show that for the first six months the drink-safe precinct in the Fortitude Valley has been most successful, as too have been the drink-safe precinct meetings I have attended on a regular basis under the auspices of the police force in the Fortitude Valley.

The results are fantastic and they show this government's commitment to making sure that this area of the Fortitude Valley is safe and secure for the people who want to have a great time in these world-class facilities here in Brisbane. These people can feel safe and secure because we are cracking down on violence, on crime and on any antisocial behaviour in the Valley so that everyone can go out and have a great time and return home safely after their evening out.

The first six-month snapshot reveals that the extra police force that this government is funding has made 995 arrests in the Valley—mostly for good order and liquor type offences—and that 11 people have been banned from the precinct for up to 12 months. I understand that there are other people who may be banned from the area if their behaviour is such that a submission is made to the court. The police force has been very successful in ensuring that those people who do not come for a good time but to do mischief will no longer be welcome in the Valley. It also shows that the police used conflict intervention strategies over 1,200 times and took over 380 people to safe zones to rest and recuperate during the first six months. The police also took 75 people into detention for breaches of the peace and handed 79 people over to Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics for medical attention.


The trial of the Chill Out Zone has also been very successful in the first six months. It has provided support for nearly 1,000 patrons of the Valley, which represents roughly 17 patrons per night. Nearly 30,000 cups of water were handed out in the Chill Out Zone, which is an outstanding achievement. The Chill Out Zone and Chaplain Watch are ensuring that people who need assistance in the Valley are assisted. People know where to go if they want a safe place where they can chill out and recover from whatever is happening. Chaplain Watch is doing a fantastic job, going out and looking at possible intervention strategies which can have an impact straightaway on helping those people who require assistance.

Overall, the statistics are speaking for themselves; it has been very successful. Officers of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation have also played an integral part in ensuring that pubs and clubs adhere to their obligations under the Liquor Act. During the first six months, they conducted 38 investigations and undertook 134 compliance operations, and 93 breaches were detected. These figures may sound high, but they are a drop in the bucket when you consider that 50,000 people visit the Fortitude Valley alone over the two nights of a weekend. Most people go there for a good time and to enjoy the world-class facilities on offer.

I want to contrast this with a recent Brisbane City Council decision. Here is the state government making a fantastic commitment in relation to ensuring there is a safe precinct, yet the Brisbane City Council recently ripped out funding for the Fortitude Valley place management team. It has been closed down; it no longer operates. Funds for the Valley Mall upgrade have evaporated. The Brisbane City Council has ripped them out and we will now not have the pleasure of an upgrade of that mall. The Brisbane City Council is taking no action on derelict and filthy buildings and public spaces, giving visitors to the Valley a very bad first impression, and as we know first impressions often last. In spite of all this, the Valley Mall board has done a very good job.

Under the chairmanship of local businessman, Phil di Bella, we have gained significant improvements in the Valley area but we need the Brisbane City Council on board as well. The day economy in the Valley is just as important as the night economy. The Queensland state government has put its hand in its pocket and has done wonders to turn around the night economy in the Valley in six months. It is just a shame that instead of assisting us with day economy endeavours the Brisbane City Council has pulled funding out.

Samford Road-Wardell Street Intersection Upgrade

 **Ms JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.16 am): All of us know Campbell Newman has no genuine interest in representing the people of my community—that is, the electors of Ashgrove—in this parliament. Campbell Newman's complete failure to be honest with the people of Enoggera shows that his own ego and political ambition will always come first for him. His unflinching willingness to say anything to anyone and to change his position when it suits him just shows that he will do anything to try to fulfil his own political desire to be Premier of Queensland.

What we have seen in recent months is Campbell Newman promising all things to all people locally when it comes to his response to the clear plan that we have to upgrade the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection. The member for Ferny Grove, the member for Everton and I have all worked very closely with the Minister for Main Roads to ensure that we get a fix to one of the busiest intersections on our side of town. More than 35,000 cars travel through this intersection each and every day. Overwhelmingly, since I have been the member for Ashgrove, this intersection is one of the issues that most people have raised with me and it is something that they want to see fixed. That is why, when we made the commitment earlier this year that we would inject significant funding to fix this intersection, more than 1,000 people signed a petition and wrote letters saying that they wanted the works to begin sooner rather than later.

But what we know about Campbell Newman is that he is a political opportunist. When he was selected by the LNP as the candidate for Ashgrove, after they disendorsed their previously endorsed candidate, he came out with guns blazing, saying 'I will outdo the government. I will commit to a \$200 million overpass at that intersection.' That was his position and he wrote to everybody in the electorate saying just that. However, he obviously got the feedback, which we all know because we live in this community and we actually talk to people there, that they do not want an overpass towering 10 metres above their homes, putting light and sound into their homes 24 hours a day. So within one week he put out another letter saying, 'The way I see it there are actually three options.' Of course, he has kept the monument to himself there—his \$200 million overpass—

Mr Schwarten: Which isn't funded.


Ms JONES: Which is unfunded, and I will get to that—but it is absolutely his preferred option for that site. He then said, 'I want to listen to the different options available. After he said that, there was a petition locally which had Campbell Newman's face on it which was distributed to all of the local businesses in my area with a letter from Campbell Newman again calling for the overpass. So he is telling people who do not support an overpass, 'No, I certainly don't support an overpass,' while he is saying to the people who want an overpass, 'Absolutely. I'm with you. I support an overpass.'

A government member interjected.

Ms JONES: That is right, and we have seen this repeatedly. But the most offensive of all was yet to happen: when Campbell Newman released his infrastructure plan. That plan is over 80 pages long and something that the LNP had been touting for months, saying, 'Wait for it. Wait for it. Our infrastructure plan will reveal all and will show exactly what our priorities are for Queensland—which projects we are going to fund and what we will deliver for Queensland if elected.' As the local member for Ashgrove I grabbed this plan, as members can imagine, to finally see what Campbell Newman's real position was when it came to fixing the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection—something that he claimed he would do in his very first letter to all of the Ashgrove electorate. He said that his priority for our community would be fixing this intersection. What do members think was in his 85-page document regarding his priority infrastructure projects for Queensland? Do members think there was any mention of the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection? Nothing! That is right.

Campbell Newman has written twice—spending a lot of money—to all of the electors in Ashgrove saying, 'My top priority for this community is to fix the intersection,' yet the one infrastructure plan that he has released, which is meant to summarise all of his priorities, does not provide one dollar, one word, one commitment for this intersection. You cannot trust a word that this man says. And it gets better! After recommitting in one publication this week by saying, 'Sorry, the overpass is back on. It might not be in my infrastructure plan, but I'm promising it in this column,' he was in another newspaper—people would have got these in their mailboxes at the same time—saying, 'No, my position's changed again. If elected we will work to get some funding, but it will be much cheaper and it won't have any resumptions.' Campbell Newman, come clean!

Queensland Health, Payroll System

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.21 am): The shoot-the-messenger, bullying culture of this government was on display this morning. The response from Minister Simon Finn with regard to the issue of the Health payroll debacle—when it was publicly revealed that this government was alerted—was an absolute disgrace. The government was warned that it would be catastrophic, but its response is to attack the messengers. It is now 506 days and \$220 million since Premier Bligh promised that her government would work day and night to fix the Health payroll system, and it still is not fixed! Thousands of doctors, nurses and allied health workers still wait nervously each fortnight to see if they have been correctly paid or paid at all. It is about two weeks since I asked Premier Bligh in this parliament whether the senior public servant responsible for ICT projects in the public works department, which oversaw the Health payroll system, has since been promoted to director-general. The Premier laughed it off as if this was some great joke. However, more seriously today—

Mr FINN: I rise to a point of order. The member is misleading the House. The director-general of Public Works was not on the project board that ran the Health payroll system. She was not the director-general of Public Works at the time the payroll system was procured and had no responsibility in the go-live decision. The member misleads the House. I ask her to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Are you making a point of order or do you wish to refer this to the Ethics Committee?

Mr FINN: I am simply saying that what the member is saying to the House is incorrect. I am asking her to withdraw that statement.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member wishes to pursue that, he needs to refer it to the Ethics Committee.

Ms SIMPSON: Perhaps to help the minister, I refer him to the fact that this particular public servant actually oversaw the ICT section of the department. If the ICT section was not over the Health payroll section—goodness me—what a mess we have in this government! It will not even take responsibility for lines of command.

Mr FINN: I rise to a point of order. The member continues to mislead the House. The Health payroll system was overseen by a project board of which the current director-general, Natalie MacDonald, was not a member.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. If the member wishes to pursue this, please refer it to the Ethics Committee.

Ms SIMPSON: This government laughed it off and then tried to shoot the messenger because it was warned that it was going to be catastrophic. Unfortunately, those who have paid the price are the doctors, the nurses, the allied health workers and all of the workers within Queensland Health. More seriously, today it has been revealed through leaked notes of a meeting of 9 September 2009 that the senior public servant I mentioned in that question had met with independent ICT experts who warned the government that the Health payroll system was facing catastrophic issues, and this was months before the system went live.


Some 506 days and \$220 million later, the problem is not fixed today. It is always more expensive and difficult to fix a crisis when it has happened than to avert it. But, no, this government shoots the messenger. No-one takes responsibility in this government. If one looks at its chain of command, very conveniently it tried to rip it up after the event.

To date, the total cost of this payroll system has been at least \$283 million, which is equivalent to the wages of 4,700 nurses for one year. What a waste of money in the way that this government has bungled this! The reason the system has not been fixed is found in the sarcastic and flippant responses of the minister and the Premier, because it is part of the same toxic bullying culture of shooting the messenger and denying responsibility. It is pervasive in this government. It is what this government's culture is about. No-one takes responsibility and when there are divergent views that are seeking to cut waste, to improve productivity and, most of all, to serve Queenslanders better, it wants to shoot them down.

I would urge good public servants to help deliver better and more cost-effective services in Queensland and join us in this campaign to see a reform of the way government is delivered for the sake of Queenslanders. There are many genuine public servants who are frustrated with the waste and the inefficiency of the state's bureaucracy because they have also experienced the same problem. This government has a habit of shooting the messenger and then bullying them, and that is why we have seen this debacle with regard to the Health payroll system. It is time the good rank-and-file public servants had a say about how to reform government to cut the cost of living. We are listening and we want to hear from them.

The high cost of living as a result of the Bligh Labor government's mismanagement affects all Queenslanders. Queensland now has the highest cost of all of the states to run a car, thanks to the deceitful way this government took away the fuel tax rebate and the deceitful way it increased registration—and the list goes on. It is time we saw a reform of government to cut the waste and to respect the professional voice of those who will speak without fear or favour and who are not part of this Labor government's culture and ways. We are determined, under Campbell Newman, to give a voice to the voiceless and to empower Queenslanders again by cutting the waste. We can do more for Queensland—more in services, more in infrastructure and more in relieving the costs of living.

Mount Isa Electorate, Local Ambulance Committees

 **Mrs KIERNAN** (Mount Isa—ALP) (11.27 am): I rise to commend the work of our state's 160 local ambulance committees. The latest ambulance committee to be formed is on Fraser Island. The Mount Isa electorate has three very hardworking committees in Mount Isa, Cloncurry and Winton. Recently as part of my parliamentary secretary duties I had the great privilege to attend the QLAC conference in Townsville. It was a great opportunity to meet with some 150 people representing 50 LACs around the state and get to know many people from this vast state and talk to them about the work they do and, most importantly, why they do it in their communities. I was very impressed with the amount of work that local committees do for all of their communities and their partnership in developing training and information programs. At the conference we got to see one of the latest initiatives—a DVD on what to do if someone is bitten by a snake. It is a really valuable information tool.

With Ambulance Week approaching, it is fitting that we take time to recognise the efforts of these local committees. Their purpose is to promote the activities of the QAS and community health issues, as well as provide support to local ambulance services by fundraising to help provide equipment or training resources within their areas. The volunteers who form the LAC make a great difference to the wellbeing of their own communities and I wish to thank them for their continued commitment. They play an important role in supporting our ambulance officers in the community and in introducing new officers to their community. This is one of the key areas, particularly in my part of the world where officers may come into Mount Isa or one of the more remote centres. It is the welcoming of the community and the people within the community that makes that new officer's role so much easier and helps them get involved in the local community.


The local ambulance committees also provide invaluable localised feedback and opinion on the direction and the operation of the local ambulance service. This grassroots support and feedback is absolutely essential. They also play an important role in creating safer communities, particularly through their involvement in the delivery and promotion of messages of safety and many other initiatives. The LAC conference is a great opportunity for all of these members to meet with senior government members and senior staff to exchange ideas and for government to receive feedback on the operation, delivery and training of our Queensland Ambulance Service and the officers therein. The relationship between the government and our 160 LACs is a dynamic and fluid interaction. I got to experience much of that on the day. I can tell members that they do not hold back. This certainly assists the government in ensuring that QAS delivers and is responsive and reflective of the communities where they serve.

I again take this opportunity to commend the terrific work that LACs do in assisting our local ambulance service in each and every community, small or large, in which they serve. I thank them for dedicating their time to assist the state government to deliver this most essential service to our

community. Their work, their opinion and feedback is greatly appreciated. On ending, I would like to recognise and thank the dedicated ambulance officers and their leaders for the work they do in our communities right across the state.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Before I call the member for Glass House, I acknowledge the children from Belmont State School in the electorate of Chatsworth in the gallery.

National Parks; Wildlife Protection and Preservation


 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.33 am): Last week the LNP released three elements of its 'can do' approach to the environment. The first was the LNP's commitment to ensuring that our national parks are properly managed and available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders. As I have said before, one of Queensland's most precious assets is its natural beauty, best portrayed through our protected estate. But like everything else, Labor has been trashing it. For the sake of Greens party preferences those opposite lock up our national parks and throw away the key. They say it is for conservation, but one does not need to be a rocket scientist to know that this approach is having a disastrous effect.

Our national parks are full of pests and weeds. There are not enough rangers on the ground to manage them and those rangers are not even equipped with the necessary management plans to do so. What is more, by locking out the general population, Queenslanders become more and more disengaged from the environment they need to explore, appreciate and protect. While other jurisdictions are realising the health and environmental benefits of linking individuals and communities with their natural environment, this government is doing everything it can to distance everyday Queenslanders from their natural surrounds. That will change under an LNP government. The LNP will make national park management a priority, concentrating on our biodiversity, weed and pest management. The LNP will focus on ensuring that our national parks are also good neighbours so that adjacent landholders are not invaded by pests and weeds taking refuge in the parks. The LNP will deliver and implement a state-wide streamlined permit system for sustainable tourism and recreational enjoyment of Queensland's public land. The LNP will properly manage our national parks for all Queenslanders to enjoy their outstanding natural heritage now and into the future.

The LNP will also get serious about wildlife protection and preservation. That is why last Thursday in Hervey Bay I committed an LNP government to a full independent scientific review of the Fraser Island dingo management strategy. The LNP recognises the Fraser Island dingo as an integral part of the distinctive ecology that makes the Fraser Island World Heritage area unique. There are two very clear, very divergent approaches to dingo management. One purports a survival of the fittest mentality—that is, if it is nature's way the dingo will survive; if not, they will not. The other school of thought is more humane: an approach that would see more human-dingo interaction to ensure the population does survive. A strategy that is too insular, that is not challenged by opposing schools of thought, that is not open to broader scientific debate could spell disaster for this iconic species. That is not something that the LNP is willing to accept. Therefore, an LNP government will commission an immediate independent, scientific peer review of the Fraser Island dingo management strategy. The LNP is committed to ensuring the long-term survival of a healthy, sustainable wild population of dingoes on Fraser Island while ensuring that the island once again fulfils its potential as a premier tourist destination.

Continuing in the vein of getting serious about protecting and preserving Queensland's natural icons, last week I also announced the LNP's policy when it comes to dugongs and turtles. An LNP government will act to protect Queensland's iconic dugong and turtle populations, which is more than can be said about this tired Bligh Labor government. The LNP recognises that there is an entitlement of traditional owners to hunt dugongs and sea turtles for non-commercial use under the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993. But the LNP will not allow unnecessary cruelty and torture of these wonderful species. An LNP government will remove the current exemption under the Animal Care and Protection Act for traditional hunters. Like other jurisdictions, this will make it illegal for anyone to mutilate, torture or unnecessarily prolong the death of an animal. The LNP will also work with Indigenous stakeholders to protect Queensland's dugong and turtle populations from poachers and stop brutality against these iconic species. Some Indigenous communities have already self-imposed moratoriums or regulated hunting practices by issuing permits and licences. An LNP government will work with Indigenous communities to see this successful and proactive model rolled out across all dugong and turtle habitats. An LNP government will enforce the law when it comes to the illegal trade in dugong and turtle meat products. These policies are in stark contrast to Labor's failed and flawed environmental record. These policies are LNP can-do action. This is part of our plan to get Queensland back on track.

Melanoma

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (11.38 am): While cancer in all its forms affects all Australian communities, we here in Queensland face the particular challenges associated with a sunny climate and our love of the outdoors. Unfortunately, this has come with the price of significantly higher rates of melanoma cancer in Queensland than in other parts of Australia. The facts about melanoma are confronting. Australia has the highest incidence of melanoma in the world, at nearly four times that of

other countries such as Canada, the US and the UK. Last year, over 10,340 new cases were identified and over 1,450 people died from melanoma. Melanoma is also on the increase. Melanoma is the second fastest growing cancer in Australia and has almost doubled over the last two decades. In 2007, melanoma was the second most common cancer for men and the third most common cancer for women.

The facts of melanoma are unfortunately known to Queenslanders more than those living in any other state in Australia. Too many Queensland families are touched by melanoma each year. Although many consider it a disease affecting older people, melanoma is the most common form of cancer for people between 15 and 44 years of age.

The Queensland government has continued to focus and put resources behind the prevention of skin cancer. With sun exposure as a child being a major contributing factor to skin cancer, Queensland schools have sun-safe strategies for sun-safe uniforms and requirements for hats and sunscreens. This not only prevents exposure to the sun while at school but also educates young people about the need for sun protection. The Office of Workplace Health and Safety has rolled out skin cancer prevention advice for workplaces, particularly among outdoor workers. Child-care centres are required to have a sun-protection policy and the Queensland government has also introduced laws restricting the use of tanning solariums by people under the age of 18 and people with skin that is vulnerable to skin cancer.

Despite the overwhelming evidence of the importance of melanoma, melanoma has not received the attention from the public that some other types of cancers have received. That is not to say that those other types of cancers do not deserve the attention they currently receive, but programs to address melanoma need that same focus. The Queensland government has continued to focus on preventative regimes in response to melanoma. Unfortunately, the national agenda around melanoma has not been given the same focus by other Australian states. Melanoma needs to be given national priority based on the cold hard facts of occurrence. This is a national problem that deserves a national focus.

I thank Melanoma Patients Australia for its advocacy to build the focus on melanoma here in Australia. Not only is MPA working to provide information to Queensland Health's cancer strategic directions; it has begun working hard with our interstate and Commonwealth colleagues to get melanoma prevention response on the national agenda. In Queensland people diagnosed with melanoma get access to some of the nation's best oncologists, but those diagnosed with melanoma need more than medical treatment. They need social and psychological support as well. Melanoma Patients Australia provides that support with practical information gathered from people who have survived melanoma and peer support groups as well as basic, practical support that helps with everyday living. Melanoma Patients Australia has also, without government funding, rolled out the Danger Sun Overhead workshops, educating construction workers about the dangers of sun exposure. The program has proven to be amazingly successful at teaching some old dogs new tricks about sun safety. I think the personal story of Jo Crotty, whose husband, Rohan, died too young as a result of melanoma, is a story that could change the mind of even the most hardened construction worker.

Melanoma Patients Australia also provides a strong support for melanoma patients to make sure that the voice of those who live with melanoma is heard, both by the public and by those who are making decisions at a national level. MPA wants to shine a light on the priorities of cancer prevention and treatment across Australia. It is time for melanoma to have the focus it deserves, not just here in Queensland but across the country.

Interruption.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! I acknowledge in the chamber the Ambassador for Cuba, His Excellency Pedro Monzon.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Resumed.

Nanango Electorate

 **Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (11.42 am): I rise to speak about the battle-weary residents of the South Burnett and the Nanango electorate as a whole. As members would be aware, mining is a constant in the lives of the residents of the Nanango electorate and, as I said, some people are battle weary. That is not a term that I would use normally, other than in describing wartime. However, in the south-east Burnett, on the Downs and in the Toogoolawah/Esk valley people have been constantly subjected to the impacts of mining exploration. Since 1998 when I was elected to this place certain

individual properties have been constantly under threat from land acquisition proposals for dam sites and the like. In fact, on two occasions one group of families has had their land drilled in relation to laying the foundations of a dam. The same land has been drilled in relation to supplying water to the Tarong Power Station, which would mean a pipeline running through their properties. They have had the constant aggravation of trying to come to terms with that. The properties were also affected by the Powerlink easement. While we know these things have to happen, it is a constant barrage and people's lives are upset. There are more powerlines to come. In the past few years there was a proposal for a train line to supply coal to the Tarong Power Station. Then there was a gas pipeline and a salinity pipeline as well. There are exploration permits for coal and the council was wanting to put a rubbish tip on people's land. It was proposed that a jail be built there. The list goes on and on.

This is not about one family being affected by one project; for the past 13 years the same families have been affected over and over again. As I said before, they are battle weary. We have wind farms, we have uranium exploration proposed, we have bauxite exploration proposed, we have had Cougar Energy and the UCG project, Bowen Energy, Coal Face Resources, Coalbank Pty Ltd, Queensland Bauxite, Volcan Australia Corporation, Australian Bauxite Ltd, Hudson Resources and New Hope Coal in the Acland area. We know what happened to the town of Acland. The people are really tired of this constant barrage by mining companies and others seeking not only access to their land but also acquisition of their land and negotiating reasonable land prices. They are tired. We have CSG, the new god of mining, going on all around the district. I do not know how many people take note of Greens polling, but according to a recent poll two-thirds of Australians want a moratorium on coal seam gas mining until the impact on the environment is known. I can tell members that 100 per cent of people affected by CSG mining want it stopped. They see their land degrading. They are very upset.


Opposition members interjected.

Mrs PRATT: All people affected by CSG mining who have talked to me have said they do not want it on their land. They do not want it within a bull's roar of them. The truth is that the government does not know how the chemicals in the fracking process will affect the land. They do not yet understand fully the impact it will have on the watertables. The government does not know the impact on people's lives, because it is safe from it. So many people have come out against it. Clive Palmer has recently come out against CSG. He has said that a leading Chinese firm he had been talking to had raised issues with him about the Australian industry, saying extraction techniques they abandoned 20 years ago are still being used here. He said—

Coal seam gas technology currently used in Australia is lethal and will kill Australians, poison our water table and destroy the land.

This is serious stuff. We need to have a moratorium on it. More and more celebrities are coming out against it—people such as Alan Jones, Bob Irwin and others. Local groups are combining to become a united force against it, such as the Kingaroy Concerned Citizens Group and the Oakey Coal Action Alliance. The list goes on and on. People are concerned. This government needs to be concerned, because people's futures are in jeopardy.

Equal Pay Day

 **Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.47 am): Last Thursday was Equal Pay Day. I was invited to address the local Business and Professional Women—BPW—organisation on what the Australian Labor Party has done to address the gender pay gap. The LNP candidate was also invited and everyone was surprised when she focused her entire speech on herself. She refused to mention anything that her party has done to progress women's pay issues. Of course, she could not because history shows that the LNP has done nothing to help women get equal pay. Equal Pay Day is an initiative of the Equal Pay Alliance, launched in 2009 by BPW Australia and the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the ACTU. There are two factors that demonstrate the logic of this partnership. The first is that in 2005 Paul Miller found that the gender pay gap was greater among high-wage earners than it was among low-wage earners. The second is the undeniable achievements of the labour movement in their quest for equal pay for women.

In Australia the 1930s and the World War II years saw significant activity in the struggle for equal pay, led by two ALP women, Muriel Heagney and Jessie Street. The movement gained impetus through the 1937 Equal Pay Conference convened by the NSW Branch of the Federated Clerks Union, now the Australian Services Union, attended by delegates from 53 trade unions and women's organisations. The conference established the Council of Action for Equal Pay—CAEP—which was the first equal pay movement in Australia, initially headed by Muriel Heagney. With the onset of war, the Labor government established the Women's Employment Board, which Heagney and CAEP had hoped would give women replacing men men's wages. It achieved a higher percentage of the male wages than the 54 per cent standard set in 1912. However, higher wages were not continued when the men came home, but it did lead to an upward trend in women's wages to 75 per cent in 1950.

In the 1960s the women's movement in Australia showed a renewed vigour in the quest for equal pay. The ACTU ran two test cases on equal pay, both opposed by the Liberal and Country—now National—Party government of the time, the first of those in 1969. An observer of the case wrote that the case presented was not equal pay for equal work but for doing away with the differential in salaries, the claim being that the 25 per cent difference in salaries was discrimination on the grounds of sex. The equal pay decision came down. Everyone was shocked, for it had nothing to do with the case presented.


The arbitration commission's decision was to award equal pay for equal work, requiring the unions to prove their case in every instance, and only about 18 per cent of women benefited. The 1972 case was again opposed by the Liberal and Country—now National—Party government. In his campaign launch speech on 30 November 1972, Gough Whitlam declared that a Labor government would apply the principle of equal pay to our own employees and fully support the equal pay case before the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. The arbitration commission had rejected equal pay that year but, on taking power in December, the Labor government withdrew government opposition to equal pay. The Labor government almost doubled women's wages overnight. The decision handed down on 15 December established the principle of equal pay for equal work of equal value. In 1974 Whitlam's Labor government also supported the minimum wage case. The adult minimum wage was then extended to include full-time women workers.

Historically then, it has been the ALP that, through its members, the union movement and its actions in government, has promoted the right of women to receive equal pay. Significant legislation in the Hawke-Keating years included equal remuneration provisions. These were included in Queensland's Industrial Relations Act by the Beattie Labor government, and an inquiry into the impact of Work Choices on pay equity was held. It was found that the introduction of the Work Choices legislation's industrial relations regime in 2000 by the Howard Liberal-National government had the effect, whether intentional or not, of setting back the cause of pay equity. For the first time in 25 years the gender gap widened and, sadly, in New South Wales the newly elected Liberal government has reintroduced some of those draconian Work Choices measures and should be viewed by women as likely to once again set back the cause of pay equity.

The Fair Work Act passed by the Rudd Labor government in 2009 has eliminated, once again, inherent unfairness in our industrial relations framework. This year federal Labor introduced new workplace gender rules which included spot checks on businesses to assess fair pay and working conditions for female workers. The Queensland Labor government has implemented a number of strategies through Labor's Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland and the Office for Women to progress pay equity for Queensland women. A good example is the Office of Fair and Safe Work Queensland's work-life balance strategy, which aims to improve the uptake of work-life balance strategies. Our Office for Women's Women on Boards strategy works with the other offices to support women's leadership by aiming to increase the number of women appointed to Queensland government boards.

We are the party of reform and have ensured the promotion of women to high office for many years, unlike the LNP. Government is yet to find a way to entirely correct the problem of pay equity, but I promise you this: if a way is found, it will be found by a Labor government and not the LNP.

Suicide

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (11.52 am): In *Qweekend* of 30-31 October 2010 Matthew Condon wrote an article concerning a 50-year-old woman who took her own life on 22 June that year. Mr Condon commenced the article by referring to the fact that in the final minutes of her life the lady sent her daughter a text message which read, 'Come and collect my body down the back old house.' The article provides an insight into the woman's tortured life and that of her family, particularly her daughter, and the pain they went through. I recommend members of the House read the article as it clearly outlines the anguish suffered by those who are touched by suicide.

The issue of mental health and how it is resourced and dealt with in Queensland and, indeed, across the nation has been an ongoing problem for a lengthy period. The case of the lady I refer to sadly shows how we are failing to provide the network for patients and families of people who suffer from mental illness, sometimes leading to drastic consequences.

Some time ago I was handed a series of documents entitled 'Northside Health Service District Monthly Governance Reporting'. The documents were not given to me in relation to mental health issues. Rather, they also covered certain details with regard to the emergency departments at various hospitals. In all, I was provided with six such documents that covered the months of October and November 2008; March, May and August 2009; and January 2010. The documents contain a segment headed 'Sentinel Event/Root Cause Analysis' and a subsection titled 'Details of sentinel events reported for the month'. In four of the documents there is reference to a patient or a person known to a mental health service having committed or suspected of having committed suicide and each of those patients except one had a connection to the Prince Charles Hospital.

In October 2008 a 43-year-old female with a history of bipolar affective disorder was reported to have suicided by way of overdose and/or alcohol. She was a parent of two children and her 12-year-old son located his mother's body. The document refers to the patient as being 'well known to TPCCH Mental Health Service'. In March 2009 a male client overdosed on Endep 50 milligram tablets between 12 March 2009 and 30 March 2009. Documents reveal—

The patient was an inpatient of TPCCH Mental Health Service early March—suicidal ideation.


It should, however, be noted that the patient signed himself out of the unit after being seen by a psychiatrist and a psychiatric registrar.

In August 2009 there were two deaths reported. The first was a person who was being case managed by the Nundah clinic of the Prince Charles Hospital who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia. He committed suicide by throwing himself under a train. In the same report a long-term client of the Prince Charles Hospital District Mental Health Service, also diagnosed with schizophrenia, was found deceased in his own home by his mother and police. In January 2010 there was a single notation under 'Sentinel Event/Root Cause Analysis' of one event having occurred in relation to a client of a mental health service. No other details are provided.

In 2005-06 there were 81 suicides or unexpected deaths in respect of a patient of a mental health service or a person who had been in contact with a mental health service or emergency department in the seven days preceding their death. On 9 September the Gold Coast acute team care service review final report identified a number of concerns in the Gold Coast integrated mental health service.

I clearly understand that these deaths took place some time ago. However, I bring to the attention of the House the subject of suicide and the fact that we as a state do not discuss why people take this drastic step. We have in place programs for drink driving, domestic violence and other types of behaviour that take lives. It is now time for the debate to be had as to whether we should be discussing the 'why' of suicide. I refer to the 'why' and do not include the 'how' as that is fraught with danger. It is now time for us as a society to consider carefully the fact that suicide does occur, its impact and whether we need to understand at the public level why this does occur. It is a question for our community and a debate that must be had with the guidance of experts.

Thursday Island, Community Cabinet

 **Mr O'BRIEN** (Cook—ALP) (11.57 am): On 28 and 29 August state cabinet came to Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. It was a great pleasure to host them in my electorate. As usual, the open community forum on the Sunday afternoon was a passionate affair, with many people in the audience calling for greater autonomy for the region. I will come back to that point in a moment.

As you would hope or even expect, the Premier does not come to a place like TI without a couple of announcements up her sleeve, and she certainly did not disappoint. Some of the major announcements during cabinet's visit included the following items. The Premier announced major improvements to marine infrastructure in the Torres Strait. These improvements include an \$800,000 marine infrastructure improvement program for Horn Island and Thursday Island, tenders to be called soon for the new multimillion-dollar multiuse pontoon for Horn Island, work towards a safer landing on Prince of Wales Island and better access to the Seisia wharf in the northern peninsula area. This is on top of the \$300,000 already committed to refurbish the Seisia wharf this year. It brings the total commitment to over \$1 million, with more to come once design has been finalised on the Horn Island pontoon and the Prince of Wales landing. These jetties and wharves in the Torres Strait are absolutely critical because travel by boat is the main form of transport for people and freight.

Community police officers will be able to continue serving Torres Strait Islander communities following a \$2.6 million funding announcement while cabinet was on TI. The grant to the Torres Strait Island Regional Council would allow 38 community police officers to continue walking the beat for another 12 months on 14 islands across the area. Community police officers are employed by the council and play an important role in the smaller islands of the Torres Strait supporting sworn officers. They are often the first point of contact that many people in the community have with police and are the local face of the law.

The jobs of the 70 workers for the Torres Strait Island Regional Council were protected by the Premier and cabinet with the announcement of a \$5 million funding package. The Torres Strait Island Regional Council had recently expressed concern at its own financial position, and the funding boost will help the council towards a sustainable future. The package includes more than \$3 million to support 45 engineering jobs and \$2 million to support 25 administrative jobs in the council. The Torres Strait Island Regional Council let us know that they were having difficulty and were looking at job cuts. We have worked with them towards this \$5 million package as part of a transition process to help the council build a stronger financial position and keep people in jobs.

These funds will allow the council to employ an average of three engineering officers who will work with each of the 15 outer islands to make sure water and sewerage infrastructure is maintained and up to scratch. Eighteen administrative staff will also be employed to manage things like payroll, local purchasing, work scheduling and general office duties. A further seven employees will work in corporate services to help the council stay on top of things like internal audits.

The Queensland government will invest \$50,000 through the Torres Strait Island regional sustainable horticultural practices program to help communities in the Torres Strait region set up market gardens to grow their own fresh produce. The local sustainable horticultural program is working towards improving public health outcomes for local residents. This funding will assist community groups to produce locally grown fruit and vegetables and will cut costs while improving the quality of fresh fruit and vegetables as well. Due to the remoteness of the Torres Strait, transporting fresh produce to the region results in higher priced produce that can often be lacking in quality.


The Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund, supporting Indigenous art creation and artists' professional development in regional and remote Indigenous communities, also received a funding boost of \$250,000 while cabinet was in the Torres Strait. In addition to the announcements, the new \$10 million government building on Thursday Island was opened, as was the upgraded Horn Island airstrip. Cabinet also endorsed the Torres Strait regional plan. Ministers, the directors-general and parliamentary secretaries travelled out to the outer islands and to the northern peninsula area to ensure that people in the most remote parts of this great state could have their say to the upper echelons of government.

I want to put on the record my support for Torres Strait Islanders' quest for greater autonomy. Torres Strait Islanders are a proud and unique race of Australian people who want to look after their own affairs on their islands. They understand that there is a process and that it is not going to happen immediately. But they were very pleased with the reception that they received from the Premier, and they were very pleased that the Premier supported a way forward to achieve this long-held aspiration.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW (QUEENSLAND) BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.02 pm): I present a bill for an act providing for the adoption of a national law to regulate education and care services for children. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill [\[5220\]](#).

Tabled paper: Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill, explanatory notes [\[5221\]](#).

Improving access to high-quality early childhood education and care for Queensland children continues to be a central priority for the Bligh government. The research shows that increased access to such education and care services ensures that children benefit from a flying start to life and increases their chance of experiencing a successful life in the future. National and international research has found that experiences in the early years of life have long-term impacts on health, learning and behaviour.

The Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill 2011 provides for Queensland to be part of the national approach to the regulation, assessment and quality improvement of early childhood education and care services through the creation of a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. Development of the bill follows the Council of Australian Government's endorsement in December 2009 of the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care.

In accordance with the agreement, the national quality framework is envisaged to commence on 1 January 2012. It establishes a new nationally consistent set of quality standards for all kindergartens, long-day-care centres, family day care, outside school hours care and pre-prep services that all states and territories are committed to delivering. These account for approximately 95 per cent of licensed early childhood education and care services in Queensland.

A small number of education and care services will be excluded from the national quality framework. They include services currently licensed under the existing regulatory framework such as occasional care services, limited hours care services and Commonwealth budget based funded services, services which are regulated but not licensed—that is, stand-alone care—and unregulated care such as babysitters and nannies.

From 2012 the new early childhood education and care legislative framework will provide Queensland parents with early childhood education and care services which are consistent with their current choices of service—that is, from unregulated care to those partially regulated that must provide minimum safeguards for children to those which are fully regulated—that is, they must hold a provider approval and service approval under the national law or similar provider and service approvals under the state law.

Introduction of the national quality framework is being facilitated by a cooperative legislative model using an application of laws approach to confer the relevant administrative, quality assessment and review functions on state and territory agencies and officials. Victoria, as host jurisdiction, has developed the legislation in consultation with all jurisdictions, and the Victorian parliament passed its Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 on 5 October 2010. The Victorian act contains a schedule which sets out the education and care services national law, and it is this national law that the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Bill 2011 proposes to apply as state legislation.

National regulations prescribed under the national law are expected to be approved by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs in the near future. Under the national law, after regulations have been approved by the ministerial council, members of the council must arrange for the tabling of the national regulations in their respective houses of parliament. These regulations will provide further detail on the national quality standard, the assessment and rating system, staff to child ratios and fees associated with the national quality framework.

I now wish to highlight some of the significant features of the national quality framework. The framework integrates both regulatory and quality standards and streamlines the regulatory burden, as services covered will need to deal with only one level of government. This is a departure from the current system where most providers must deal with state and territory agencies for licensing purposes and with the Commonwealth for accreditation purposes.

The new national quality standards, which form part of the national quality framework, set a new ambitious benchmark to which all early childhood education and care services will aspire. From 2012 services will begin to be publicly rated on a five-point scale against the new national standards, providing parents and the community with more information about the quality of services and to assist in their educational and care choices for their child. This assessment and rating process is designed with continuous quality improvement in mind, encouraging service providers to strive for continuous improvement and to consider the quality and practices across an early childhood service.

The national law establishes the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority as the national authority responsible for guiding the consistent implementation and management of the national quality standards on behalf of all jurisdictions. It also provides that the ministerial council is responsible for monitoring the performance of the authority.

The legislation is to be administered in each jurisdiction by the regulatory authority of the jurisdiction. In Queensland this will be the Department of Education and Training. Regulatory authorities will administer the 'approval to operate' process—analogue to Queensland's existing licensing system—as well as assessing and rating services. The new legislation will be more outcomes focused than Queensland's current legislation, incorporating the assessment and ratings and licensing and compliance processes.

There will be a dual 'approval to operate' process, with regulatory authority approval being required for both the provider and the service. An approved provider will not be permitted to operate a service unless the service itself has also been granted approval. However, there will be no limit on the number of services that an approved provider can operate.

Although the national law requires an approved provider to apply for a service approval, it streamlines the process so that a person proposing to operate a service can apply for both approvals simultaneously—that is, they do not have to wait to be granted their provider approval before submitting their application for a service approval. Additionally, all existing licensees will be automatically approved to operate as approved providers under the national quality framework.

The granting of applications for new approved providers will be subject to the applicant meeting specified criteria, including a test of their suitability and any other matters relevant to their ability to operate an education and care service, such as whether they are bankrupt or insolvent. In Queensland, the stringent blue card process will continue to be considered by the regulatory authority as to whether or not a person is suitable to provide child related services.

Once granted, a provider approval and a service approval will be ongoing—that is, there will be no need for it to be renewed—unless relinquished by the holder of the approval or revoked by the regulatory authority. Additionally, the granting of approved provider status will be recognised in all other jurisdictions, thus eliminating the need for providers to obtain separate approval from each jurisdiction in which they intend to operate. Providers will be required to ensure that, for each service they operate, there is a person, the nominated supervisor, who will have the primary management and control of the service in the absence of the provider. This person must hold a supervisor certificate that has been granted by a regulatory authority.

The national law will enable approved providers to apply for a waiver to permit a service to operate without meeting a particular requirement under the staffing arrangements or the physical environment standards of the national quality standard and the associated requirements under the regulation. The waiver process is designed to assist providers who are either temporarily or permanently unable to meet these requirements—for instance, during building renovations or where a staff member may be temporarily unavailable due to accident or illness or where services in very remote areas are unable to comply with particular requirements.

Where a waiver is in place, the approved provider cannot be prosecuted for an offence directly related to meeting the relevant element of the standards. Before granting a waiver, the regulatory authority will be required to consider whether the circumstances justify this and whether the service is able to satisfy the objectives of the relevant requirements by an alternative means to ensure that children's health, safety and wellbeing are not jeopardised.


A key element of the new legislative approach will be the introduction of an assessment and ratings process. Regulatory authorities will be required to assess services against the quality rating system and against seven quality areas, the details of which will be prescribed in the national regulations. The regulatory authorities will be responsible for the majority of the assessments and ratings process which each service is required to participate in.

The only part of the assessment and ratings process which will not be conducted by the regulatory authorities will be where a service aspires to the highest rating—the excellent rating. In this case, the provider must make application to the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, which will be responsible for assessing and rating a service as excellent. The introduction of a transparent ratings system will give parents access to information about the quality of services so they can make more informed choices about the services their children attend.

Some concerns have been expressed about potential cost impacts that the national law may have on services and families. In 2009 and 2010 Queensland negotiated some flexibility to ensure that the right balance was achieved in the national law between increased quality and affordability for parents, including delaying staff-to-child ratio improvements until 2016, allowing existing services to continue to use staff rest-break and rest-pause arrangements until 2020, and allowing services licensed prior to 2011 to continue to use a ratio of one to five for children aged 15 to 35 months until 2018. The bulk of the cost impact to Queensland services is anticipated to occur in 2014 and 2016, when early childhood teachers will be required in all long-day care and kindergarten services and when improved educator-to-child ratios commence.

The bill also retains certain provisions from the current regulatory framework, for instance, provisions to allow the Department of Education and Training to continue to share information with the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian to ensure the utmost is done to protect the safety of Queensland children. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.13 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee.

PROTECTING PRIMARY PRODUCTION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies) (12.14 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966, the Agricultural Standards Act 1994, the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002, the Plant Protection Act 1989, the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Protecting Primary Production Amendment Bill [\[5222\]](#).

Tabled paper: Protecting Primary Production Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[5223\]](#).

This bill will amend six acts within my portfolio jurisdiction as Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies. These amendments are all suitable for an omnibus or miscellaneous amendment bill as addressing them in the one bill represents a better use of parliamentary time than having the individual acts amended separately. These amendments will ensure the effective administration and operation of the respective acts and implement the outcomes of legislative reviews and national proposed arrangements.

The amendments to the Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Act 1966 will give effect to a previous government decision in response to the Webbe-Weller review of government bodies to abolish the redundant Agricultural Chemicals Distribution Control Board and to transfer the relevant functions from the board to the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, where they will in future be administered by Biosecurity Queensland.

The amendments to the Agricultural Standards Act 1994 will address a gap identified in the act provisions which, in line with other jurisdictions, implement the national ruminant feed ban. This prohibits the feeding of restricted animal material to ruminants to prevent the spread of transmissible diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease. The amendments are necessary to ensure inspectors have adequate entry powers for the routine testing of stock feed.

The amendments to the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002 are very straightforward. They will simply replace the current act requirement for separate strategies with a single state pest management strategy for plants and animals.

The single amendment to the Plant Protection Act 1989 will clarify that land and vehicle owners and persons engaged by landowners to work on the land are obliged to notify an inspector within 24 hours of a notifiable pest once they are aware or ought reasonably to have been aware of the existence of the pest.

The amendments to the Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994 give effect to the government's response to a review of the act, the report of which was tabled in parliament last September. This is the act under which QRAA operates. Section 45 of the act contains a review clause that was activated in 2009 when I commissioned a review to be undertaken. There was active participation in the review by QRAA and appropriate stakeholder consultation. Although the review raised no issues about QRAA's performance, the review considered other issues such as the scope of the act and its adequacy in terms of QRAA's functions, powers, governance and administration.

Overall, the review did not identify any significant deficiencies in the act. The recommendations from the review primarily seek to enhance QRAA's operational efficiency by facilitating the administration of interstate schemes by QRAA, streamlining the appointment of and delegation of powers by the QRAA chief executive officer and clarifying the requirements for future review of the act. In regard to the last mentioned item, the intention is that this important act will be reviewed at least once every 10 years.

The amendments to the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 are interim amendments, pending a full review and rewrite of the act which is proposed over the next 12 to 18 months. There are two principal matters being addressed by the present amendments to this act.

Firstly, amendments are being made to meet a commitment by Queensland to legislate for participation in the National Recognition of Veterinary Registration scheme, or NRVR as it is usually called. The agreement of all states and territories to participate in the national registration scheme was achieved via the Primary Industries Ministerial Council. The other jurisdictions are all progressing—and, in Victoria's case, have enacted—the necessary facilitating legislation.

The NRVR scheme will allow Queensland-resident veterinary surgeons with registration in this state to also practise 'as of right' interstate without having to go through a separate registration process in another state or territory, as the veterinary surgeon will be automatically 'deemed' to be registered in all other jurisdictions in Australia. That means that a veterinary surgeon residing and practising in the home jurisdiction will only have to pay the one registration fee for the home jurisdiction which will bestow practising rights in all other jurisdictions. This national system of registration also applies to the registration of veterinary specialists.

There will also be no need to formally apply for registration in each other jurisdiction, because once a veterinary surgeon registers in the home jurisdiction that registration will be automatically mirrored in each other jurisdiction, including any special conditions or limitations attached to that home registration. Furthermore, if a veterinary surgeon's registration is suspended or cancelled by the registration board in the home jurisdiction, that action will automatically affect the registration status in each other jurisdiction. That is because what is called 'deemed' registration exactly mirrors the original or home registration. In effect, the NRVR arrangements will facilitate national recognition of both veterinary competence and veterinary incompetence. This amendment will not only benefit veterinarians by allowing them to seamlessly practise nationally, but it will also benefit animal owners as tighter national registration of veterinarians will exist.


Secondly, the opportunity is to be taken to deal with another matter that will significantly improve the ability to contact veterinarians during a biosecurity emergency. It is proposed to add as a condition of registration of veterinary surgeons in Queensland that the registrant provide a range of contact details which will allow contact at all times, including outside normal working hours—for example, mobile phone numbers and email addresses—and that Biosecurity Queensland be authorised to access this information for use in biosecurity responses. At present, guaranteed and timely access to contact details for all registered veterinarians held by the Veterinary Surgeons Board is not possible as the act does not mandate the collection of a complete record of contact details, including for out of hours. Currently, the only guaranteed available information is a postal address, which is not suitable for providing urgent information to this key group of professionals. Although Biosecurity Queensland uses a range of measures to get important information out, including through the Australian Veterinary Association and the internet, there is no reliable source of contact information to ensure that all veterinarians can be reached in an appropriate time frame for critical biosecurity incidents.

Criticism has been levelled at Biosecurity Queensland for failing to quickly alert and inform veterinary surgeons during one of the Hendra virus episodes. This clearly demonstrates that the inability to access emergency contact details for veterinarians is a significant gap in the state's emergency response capability. The proposed amendments will provide the degree of certainty necessary for Biosecurity Queensland to be able to access information to enable effective communication about biosecurity incidents with veterinarians across the state.

However, access to the additional contact details required to be supplied to the registrar of the Veterinary Surgeons Board by veterinary surgeons will be strictly limited. Access will be available only to the department's chief executive officer for the express purposes specified in the act—that is to say, to distribute key information to facilitate management of biosecurity events. The additional contact details will not be displayed on any publicly accessible registry maintained by the board, nor will it be publicly accessible via any Biosecurity Queensland website.

The Agricultural Standards Act, the Plant Protection Act and the pest management parts of the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act will in due course be incorporated into the new Biosecurity Bill, the exposure draft of which closed for public consultation on Friday, 2 September. These acts will then be repealed, along with several other existing biosecurity laws. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies) (12.25 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (12.25 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for protection of a person against violence committed or threatened by someone else if a relevant relationship exists between the persons, and to make amendments of the Criminal Code, the Evidence Act 1977, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Regulation 2000 for particular purposes, and to make minor or consequential amendments of this act and other legislation as stated in a schedule. I table the bill and explanatory notes and I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill [\[5224\]](#).

Tabled paper: Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill, explanatory notes [\[5225\]](#).

I am very pleased to rise today to introduce into the House a bill which comprehensively strengthens and modernises Queensland's 20-year-old domestic and family violence laws. Every woman, man and child has the right to live free from violence and abuse. While it is recognised that anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence, the facts show it is most often committed by men against women and children. In 2009-10, the Queensland Police Service recorded 49,372

domestic and family violence occurrences, an increase of 11.5 per cent on the previous year, and laid 8,033 charges for breach of a domestic violence order. The courts received 22,754 applications for domestic violence orders, an increase of eight per cent on the previous year.

People, predominantly women and children, die as a result of domestic and family violence. They suffer significant physical and emotional trauma, work and educational opportunities are affected, lives are disrupted and many victims of this type of violence become homeless.

The new Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011, which reflects contemporary understanding of domestic violence, is now ready for parliament's consideration. We consulted extensively with the domestic and family violence sector and the broader community in developing these reforms. These people work hard to support victims of domestic violence. I commend their work and constructive input into this bill. I also commend the dedication of my Department of Communities staff in the development of this bill.

Stakeholders provided substantial feedback during the three phases of consultation undertaken during the review process. The suggestions provided by the domestic and family violence sector, the police, the legal sector and the community, including those directly affected by domestic violence, have largely been consistent and provided a clear direction for reform. Queenslanders clearly told the government that, while they supported the current laws, they wanted to see them strengthened to provide greater safety for victims of domestic and family violence. They also wanted to see perpetrators of violence held more accountable for their behaviour. The bill's key focus is to maximise the safety and protection of victims and see perpetrators of violence held more accountable.

The bill includes a wider definition of violence; provides for immediate protection to victims; allows the police to detain a perpetrator for up to eight hours; provides greater guidance to identify the person most in need of protection; provides greater guidance on the impact of domestic violence on children; provides greater guidance on the use of ouster conditions to keep victims safe; and increases the maximum penalty available when a domestic violence order is breached to three years imprisonment. The bill represents a contemporary civil response to domestic and family violence and includes several major areas of reform which I would like to outline for members.

Preamble, purpose and principles

The bill includes a preamble which provides the opportunity for us, as the Queensland parliament, to make a clear statement that domestic and family violence is not acceptable in Queensland communities. The preamble also enables us as the parliament to recognise domestic and family violence in the context of relevant international obligations, contemporary social values and human rights. The preamble identifies some of the features and impacts of domestic and family violence and recognises civil responses should operate with, not instead of, the criminal law.

The bill also contains an expanded purpose which outlines the aims of the bill. These are to prevent or reduce domestic violence, maximise the safety and protection of victims, minimise the disruption to the lives of victims and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. I am also pleased to announce the inclusion of principles in the bill. These will provide guidance to those involved in interpreting and administering the legislation, including police, courts, lawyers and members of the community. The overarching principle for administering this legislation is that the safety, protection and wellbeing of people who fear or experience domestic violence, including children, are paramount. This principle is to influence every decision made and every action taken under the new law. The preamble and principles provide an overarching framework for the operation of the legislation and will promote a consistent approach to the interpretation of this new law.

Definition of domestic violence

A significant area of reform is the definition of domestic violence contained in the bill. The definition of domestic violence has significant implications for how this type of violence is identified and treated by police, the courts, support services and the community. To enable effective responses to domestic and family violence in Queensland, the bill includes a wider and more contemporary definition of domestic violence. A contemporary understanding of domestic violence refers to a person being subjected to an ongoing pattern of abusive behaviour by an intimate partner or family member. This behaviour is motivated by a desire to dominate, control and oppress and to cause fear. Although any act of aggression in a relationship is unacceptable, domestic violence refers to this particular type of abuse. It is this type of abuse that is the focus of the bill.

The definition of domestic violence included in the bill is wider than the definition in the current domestic violence laws. It includes behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive; emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive; threatening or coercive; or behaviour that in any other way controls or dominates another person causing fear. By including this wider definition, the breadth of behaviours used to control and dominate in a relationship characterised by domestic violence will be captured. This means that police, magistrates, lawyers and members of the public will be more readily able to identify situations where domestic violence has occurred. This change is consistent with the

views expressed during consultation and with the recommendations made by the Australian Law Reform Commission in its report *Family violence—a national legal response* released in November 2010.

Police functions and powers

Another significant area of reform relates to police powers. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great work of the Queensland Police Service in responding to domestic and family violence. Queensland police officers are often the first to respond to domestic and family violence. The circumstances are often difficult as victims of domestic violence are usually traumatised at the time police attend. They are frightened and confused by the abuse they have experienced, possibly over a period of months or years. Over the past 20 years police responses have developed significantly. Training, operational procedures and resources have been developed to assist police officers as they respond to incidents of domestic and family violence. These are regularly reviewed and modified to enable police to provide effective responses.

In developing the bill, it was important to include measures to support police in their vital role of providing for the safety of people affected by domestic and family violence and responding to those who perpetrate violence. The bill includes a number of provisions that extend police powers in relation to domestic and family violence. These powers support the aim of increasing the safety of victims of domestic and family violence and holding the perpetrators of violence accountable. Firstly, police will be able to issue police protection notices that provide for the immediate protection of victims of domestic and family violence. The conditions placed on a notice will direct a respondent to be of good behaviour towards the aggrieved and not commit domestic violence. A cool-down condition may also be imposed to exclude perpetrators from their homes for up to 24 hours. A notice will act as an application to the court and will provide short-term protection until the matter is considered by the court. Police protection notices will be particularly effective in remote and regional areas where the courts do not sit as regularly.

Secondly, the grounds on which police can detain perpetrators of domestic violence will be expanded to include situations where the perpetrator's aggressive behaviour presents a continuing danger or the perpetrator is too intoxicated to understand release conditions, compromising the victim's safety. Police can hold a perpetrator for up to eight hours. Detention powers are subject to strict requirements and include obligations on police to record certain particulars about the detention. The ability for police to detain a respondent in custody for more than four hours was suggested by many stakeholders during consultation. The implementation of this suggestion will increase the safety of victims of domestic and family violence at a time when they can be extremely volatile. I seek leave of the House to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Thirdly, police will have the power to issue a direction to respondents to remain at a place to enable the service of a domestic violence application or order. The requirement will be for the respondent to remain at a place for a reasonable period of time during which the police officer can serve the respondent or make arrangements to advise the respondent of the conditions of the order.

This will improve the safety of victims of domestic violence as there will be additional opportunities for police to serve respondents who have been difficult to locate, or may be actively evading service. Once service requirements have been met orders can be enforced.

These reforms are in line with the Bligh Government's aims of ensuring increased safety for victims of domestic violence and greater accountability for perpetrators. While it is our priority to meet these objectives, we have also been mindful to ensure that sufficient checks and balances are placed on the exercise of those powers by police.

Across these new mechanisms to enhance policing of domestic and family violence, some of the safeguards that will operate include particular circumstances being met for the issue of a notice, detention or direction to remain and requirements to explain notices or directions to respondents. In addition, judicial scrutiny of notices will occur and, except where a respondent is detained because of intoxication, a Magistrate must approve an application to extend detention past four hours. A number of other safeguards have also been included in the Bill.

I am confident that in this Bill we have struck the correct balance between protecting victims of domestic violence and upholding the rights and liberties of individuals.

Cross-applications and cross-orders

The Bill's objective is to ensure that victims of domestic and family violence are provided with protection against future acts of domestic violence. One of the issues I have been particularly interested in addressing in the Bill is the concerning number of cross-applications that come before the court under the current legislation. This is where each party to a matter alleges domestic violence against the other.

During consultation, stakeholders reported a disproportionate number of cross-applications and expressed the concern that in many instances domestic violence orders are made against both people involved.

This is inconsistent with an understanding of domestic violence that comprises one person being subjected to an ongoing pattern of abuse by another person who is motivated by the desire to dominate and control them. It is not reasonable to accept, except in exceptional circumstances, that both people in a relationship can be a victim and perpetrator of this type of violence.

For example, violence used in self-defence and to protect children can be misconstrued as domestic violence if a broader view of the circumstances is not taken.

It is disturbing that legislation with the purpose of providing for the safety of victims of domestic violence appears to be used, in some instances, to further victimise vulnerable Queenslanders. Often in these circumstances, victims of violence consent to orders against them to avoid further court appearances or the prospect of a hearing which will require them to give evidence before the court. This is contrary to the purpose of the laws and does not provide a fair outcome to victims.

As a result of this feedback, the Bligh Government is refocusing the law to ensure that the person most in need of protection is identified.

This will be achieved by including guidance in the principles for administering the Act. As mentioned earlier, the Bill provides for an overarching principle that the safety, protection and wellbeing of people who fear or experience domestic violence is paramount. One of the five principles that sit under the priority principle is that, where there are conflicting accounts of domestic violence or indications that both people in a relationship are committing acts of violence, including for their self-protection, the person who is most in need of protection should be identified.

A further measure to reduce the number of cross-applications is included in the provisions relating to the making of police protection notices. The Bill does not permit cross-notices being issued. It is likely that this provision will reduce the number of cross-orders that are ultimately made.

To support the objective of focusing on the person in need of protection, the Queensland Police Service is working to introduce complementary processes and practices. An investigative and risk assessment framework is being developed under which a number of issues will be considered. Some of these include risk factors, observations and whether violence has escalated.

These reforms are in line with the Bligh Government's vision for a fairer and safer Queensland.

Perpetrator accountability

The consultation sought feedback about perpetrator accountability and posed specific questions in relation to ouster conditions, behaviour change programs and breaches of domestic violence orders. As was expected, a majority of the submissions received were from people who strongly support the introduction of measures to increase the accountability of perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

I am pleased to announce reform across the three areas considered during the consultation process. These reforms will work in conjunction with those I have already outlined, including the focus of the legislation being clearly directed toward the person in need of protection and the new police powers which also support increased accountability for perpetrators of violence.

Ouster condition

The Bill includes greater guidance for the court when considering whether to make ouster conditions. The court will also be required to provide reasons if it does not impose an ouster condition when it is sought.

Ouster conditions prevent a respondent from remaining at, entering or attempting to enter certain premises. This may include premises where the respondent and the aggrieved live or lived together, or where the aggrieved or a named person lives, works or frequently goes. The ouster condition can also apply to premises in which the respondent has a legal interest, such as as a property owner or tenant.

Exposure to, or fear of, domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness. It is easier to find accommodation for a single person than for a mother and children. The Bill increases the clarity about the considerations for the court in order to ensure that ouster conditions are made safely, to protect victims of violence.

The other important feature of ouster provisions is that disruption is minimised for the victim of violence. This extends further than living arrangements and includes people's social and community connections. Maintaining connections and supports can be critical to the ability of victims of violence, including children, to recover after the experience of living with, or being exposed to, domestic violence.

Intervention order

The Bill also provides for an order to be made requiring a respondent to attend an approved intervention program or counselling. The current Act provides a broad power for courts to impose conditions that the court considers necessary and desirable in the interests of the aggrieved, any named person and the respondent. It is not clear whether this power extends to ordering a respondent to attend a program or counselling.

The Bill provides a clear power for the court to make an order requiring a respondent to attend an approved intervention program or counselling.

Penalty for breach of a domestic violence order

A further measure included in the Bill to increase the accountability of perpetrators of domestic and family violence is an increase in the maximum penalty available where a domestic violence order is breached. The maximum penalty will increase to three years imprisonment. This is the longest prison term that a Magistrates Court can impose.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the domestic and family violence sector and thank them for their commitment and passion in their tireless efforts to assist people affected by domestic and family violence. Queensland is very fortunate to have such a dedicated sector. I am sure they will welcome the reform being introduced as they have advocated for many of the provisions that have been incorporated in the new legislation.

I am heartened by the knowledge that the sector will continue their valuable work in supporting and assisting people affected by domestic and family violence.

This Bill aligns with the Bligh Government's vision for a fair and safe Queensland.

I thank Departmental staff, staff of the other agencies, Police and community service providers. This Bill is the culmination of their dedicated work.

It is the Bligh Government's goal to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic and family violence in Queensland communities. I am confident that this new legislation, with the extensive support systems funded in Queensland, will achieve this goal.

I commend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011 to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (12.35 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

ONE FUNDING SYSTEM FOR BETTER SERVICES BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Community Affairs Committee

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (12.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for funding by departments to non-government entities and local governments and to repeal the Community Services Act 2007 and the Family Services Act 1987 and to make minor and consequential amendments to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984, the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Casino Control Act 1982, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Duties Act 2001, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Forestry Act 1959, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Housing Act 2003, the Liquor Act 1992, the Marine Parks Act 2004, the Maritime Safety Queensland Act 2002, the Police Service Administration Act 1990, the Public Service Act 2008, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Community Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: One Funding System for Better Services Bill [\[5226\]](#).

Tabled paper: One Funding System for Better Services Bill, explanatory notes [\[5227\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce a bill for an act to establish a single, streamlined set of laws for Queensland government funding provided to non-government and local government entities. The bill delivers on three key objectives: it will provide, for the first time, consistent legal powers for safeguarding the delivery of crucial products and services that are delivered with funding provided by the Queensland government and for ensuring the proper use of these public funds; it will simplify existing funding laws and reduce red tape for entities that are currently funded under multiple acts; and it will help to improve the transparency of government's funding decisions.

Queensland government funding programs are significant for two major reasons. Firstly, they involve a large investment of public funds. In 2010-11 government funding to non-profit entities alone totalled \$1.8 billion. This does not include investments in other types of entities such as for-profit organisations and local governments or the funding provided in other forms. Secondly, many Queenslanders rely on the products and services that government funded entities deliver, including education programs, employment and industry initiatives, family support and critical services for vulnerable people.

In presenting this legislation, the Queensland government is recognising the importance of working together with the not-for-profit, business and local government sectors. The bill recognises that government's funding practices should be open and transparent. It recognises the diversity and autonomy of funded organisations and the importance of cooperative funding relationships. I also want to note that the bill's principles are consistent with the goals and principles of the 2008 Queensland Compact. The compact was developed in 2008 to guide the relationship between the community services sector and the Queensland government.

Quite rightly, Queenslanders expect public funds to be used in a proper and accountable way. In the vast majority of cases, funded entities use government funding in good faith to provide the best possible products and services for Queenslanders. However, from time to time serious concerns arise. For example, an entity may fail to provide key products or services, there may be a risk of harm to vulnerable clients or misuse of funds. Although rare, these situations have serious consequences. In such situations funding legislation provides additional options for safeguarding the use of funds where an agreement or contract is not effective in doing so or where an entity can no longer comply with its agreement.

Existing funding legislation for housing, disability and community services has provided effective legal powers for my department and the departments of other ministers to take action where necessary to safeguard products and services and ensure the proper use of funding. The protections offered by current funding legislation are not always available. Some departments and funding programs have access to legislative safeguards and some do not. Not all funding is afforded the same level of protection. To ensure consistency, the bill will apply to all Queensland government funding unless it is specifically exempted. This ensures that any government department can take strong and decisive action if funding is improperly used and, at the same time, move to protect the interests of Queenslanders who benefit from the delivery of funded products and services.

However, government needs to use legal powers responsibly and only where they are necessary and justified. The bill's powers are only available in the most serious of circumstances where there is actual or serious risk of failure to deliver funded products and services, harm to a person resulting from a funded entity's act or omission in delivering a funded product or service, or improper use of funding. In these cases, the bill will enable departments to take a variety of remedial and investigative actions such

as issue a compliance notice that requires the entity to fix the problem, appoint an interim manager to ensure that the products or services continue to be delivered in a safe and accountable way, recover misspent or unspent funds as a debt, and enable suitably qualified authorised officers to investigate a suspected serious concern.

The bill further protects the rights of funded entities by providing for reviews and appeals for key decisions. Entities can apply for a review to the relevant government department and, if the matter is not resolved, an external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. It also ensures that personal information gained through exercising a power under the legislation is confidential.

Importantly, the bill recognises that in the majority of cases serious concerns can be managed and resolved cooperatively or through the terms of an agreement. This is government's preferred approach and is supported under this legislation. The bill expressly states that a cooperative approach must be considered before a power is exercised. In addition, it recognises that the powers provided by funding legislation are not necessary or appropriate for all types of funding and appropriate exemptions are provided. For example, the bill will not apply to rebates or sponsorships, nor will it apply to funding provided directly to a person to enable them to obtain, rather than provide, a particular product or service—for instance, disaster relief payments. The bill will not apply to the Queensland Government Agent Program—QGAP—which pays and supports entities to act as agents for the Queensland government in small and remote communities, for example, by processing transactions and providing access to information. The bill will also not apply to funding provided to businesses for specific incentive or economic development purposes, for example, to encourage industries to develop or implement climate-friendly manufacturing practices.

At a time when the community sector is facing rising staff costs, I am pleased to be bringing to parliament a bill that will reduce red tape for this sector and free up resources for direct service delivery. In my portfolio and that of my colleague Minister Pitt it is estimated that streamlining and simplifying existing laws will contribute approximately \$3.5 million towards the savings target of \$150 million set under the Queensland Regulatory Simplification Plan 2009-13. Given the cost pressures that not-for-profit entities are currently facing, this will be a very welcome outcome. Currently, funding laws are contained in multiple acts. This creates complex regulation that generates red tape for entities funded under more than one act. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Many entities receive funding or other assistance under more than one Act. The different requirements of the Acts impose extra compliance and administrative costs on funded entities and divert valuable resources from the delivery of products and services. The Bill will remove some requirements from these Acts that are no longer necessary. These amendments will work hand in hand with amendments to the Disability Services Regulation 2006 and the Housing Regulation 2003 to remove existing requirements and deliver significant red tape reduction for organisations funded under these Acts.

The Bill has been designed to apply to government funding arrangements currently delivered under 17 separate Acts—including, for example, the Casino Control Act 1982, the Corrective Services Act 2006 and the Marine Parks Act 2004. Other provisions in these Acts will not be affected. Two Acts—the Family Services Act 1987 and the Community Services Act 2007—will be repealed entirely.

I would also like to assure the House that the Bill will not add an administrative burden for entities not currently funded under legislation. It defines the circumstances when legislative powers may be used rather than prescribing requirements that funded entities must meet, and aligns funding processes to current funding practices.

Transparency

Targeted communication and consultation on a draft Bill was conducted with funded entities across government earlier this year. Some departments held face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders, while others provided information via letters, emails or their regular networks. Three face-to-face meetings were held—with representatives of the human services sector, health services sector, and local governments. I am pleased to advise the House that sector participants supported the Bill. My thanks go to all those who contributed—for sharing their insights and experience, and for their invaluable assistance in shaping the Bill.

During consultation, stakeholders highlighted the need for government to be transparent in its funding practices; funding arrangements needed to be flexible and tailored to the requirements of the product or service.

To increase transparency across government, the Bill sets two minimum requirements for the funding process—that there must be a written application and a written agreement for the funding. These measures ensure that funding processes are open and documented and that the terms and conditions for funding are clear. These requirements are consistent with funding practices already used by many departments—and flexibility is preserved by not specifying a particular format for these documents.


Conclusion

I believe the Bill strikes a good balance between providing strong and consistent safeguards, delivering red tape reduction and ensuring the necessary flexibility and transparency of practice.

I am confident that the One Funding for Better Services Bill provides a strong, up-to-date legal foundation for our government's current and future funding practices and arrangements. It will add consistency and rigour to the provision of government funding, and strengthen public confidence in government-funded products and services.

I commend the Bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algerier—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (12.44 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Community Affairs Committee.

MAJOR SPORTS FACILITIES AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (12.45 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a second time.

I note that the portfolio committee has provided its report on the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. I would like to thank the committee for its quick response to the bill and hereby table my response to the aspects highlighted in the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 2—Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011—Government response [\[5228\]](#).

I will be responding to the committee's report in more detail during my reply speech. At this stage I would like to point out the committee's recommendation that the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. As I outlined to the House in my introductory speech, there is an urgency associated with the legislation because of the unprecedented success of Queensland based football clubs this year. This year's State of Origin win in front of a home crowd and the premiership wins of both the Brisbane Roar and the Queensland Reds, as well as the upcoming Broncos home finals, are testament to the great success the teams have had which further entrench Queensland as the champions state and the events state.

With the successful rugby league event staged at Suncorp Stadium last Sunday to farewell Darren Lockyer, we have now reached No. 23 of the cap of 24 for events over 25,000 for 2011. In fact, if 454 more people had arrived at the Socceros game on Friday night—and I note the member for Gympie was there—it would have reached the cap of 24 out of 24. We will now reach the 24-event cap this weekend when the Broncos play—and beat—the Warriors at the home semifinal. If the Broncos come out on top—I should say when the Broncos come out on top—Brisbane will be eligible for a home final and a further chance for the Queensland community to celebrate its sporting success and say goodbye to Darren Lockyer again. To allow for this possibility, it is essential that this legislation's amendments be in place to cater for the likely crowd numbers. I believe that it is very appropriate that the first bill that will be debated since the introduction of the new committee process is this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (12.47 pm): I rise to speak to the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill and also note that this is the first bill to be referred to a committee and then reported back to the House. For the benefit of the House, can I highlight that perhaps we need a mechanism whereby the minister's report can be given to the shadow in advance so that there is an opportunity to address it.

Mr Reeves: I have tabled it.

Mr GIBSON: I have asked for a copy and I will address some of the points as I come to them. I take this opportunity to congratulate Queensland football teams on their outstanding success this year. It started in February when the Brisbane Roar won the A-League championships by beating the Central Coast Mariners. The score was 4-2. This win was a huge boost to the round-ball game in Queensland and I am sure their success will continue into next season. We have also seen Mal Meninga's Queensland Maroons do incredibly well in the State of Origin with a record sixth-straight win. There is no doubt that that is something that will continue. It does not stop there. It continues on with the Queensland Reds, who won the Super 15 final in a great game against the Crusaders with a score of 18-13. We now have the situation with the Broncos, as the minister has just highlighted, where we expect them to go on to great things for the remainder of this year's season and, indeed, to play two more games. That brings us to the very issue of this bill and how important it is.

Suncorp Stadium has now been utilised by so many different codes in both national and international games. We have had the Bledisloe Cup, the Tri Nations and the Socceroos qualifier. So many sporting events are now coming to this great stadium. Let us put very clearly on the record that Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium is a great asset for the people of Queensland. It was a world-class facility when it was built. Comments at the time of its opening highlighted the strength of the stadium in its design. At Suncorp Stadium even the worst seat in the house is a great seat.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr GIBSON: As a result, in my view it is one of the best football stadiums in Australia and I think it is one of the best in the world.

A government member: They all bagged it.

A government member: You hate Suncorp Stadium.

Mr GIBSON: I note the ramblings of those opposite who do not support Suncorp Stadium or the teams who play there. I note that. However, unlike those opposite, we will continue to support sport in Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Member for Gympie, if you want the protection of the chair it would pay you not to bait those opposite you. You have the call.

Mr GIBSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Recently I met with the designers of Suncorp Stadium, Populous, which is an international architecture firm with its Asia base here in Queensland. Quite rightly, they are still proud of their work in designing Suncorp Stadium. There is very little to rival the atmosphere of a sold-out Suncorp Stadium football match. It is where Queenslanders go to support their teams across so many codes and they often do. Many of us live our sport and we ride the highs and lows of Queensland sporting heroes as they battle it out on the field. There is no better place to battle it out than Suncorp Stadium.

Certainly, the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill has not been made necessary because of any design flaw in Suncorp Stadium. Let us be frank: the design of Suncorp Stadium has resulted in a superior experience for the public, but they do not come to the stadium just to see the stadium; they come to watch their teams play. The success of Queensland teams across various codes over the past year has resulted in the requirement for this bill. It is because Suncorp Stadium is such a good venue coupled with the important fact that our teams have performed so outstandingly that we have seen crowd numbers grow. The stadium is now reaching the capacity that it was designed for. This amendment is necessary because of the legislative and regulatory framework placed around Suncorp Stadium when it was built.

However, I must note that the bill is being rushed into this parliament because of this government's failure to properly plan and manage resources. For example, available quite freely on the Suncorp Stadium's website are the crowd attendance figures. It is clear that from 2009 to 2011 there has been an increase in crowd attendance. In 2009, 16 games had a crowd attendance of over 25,000. In that year it was well below the cap. In 2010, as our various teams continued to improve and as the community got behind them and supported them, we saw 20 games with an attendance of over 25,000. Did that set off any alarm bells for this government when preparing for or addressing the issue of the growing numbers? It is clear that it did not, because in 2011, with 23 games to date with an attendance of 25,000 and interestingly three games with crowd numbers over 24,500, once again this government is scrambling and playing catch-up.

This bill shows us that the government is as incompetent at managing a stadium as it is at managing our health system and other areas of concern within the state. The government has failed to be even vaguely aware of what has been happening. As a community we have become so hardened by Labor's failures and its inability to properly plan that mediocrity has become the phrase for Labor. Mediocrity is so prevalent under this government that as a community we almost become ready to embrace its half-baked measures. Let us ask this question: which government would build a hospital but then turn patients away because of a cap? Which government builds a school and refuses enrolments?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gympie, you will refer your comments to the bill that is currently before the House. It is very narrow in scope and you will come back to it or you will be sat down.

Mr GIBSON: Which government builds a stadium, but then threatens to turn the public away because of a cap that it has put on? The answer is simple: this Labor government. This Labor government has failed to address these issues. This bill is a missed opportunity to address community concerns regarding the impacts of large crowds at Suncorp Stadium and getting the best out of Suncorp Stadium. By capping the numbers this government is, in effect, encouraging mediocrity. It says to the tenants who use Suncorp Stadium, 'We do not want you to achieve crowds over 25,000 or 35,000. We don't want you to get to 50,000 too often. Can you not be too successful? Can you hold back?'

More importantly, the bill fails to address community concerns surrounding the area. When condition 42 was originally brought in, it referred to the *Lang Park stadium redevelopment assessment report* by the Coordinator-General, dated August 2000, and the executive summary of the draft EIS by Sinclair Knight Mertz, dated May 2000. At that time it said that each year there would be no more than 24 major events at which crowd size could exceed 25,000 persons. What has happened since then? We have seen the population of Queensland grow exponentially. We have seen sporting teams decide to engage and use Suncorp Stadium on a greater basis. In June next year we have the possibility of another NRL team using Suncorp Stadium. However, this bill does nothing to address those major issues. It does nothing to address community concerns about the impacts of those large events.

Let us be frank: while crowd size has an impact with regards to traffic flow, invariably it is the antisocial behaviour that occurs that is of most concern to residents. That does not necessarily come with large crowd sizes. A small group exhibiting antisocial behaviour at a game where attendance is under 25,000 can cause as much discomfort and concern for residents as a large crowd of over 50,000 where no antisocial behaviour is exhibited. It is the failure of this government to address those community concerns and those issues that we see as a standard of mediocrity. It is the Labor way to plan for mediocrity and drag people down, rather than aim for excellence.

Another sad reality of Labor's mismanagement of Suncorp Stadium is that, whilst the design remains superior and at its time it was a world-class venue, its current condition cannot be described as that. If those who have been to Metricon Stadium and seen the facilities there were to compare them with those at Suncorp Stadium, they would see that Suncorp Stadium—


Mr Lawlor: Which you opposed also. You guys opposed that as well. You were against Suncorp and you were against Metricon. You are absolutely against stadiums and against sport.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Southport, order!

Mr GIBSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, we cannot now say that Suncorp Stadium is still a world-class facility and that is the result of the failure of this government to reinvest in the stadium. It is evident to all who use it and it was highlighted during discussions with the CEO of Stadiums Queensland when we asked what his strategy was with regards a sinking fund as equipment comes to the end of its life. He indicated that they do not have one. Each time they are required to go to the government, cap in hand, to seek a replacement for items that have come to the end of their natural life. That is the pressure that this building is under. At a time when money should be reinvested in the stadium, at a time when we should see greater expenditure in maintaining Suncorp Stadium to keep the experience that those players and, more importantly, the public are able to enjoy, we find ourselves in a situation where Labor is once again failing to properly plan.

Unfortunately, this is typical of this Labor government's inability to look to the future, its inability to identify and solve issues and its inability to work with the community. As we have seen, this bill does not address those key issues about community concerns for Suncorp Stadium nor does it address the issue of the capping of attendance numbers at a major asset that Queenslanders want to come to to enjoy watching games being played. The increase of crowd numbers to 35,000 per year for only 2011 is a curious way to address the issue the government faces. In this bill the government is installing a head of power to provide a regulation to address Suncorp Stadium's operation for the future.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

 **Mr GIBSON:** As I said before the break, it makes sense to have all of our major football codes playing at a major football stadium such as Suncorp. It makes economic sense; it makes sense in terms of logistics, public transport, policing and security; and it makes sense for a whole range of other reasons. As has been discussed, these major teams have been phenomenally successful in 2011. This unprecedented success has attracted more fans to games for each of the three football codes, with more people attending Suncorp Stadium than ever before. Again, as I have indicated, this government has been caught asleep at the wheel.

I would now like to turn my attention to some of the elements specific to the bill itself. I must note with curiosity that the bill seeks to retrospectively change the definition of a major sporting event to that which has an increased crowd size of 35,000 people for 2011 only. Apart from enabling us to ensure that the Broncos can hold their NRL finals at Suncorp, that highlights again the failure of this government to properly plan. As a result of this bill, come 1 January next year we will go back to a cap of 25,000. Even though we saw that in 2009 there were 16 games held with a crowd size of over 25,000, growing in 2010 to 20 games and growing again in 2011 to 23 games, with potentially 25, we see this government's foresight being, 'We will go back to a cap of 25,000.' However, within the bill we then see a head of power by which these changes can be made by regulation. The question needs to be asked: why is this government not just getting on with the job of fixing the problem at hand?

In the future this parliament will not have this debate about how we should manage Suncorp and what the cap will be. That will be done by way of regulation, and those regulations can be changed at the discretion of the minister. There is not the same parliamentary scrutiny over regulation that exists over legislation, and the minister knows that. The minister knows that regulation is designed to ensure

the government can freely address issues, but it lacks scrutiny. That is what we are seeing here: another tricky deal by Labor, another sneaky way of bringing about these changes. Its members are couching it in terms of, 'That is because we have done the consultation. We want to do more consultation.'

We come to an interesting point because apparently the member for Mount Coot-tha, the Treasurer, has done community consultation, and he tabled it for our benefit. If we were to take this information, the outcomes of the community consultation indicate that 70 per cent of locals are either strongly supportive or supportive of increasing the cap. That is from the member for Mount Coot-tha's own community consultation. Only 26 per cent oppose. Here we have this consultation that says, 'We want to change it,' but the government is saying, 'We will not do it in a permanent way; we will bring it in via regulation.'

I understand that this issue falls within the electorate of Mount Coot-tha and that the member is looking to make political mileage where he can. He railed in this parliament about concerns over a recommendation of the Suncorp Stadium Management Advisory Committee that a model based on, I believe, the Welsh model and the Millennium Stadium be looked at. That model constitutes a trust fund into which a component of all ticket sales goes. The Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha, got all concerned. He said, 'Oh, there is going to be a tax, a tax on football tickets.' What did he do? He rushed out and he created a Facebook page. That page is titled 'Newman must say no to footy ticket tax'. It is so popular that four people 'like' this idea. Not only do we have the most unpopular Treasurer in Queensland, not only do we have the most unpopular MP in this House; we now know that he is the most unpopular person on Facebook because he could not get more than four people to rail against this concern. Why is that? Because they saw through the smoke and mirrors. They saw through the petty politics that are being played by the member for Mount Coot-tha and they realised that that was nothing more than another stunt from a failed, long-term Labor government that has no vision, no plan and, more importantly, no desire to actually address these areas.

Let me make it very clear at this point. The LNP will support this legislation.

Government members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: I hear the cries from those opposite. They do not like to support sports. They do not want to see that occurring within this state. We want Queenslanders to have access to major sporting events in this state. We want to ensure Queenslanders can support their local heroes, regardless of the code they play. In particular—and shamelessly, may I say—we want as many Queenslanders as possible to be in Suncorp Stadium to cheer on the Broncos to an NRL premiership. We want Darren Lockyer to have a capacity crowd to see him play his finals. However, we want to also ensure Queenslanders know that this government failed to properly plan. Despite the attendance numbers being obvious and available to the public, this government has been caught napping and it was not prepared until the very last minute.

We have addressed the issues with regard to the original planning conditions. The concerns that were evident in 2000, when the initial reports were drafted and then incorporated into the development application condition, have not simply evaporated. Those concerns are still there. The community still wants to ensure those issues are addressed, not just in the short term but also in the longer term. We understand and appreciate that the members of the public who live around Suncorp Stadium are sensitive to certain issues—issues that include noise, as I indicated, traffic congestion and, of course, that antisocial behaviour that comes from a very small minority who set about, either because of excess alcohol or for other reasons, to inflict upon others their inappropriate behaviour. The majority of Queenslanders who attend Suncorp Stadium do the right thing.

I pay credit where credit is due. The government's transport management plan is effective and we see great numbers coming to and from the event via public transport. Indeed, I am told that Suncorp Stadium's public transport figures are some of the best in Australia. That is a credit to all the public who ensure they use that mode of transport. However, we have to ensure the concerns of the people of the electorate are listened to and their inconvenience is recognised. It is clear that this government has not been prepared to do that.

What we saw from the consultation by the Treasurer in his own electorate was nothing more than just smoke and mirrors. We know that because during estimates we asked the CEO of Stadiums Queensland what it was his intention to raise the cap to. There had been media statements beforehand talking about raising the cap, but we did not have any detail to that. When we asked the CEO of Stadiums Queensland in estimates, 'What is the magic number? What do we want to increase it to?', he let the cat out of the bag. It was Stadiums Queensland's view that the cap should be removed altogether. There is much to be said for that proposal. When you have a venue and when the government has invested that kind of money into the area, we should look at removing the cap. But let us do it honestly. Let us consult and talk to people. Let us not play games of smoke and mirrors and have this subterfuge that we have seen from the Treasurer in ensuring the public do not know the government's intentions.

We now have a bill before the House that does not address what the CEO of Suncorp Stadium made very clear were his intentions during the estimates committee. It is clear that the Treasurer in his capacity as the member for Mount Coot-tha is not prepared to be honest with the people of his electorate. If he is part of the problem, then may I suggest a new solution—a new solution being the LNP candidate for Mount Coot-tha, Saxon Rice. She has been someone who is willing to talk to the community, to listen to the community and to take forward their concerns with regard to behavioural issues, traffic control and crowd numbers around Suncorp Stadium.


We need to ensure that the future of Suncorp Stadium is a bright future. As I have said, it is a stadium that was well designed. It is a stadium in which every seat in the house is a great seat, but it is a stadium that under a Labor government has now started to fall below standard and cannot be honestly called a world-class stadium anymore.

Government members interjected.

Mr GIBSON: We hear the cries from those opposite because they do not like the truth. We hear the cries from those opposite, and I am sure in their speeches they will endeavour to deflect the government's failure to plan. I am sure in their speeches they will go back to the past and try to address some of those issues. But let us talk about the present and the future because that is what those in the Labor Party do not address. They do not address the future. They are a party living in the past and failing to address the issues for Queensland's future.

We have a situation with regard to this bill that is of concern. The regulation element in this bill will not enable proper consultation or openness and transparency without anything more than a promise from the minister, without anything more than, 'Trust me. I will do the right thing.' We would want to support proper consultation with the public. We would want to ensure that we do not have changes coming through regulations because, as I have indicated, it is fair to say that in 2012 we will see more than 24 games of any code played at Suncorp Stadium with over 25,000 people attending, based on the trajectory of growth from previous years.

We have concerns about the lack of consultation. We have concerns about the urgency in which this bill has come through, but we do note that should this bill not pass then we would be blocking Queenslanders, preventing Queenslanders, from being able to support their team. As a result, we will be supporting this bill to ensure that all of those who wish to attend Suncorp Stadium and cheer on the Broncos to a premiership in 2011 can do so.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (2.42 pm): As Queenslanders we are all proud of what happens from time to time at Suncorp Stadium. In fact, I was there recently to see the Wallabies' game, which was a fabulous game of rugby. Anyone listening to or reading this debate should not make the mistake that we are debating the feats of Queenslanders on the pitch. What we are debating is the honesty, or lack thereof, of the government. Quite frankly, we would be proud of those achievements by Queensland sporting teams no matter where they took place.

The issue here is that the local community around Suncorp Stadium and the community in the western suburbs of Brisbane were fundamentally misled over the mitigation measures that would be in place to limit the impacts on their community. I would ask the question: how can you run the state of Queensland if you cannot even administer a stadium and the number of games that occur at the stadium? We came back to this place on a number of occasions in order to change the ground rules that were promised to this local community. We came back and adjusted the number of decibels of noise that could be emitted. We came back in 2006 to adjust the rules about concerts. Even in this bill, we have yet another bite at changing the rules that were promised to the residents of that part of Brisbane. The government is now foreshadowing that there will be so many rule changes that it does not even want to bring them to the parliament anymore. It wants to make the changes through regulations. There has been a fundamental betrayal of trust by this government on solid commitments it gave to people within that precinct.

Was it that those on the government side could not foresee that building a stadium to the scale of Suncorp Stadium would create demand? Could they not foresee that people would want to hold rock concerts? Could they not foresee that the number of football teams wanting to use it for big events would increase? If it is that they could not look at Suncorp Stadium and foresee the demand to use it, then perhaps it is no wonder that they also could not plan health or water or a whole range of other complex things in this state. Or is it the other possibility that they did in fact know that Suncorp Stadium would be the venue for more rock concerts and more football games than they ever let on? Did they just cynically believe that once the stadium was there there would be very little choice for anyone when it came to reneging on the assurances that they had given to the local community—assurances that once given have now proved to be worthless? It is my belief that the latter is the case. They never intended once Suncorp Stadium was built to honour the commitments they made to those communities. They always knew that there would be a Cyclone Larry or a football final where they would have to stand up and say, 'We have to change the rules because we need a concert for Cyclone Larry or we need to hold a football final.' This has been a very cynical political exercise.

When I look back at the 2006 debate in this House in relation to concerts, I note that the consultation detailed in the notes comprised crown law and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and that was it. Less than three years earlier they had relaxed the noise limits that were allowed. It is the same sort of shambles that we see in so many areas of government policy. The *Courier-Mail* said back in 2006—

Rock concert for Suncorp Stadium—the final predictable twist in a saga which has seen proper process sacrificed for political expediency.

It went on to say—

If you are unfamiliar with politic-speak, allow me to translate. 'Could' means 'will'.

Interestingly, when I look back further on that debate in 2006, I picked up this gem of a quote from the local member, the member for Mount Coot-tha. In 2006 his version was—

As the original development approval predated my term, let me state for the record today that I support the limit attached to events at the stadium and, for a range of reasons, do not support that limit being changed. Lest there be any confusion on this point, there is no suggestion whatsoever that this limit be revised; I am simply taking the opportunity of this debate to state my own position for the benefit of my community.

The community that lives around Suncorp Stadium will know what that sort of promise is worth to them.

We now have a committee system in this House that is supposed to increase consultation and transparency. I thought the comments from the members of the committee were very interesting. They said that this bill has been pushed through on an unacceptable timetable. That timetable prevented that committee from undertaking due process of consulting with people in the Suncorp Stadium area who had been given these undertakings.


The committee report lists the likely or potential adverse impacts, which are many and varied. It lists seven dot points. They include increases in noise and increases in traffic congestion. As a representative of a seat in western Brisbane I want to particularly comment on increases in traffic congestion. When these matches are held at Suncorp the whole road system of western Brisbane grinds to a halt. At the most recent match at Suncorp the queue of stationary traffic on Coronation Drive went right back to Toowong station. The committee then goes on to say—

Ms Jones interjected.

Dr FLEGG: I take that interjection from the member for Ashgrove, whose own seat would be affected. It is not a case of supporting or not supporting. These are legitimate concerns that were raised and the reasons for which the original commitments were given. They are legitimate issues for this parliament to consider when the government has broken its promise. It has reneged on its promise.

The committee report goes on to note further likely or potential impacts. They are changes to permissible parking on game days; a reduction in available street parking for residents, their visitors and local businesses; an increase in the number of intoxicated people; an increase in alcohol related violence, and so on. The government never intended to honour those promises that were made to the local residents in that area. It knew full well that on the eve of a major football final with a stadium sitting there that it was going to be difficult or impossible to vote that the stadium should be left empty and that the game should be taken somewhere else.

The issue here is the lack of honesty and the fact that the government was prepared to make promises that it never intended to keep. This is not about a survey done by the Treasurer in the local area that might show support for this measure; this was always about a minority of people who had been given promises to protect their interests. I can say here without a shadow of a doubt that if the people of the Mount Coot-tha electorate, and particularly those around Suncorp Stadium, want someone who will be prepared to honour what they say, who will be prepared to stand up, who will be prepared to genuinely consult, then they have been given a very good alternative by the LNP. Saxon Rice will make a far better representative for the people of Mount Coot-tha than the current member, who cannot even abide by his promise made in 2006 to stand up on the very issue he is standing here today and seeking to revoke.

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (2.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. I congratulate the Minister for Sport for responding to the environmental changes over the past 10 years and introducing this bill. Unlike the opposition, which has stood still for the last 10 years, if not the last 20 years, and which does not change with the times and which has the same old motley crew in this House, this government acknowledges changes and moves with the times.

The year 2011 has been amazingly successful for Queensland football teams. This year the Brisbane Roar hosted and won the A-League grand final. The Queensland Reds hosted and won the Super Rugby grand final. Queensland hosted two State of Origins and won the series for the sixth time. The Brisbane Broncos will make the NRL finals. At least that is one thing on which I agree with the member for Gympie.

On top of all this, we have hosted a number of international sporting events at the stadium, such as the final Tri Nations Bledisloe Cup match two weekends ago where Queensland James Horwill led the Wallabies to their first Tri Nations series victory over the All Blacks and the Springboks in 10 years. I was at that game at that stadium. It is a fantastic stadium.

Unlike those opposite, we will not rubbish Brisbane institutions like Suncorp Stadium. We will not bag Queensland's economic performance for cheap political tricks. This is about not rubbing Brisbane's iconic stadiums for cheap political gain and therefore doing anything you can to win government.

Mr Gibson: Embarrassing.

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection about being embarrassing. The only embarrassing thing in this House is hearing those opposite continually bag Suncorp Stadium, which is a fantastic facility built by a Labor government.

Unlike the member for Gympie, I was at that game. It had been raining all day and the condition of that ground was second to none. It was absolutely fantastic. You would not have known that it had been raining all day. The teams played fantastic rugby. They did a great job. There is nothing more embarrassing than having to sit in this House listening to those opposite, like the member for Gympie, continually bagging and giving Queensland and Brisbane a hard time. Enough is enough. They are not going to win government by doing that so they should not continue to do it. Not only is the ground a world-class facility, it commands record crowd attendances. These events have also had a significant economic impact on Brisbane. They also create jobs for Queenslanders.


This is not the first time that amendments have been proposed to the Major Sports Facilities Act 2001 to make better use of these world-class facilities. In 2006 amendments were made to the Major Sports Facilities Act to allow the staging of concerts at Suncorp Stadium. I went to the U2 concert. That was one of the best concerts I have been to in my life. It was absolutely fantastic.

As a result of these amendments, Suncorp Stadium has been allowed to host three concerts and one religious event each year. The crowd cap that this bill amends was voluntarily imposed by the government as it was considered appropriate for Suncorp Stadium in 2001. But 10 years on there has been a lot of change in Brisbane during that time. There has not been much for those opposite, I might add. Brisbane has grown. It has grown under a Labor government. An additional 600,000 people have moved to South-East Queensland.

The Brisbane Broncos are not the only major team playing home games at Suncorp Stadium, as was the case in 2001. More and more people are frequently attending live sporting events and concerts. Today, major national and international sporting events are a key tourism strategy for Queensland. It is a fantastic strategy that this state government supports.

Queensland's globally competitive capability in facilities development and operation, sports goods and services and event management underpin our success in attracting these major international events. It does not help when those opposite continue to downplay and downgrade the quality of the events and the sporting venues that Queensland has. Many jobs in tourism depend on Queensland's strong reputation as a sporting destination. We as a government will do all we can to keep that reputation alive and well. It is critical that we maintain our competitiveness in ensuring that our facilities, including Suncorp Stadium, are used to capacity and are not forced to limit the number of people attending events.

We built this stadium, we support this stadium and we will continue to make sure that it is one of the fabulous places to host concerts, sporting events and major events not only today but in years to come. It is therefore with great pride that I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HOOLIHAN** (Keppel—ALP) (2.58 pm): I think the member for Gympie should go back and read report No. 2 of the Community Affairs Committee. What he stood up in this House and said in relation to that report was patent nonsense. He did not bother to read it. There were concerns in the committee—a committee which I chair—but there was also a recognition by all of the members of the committee that this was a necessity, that this was urgent. There was a request, as members will note from the report, that the minister address the concerns of the committee, and the minister has tabled some documentation and I believe he will be able to respond to that in his reply.

When this stadium was built with the redevelopment of Lang Park into Suncorp Stadium in 2001, there was a relevant development approval. We heard the ongoing diatribe from the member for Gympie about there being 'no provision for the future' and that we were 'asleep at the wheel'. In 2001, I think the member for Gympie was probably still wet behind the ears, and I do not think he got any drier as he got older. There is no doubt that 2011 is 10 years down the track. In 2001 there was no Brisbane Roar, the Reds were playing at Ballymore and the Broncos was the only team playing out of Suncorp Stadium. I defy the member for Gympie to tell us what will happen in 10 years time with other major sporting teams. He does not know and nobody else has a crystal ball.

That is the basis for the change—to allow regulation. A whole host of other things may happen in the sporting world that will affect Queensland sport, not only at Suncorp Stadium. This is a stadium that was built by a Labor government, along with a number of other stadiums, yet the blinkered people on the other side of the House claim that no infrastructure has been built. They should go to the Gold Coast and have a look at the two stadia down there, or have a look at Suncorp itself and the tennis centre. This is all infrastructure that was built to support sport in Queensland.

Mr Schwarten: Economic development.

Mr HOOLIHAN: I take the interjection from the member for Rockhampton. It is economic development. It has provided construction jobs. It has provided jobs in the sporting industry. It has given teams the opportunity to play in world-class facilities. The member for Gympie would have us believe that this is not a world-class facility. Why do we have the Super 15s playing there? Why was the final between the Reds and Canterbury played there? Why does Brisbane Roar play there? Because it is a world-class facility with world-class transport.

Some potential impacts were outlined in the report. At this stage, I would like to thank the scrutiny of legislation staff for their prompt detail in relation to the fundamental legislative principles documentation on which the report was based, particularly Renee Easten from that office. I know they worked very hard to have all of this information available for my committee.

What the bill purports to do for only 2011 is raise the crowd cap for major sporting events from 25,000 to 35,000. It does not do it in 2012 but it does make a provision for a regulation—a regulation which will allow future sporting events to be considered on the need at that time. It keeps faith with the people who reside around there. There is no general increase. At some future time there may be a need for that, but it keeps faith with the people who reside in the area around Suncorp Stadium.

These legislative amendments will in fact operate from 1 January because the cap is placed on a calendar year, as I understand it. There was some concern about the fact that it was retrospective, but it is only retrospective in relation to the number of games with a certain number of people attending, and there have only been nine games at which the number of people has exceeded 35,000. That allows the Brisbane Roar A-League matches to be held later in the year, and it allows for the NRL finals this weekend to proceed without any impact. At the present time, because it is an act of this parliament, the existing crowd cap can only be addressed by legislative amendment.

The bill needs to be passed and assented to allow the NRL preliminary final this weekend to proceed. Let us deal with some of the reasons that might be necessary. Earlier we heard the comment from the member for Rockhampton about additional work. An average Broncos game generates around 1,200 jobs. Every year our stadiums pump more than \$308 million into the Queensland economy, but we need to make sure that our venues are able to stand up against interstate and international competitors when it comes to hosting major sporting and other events. We are here for sporting tourism; we are here to provide great venues for all of those sports. The changes here balance the needs of the community against the benefits for Queensland and Queenslanders generally.


With our major sporting teams having unprecedented success, we are facing a need to make these changes. We heard from the member for Brisbane Central—and we are all aware of it, on both sides of the House—that the Reds won there, the Broncos have made it into a preliminary final and the Brisbane Roar won there, and that is because of the quality of the stadium. I do not want to see Queensland lose any games due to a crowd cap that is in fact based on figures from 10 years ago. If you relate the 25,000 to the population of Brisbane and Queensland at that time and then do a comparison with now, the figure that was used by Sinclair Knight Merz may very well have been in excess of 35,000.

If this change is not made, we will lose games. As I have indicated, the changes in Brisbane over the 10 years have been significant, and it is time to bring things up to date. I know that members of the LNP live 25 or 30 years ago—that is exactly their attitude—but how many stadiums were built by them?

Mr Schwarten: None.

Mr HOOLIHAN: Yes, none. So it is now time to review the issue, and Brisbane and Queensland need to accept that we are a growing city and we are a growing state and we need this sort of support.

I would also like to mention the significant focus on Queensland that we get out of the local, national and international events. Sports tourism is a growing area and it is a very strong focus for the sport department in Queensland and the people of Queensland. The attention on Queensland as a great destination which is generated by the major sporting or other events is a major boost for tourism. The member for Rockhampton mentioned the World Cup games in 2007. Members should think about what the World Cup in New Zealand will do, and those stadiums are not limited to 25,000 people. We want Queensland to be showcased to Australia and around the world. It is true: Queensland really is a great event state and our sporting teams are great, and this legislation will ensure that continues. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (3.09 pm): The Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill is an important bill because of the impending semifinals that are occurring in Brisbane, and I mentioned to our party room that it was probably mandatory to speak to this bill if you had played at Lang Park! My colleague from Toowoomba North likes the little sporting snippets that I sometimes tell, so when I played at Lang Park it was the last year of the unlimited tackle in Australian rugby league. I remember kicking off for Easts one second half against Norths.

Mr Gibson: Was that before or after the war?

Mr HORAN: No, but it was far enough back. We kicked off to Norths and we never got the ball back for 35 minutes, so I have lovely memories of Lang Park! It has been a place of great significance to Queenslanders. I have seen some epic games there. I saw the Wallabies return in 1963 from South Africa and the No. 1 Wallabies played the No. 2 Wallabies after they had won two tests in an epic tour of South Africa. I saw the great Queensland front row forward Doug Beattie felled by a rabbit-killer punch by Brian Hambly from New South Wales in front of a wild crowd that booed and booed until Hambly was sent off.

One of the most poignant things about Lang Park, or Suncorp as it is now known, was Hugh Lunn's book of short stories that he wrote not long after the first State of Origin was played there in 1980 with Queensland coached by John McDonald from Toowoomba. Hugh Lunn wrote about all of the years of defeat, and one defeat I remember in particular was when Bill Pearson was the captain of Norths and they lost 59 or 69 to three because all of the good Queensland players were going down to poker machine rich New South Wales. Hugh Lunn wrote that Queenslanders in great hope for the first State of Origin game came walking down the hills through the Queensland houses that line the streets of that area of Paddington and that that night after all of the floggings that had happened for years and years and years—and on one occasion New South Wales had threatened to cancel the interstate competition—when the score got to 18-12 the Queensland crowd started to chant, 'Easy, easy, easy.' They certainly got used to winning, and that has been a great place for winning ever since.

Despite all of the controversy when it was being built and the \$485 million and all the rest of it, Lang Park or Suncorp has turned out to be one of the great stadiums of the world. A stadium for a game like rugby league or rugby union is limited to the number of people who can view it, otherwise it becomes almost impossible. I had the pleasure of going to the Olympic stadium pre Olympics when the capacity was 110,000 to see one of the All Blacks-Wallabies tests and you had a nosebleed getting up to where you sat and when you looked down they just looked like ants. The capacity of a ground around a rugby league or a rugby union or a soccer field is really limited to about 52,500 to 55,000 people unless it is an Australian rules field like the MCG which has a bigger area to spread the grandstands around.

The design of that stadium has meant that there is hardly ever a bad seat in the place. In terms of the catering facilities, one can travel around the world and they will never see a stadium where people can get their food and drink as easily as they can at Suncorp. The fact that the bus terminal is underneath is excellent, and it should be almost mandatory that every stadium has a railway station nearby or underneath. The station at Milton is excellent. At Landsdowne Road in Dublin the train comes right under the grandstand. There are no people there and then all of a sudden the trains arrive and the place fills up. They are the important things about a field.

This field this year and in preceding years has been used for soccer and rugby union as well as rugby league, so the need has suddenly arisen. Our shadow minister has been rightly critical of the lateness of this legislation being brought before the parliament, because earlier in the year the Roar were going well. They have called Brisbane the title town because the Roar won, the Roar women won, the Firebirds won in an unprecedented display—the first time ever a netball team has been undefeated—the Broncos are going well this year, the Reds have won the Super 15 and we also won the State of Origin for the sixth time. There will be another side in rugby league at some time in the future. If that side happens to be from Brisbane, then Lang Park or Suncorp will have an even bigger demand upon it. So there are some important issues.


The attraction of a venue for sports tourism, as has been spoken about by other members, is massive and it is part of modern life. One of the issues with Suncorp is its capacity. It is the ideal capacity for that size of ground, but Sydney has a ground that holds about 80,000. I note that Sydney will get two rugby union tests a year. The only way we could match that up here in the returns to the particular code that is running the game is to look at costs. You cannot jack the price of 52,000 people up to try to match the price you would get from 80,000 people. That is not fair to our patrons and therefore it has to be in the cost of hiring the ground, and oftentimes the cost of hiring the ground depends and can be brought down somewhat if it has a reasonable amount of use.

The other weekend there was a massive game on the Saturday night between the All Blacks and the Wallabies with a capacity crowd and the very next day the Rabbitohs and the Broncos were able to play again because the field is such a good field. It is a place that has great capacity and a variety of uses, so it is important that certainty is given to those people who are running the venue to be able to keep those costs down.

This legislation has been brought into this parliament too late. The government would have been able to see what was happening earlier in the year because the likelihood was there. It was not just the case that suddenly the Reds making the final tipped it over the edge. The Roar had had big games. The Broncos had been drawing big crowds throughout the year. The Reds had been drawing big crowds throughout the year. When the Reds played Auckland and 46,000 or 47,000 people attended for the semifinal, there was a glitch in the computer system because the computer system mixed up that game

with the State of Origin that was happening the next Wednesday night. Subsequently, they lost about 7,000 paying customers who could have attended because the computer system was saying that it was a sell-out when it was not a sell-out, so those things have to be fixed.

Bringing this legislation into the parliament so late after all of the signs and portents were there really shows once again a lack of planning and organisation. With regard to moving into an ad hoc system as of next year where it will be by regulation, it is almost like we will wait and see how they go. That does not show much faith in any of those Brisbane based sides. It does not show much vision as to whether there will be a second team playing in the competition. These possibilities need something with a little bit more certainty than a minister bringing in a regulation, which is subject to disallowance by whoever is the opposition of the day, if there is a rash of big attendances or if there happens to be teams of the various codes being successful. That criticism by our shadow minister is very valid and it mirrors what is happening with this government in terms of the lack of planning and the clogging up that is occurring and the lack of action that is happening without any proper management. I join with our shadow minister in supporting this bill for the good of those loyal patrons of the Broncos. All Queenslanders hope and wish that they can do well, because they have been an ornament to the code and to the game throughout the year. We will be supporting this bill.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.18 pm): Queensland has some magnificent sporting teams and they do this state proud. We are proud of what they have achieved and Suncorp Stadium provides an important sporting infrastructure for the whole state and is well loved by many avid sports fans. We, however, must also remember that this is a state stadium and it is in a local community's backyard and that community also has a right to have its voice and its concerns noted. Many love the stadium but have concerns about how the negative impacts are managed in the surrounds of the stadium, particularly after games. These issues have certainly been noted in the committee's report that has been tabled and they are certainly worthy of being brought to the attention of this House again.

I am a member of that committee. In the report we specifically noted—

... that the Minister has provided limited material that addresses the identified potential impacts as outlined in 17 and 18 of this report. The committee asks that the Minister address these issues in the Parliament.

On reading the 2½-page response tabled by the minister, it appears that the only new thing the minister is supplying to address the committee's concerns about those impacts upon the community is—

Suncorp Stadium is also putting into place a new initiative on its website allowing local residents and others to sign up to receive up-to-date information about events and other useful information.

I think this parliament and the people in the community surrounding Suncorp Stadium deserve a lot better than a website link. Their concerns are valid and they should have been respected and addressed by the minister. Perhaps the minister will still bring to the table later on in the debate something more than what his tabled letter contains. It is not good enough for a community that deserves to have its voice heard in the midst of this new legislation that is extending the conditions relating to Suncorp Stadium. Clearly the concerns that they have raised in the very abbreviated time in which this bill has come back to the parliament have not been addressed by the government.

If the existing measures that are in place that are supposed to mitigate the impacts of large crowds at Suncorp Stadium were sufficient then we would not have seen these issues raised in the committee's report. For example, the likely or potential adverse impacts are many and varied and extend to increases in noise pollution and increases in traffic congestion. The report goes on about increases in the number of intoxicated patrons in the streets adjacent to the stadium following events and related potential increases in alcohol fuelled violence in the licensed venues and streets that are located proximate to the stadium.

The report also outlines concerns about transport. I think it would be really unfortunate if Labor MPs were to verbal the community by saying that they do not have legitimate issues and they should like or lump the minister's response. I think they deserve to have their concerns addressed with more than the status quo about the current mitigations.

In that very abbreviated, rushed time frame—the unsatisfactory time frame in which this bill has been brought back before the House because of a lack of proper planning by this government—the community has clearly said that it wants to see better. It deserves to have better. Unfortunately, as has been noted by the committee, this bill was pushed through its committee stage in an abbreviated time frame. In its report the committee has noted that this is an unsatisfactory time frame which has in many ways cut short the ability to really examine some of those policy issues and, I believe, to give true voice to having more effective mitigation measures around this community.

It is up to the minister to give us a better explanation than we have seen in this tabled paper. It is time that we saw these policy issues addressed. The community deserves better. We want to see a stadium that is able to proudly host these events without any adverse impacts on the community due to

the fact that they have been listened to. That is what we are waiting for. That is what we are demanding. I will certainly be listening to see if the minister brings something better to the table than a website link that simply gives people information.

Mr O'BRIEN (Cook—ALP) (3.23 pm): The hypocrisy of those opposite knows no bounds. They have opposed the rebuild of Suncorp Stadium since day one. Member after member of the opposition stood up in this parliament and questioned then Minister Mackenroth at the time and suggested that this project was a waste of money and that it was a blight on Queensland. Now they have the complete audacity and absolute shameless capacity to stand in here today and sing its praises. They should hang their heads in shame. It is an absolute disgrace that they could come into this place and try to walk on both sides of the fence in relation to this fantastic facility that serves all of Queensland.

I come from the most remote part of Queensland. Many people from Cairns and the surrounding areas come down to Suncorp Stadium to enjoy a game of football, rugby union, soccer or whatever. I used to come down once a year for a test match. I am not able to do that anymore. I certainly come down and either watch a test match of rugby union or a State of Origin match if I manage to get some tickets—which I have done on one occasion before—and it is a fantastic facility at which to watch football. It is a credit to this Labor government. Those opposite should hang their heads in shame that they came in here and started singing its praises because they opposed it tooth and nail. So much did those opposite try to find fault with Suncorp Stadium that they pushed for a public works committee inquiry into it in 2008.

Mr Gibson: That's in the past.

Mr O'BRIEN: 2008 is not that far in the past. Those opposite were trawling for something to be wrong. They so much wanted something to be wrong with Suncorp Stadium that members on that public works committee, which included the current member for Condamine—he is the only one left—pushed for the inquiry to try to find fault with Suncorp Stadium. The committee went over Suncorp Stadium with a fine toothcomb—three of those members who sat on that committee, and other members who I think were co-opted in. The member for Toowoomba South might have come and had a look at some of the aspects of Suncorp Stadium when we did a site inspection. There was certainly another opposition member. I might be doing the wrong thing by the member for Toowoomba South, but there was certainly another opposition member who came along to try to find fault. They went over it with a fine toothcomb, and could they find a single thing wrong with Suncorp Stadium? Could they find fault with this facility at all? Did they make a suggestion then about crowd numbers when they were given the opportunity and when we had a close look at the legislation? No, they did not.

I recommend the old public works committee's report into Suncorp Stadium. There was, in fact, one recommendation that came out of that committee's report that related to pedestrian access outside the facility itself. For those opposite to come in here now and try to grab onto the coat-tails of the success of this enormously worthwhile Labor government project to me just smacks of shameless opportunism.

Mr Johnson: I always supported it, member for Cook.

Mr O'BRIEN: I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. He was a lone voice on that side.


Mr Johnson: There were quite a few of us.

Mr O'BRIEN: But it was not your official policy. Those opposite used it as a weapon to try to say that this government had its priorities wrong. Those opposite have now been proven wrong. This is an enormous boost not just to Brisbane but also to everybody in Queensland and Australia who enjoys watching sport in the best facility that this country has to offer. In their introduction to a State of Origin game this year 'Gus' Gould and Peter Sterling—both of them 'cockroaches'—described Suncorp Stadium as the best place in the country to play and watch football.

I will finish my remarks by saying that everybody from Queensland enjoys this stadium. Many people from regional Queensland come down to watch games played there. I remember watching a rugby test match there four or five years ago now. I was at the highest point in the stadium. I was in the absolute last row of seats on the try line. It was not the best seat in the house. It was not the most preferred seat in the house. It was certainly not a platinum seat. I had a fantastic view of that game. It is an amazing facility.

I think we limited the numbers of people coming to Suncorp Stadium at the time to try to get the balance right for the local community. I do not speak for that local community. I understand why they would have some concerns. This government has put an enormous amount of effort into public transport to allow fans to get to the facility on big-game days. It is really well advertised in terms of free trains, bus services and additional transport services that are put on when the big games are on. That assists the local community to deal with the crowds. I know there are parking restrictions during the game as well. I remember seeing those as I have walked to the ground. I have always tried to walk to

the ground when I have gone to see a game there. This is about management and it is about moving with the times. This stadium is a great Queensland icon. Today as a government we continue our proud record of management and our proud record of achievement. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (3.30 pm): On Sunday, along with more than 52,000 other Queenslanders, I was there to see a great sporting moment, that is, Darren Lockyer playing his last regular season game for the Brisbane Broncos at Suncorp Stadium. This Saturday, along with around 52,000 other Queenslanders, I intend to be there as the 'Broncs' take on the Warriors in the first of the finals matches in this year's NRL season. Should things go to plan, as I expect they will, the following weekend I intend to be there for the semifinal as the Broncos look to repeat their performance of 2006 and head towards another NRL premiership. If it were not for the legislation that has been introduced into this House and which is intended for passage here today, potentially up to 25,000 people would be turned away. When the Queensland Roar commences its campaign to defend its title from October, potentially people could be turned away from the seven games that it has planned for the balance of the season.

This bill has the support of my local community. In this debate I have listened to the contributions of those opposite. I caution them that one swallow does not make a summer. There will always be people who disagree with a proposition. Many of the people who disagree with the change that has been proposed by the government today never wanted the stadium in the first place. I simply disagree with them and always have. More relevantly, many people are keener to see addressed implementation issues involving the stadium. That has always been the case. Those are the operational issues that attach to a stadium located in the inner city. It has been an important exercise to work with the stadium management advisory committee, community stakeholders and local residents to identify the issues that attach to the stadium, whether 23,000 people turn up or whether 36,000 people turn up. The great benefit of that exercise has been the ability to take the temperature out of many of those operational issues and ensure that some of the issues that arise from time to time, regardless of the limit placed on the stadium into the future, are dealt with. The task is an enduring one. Along with my local community, I commit to maintaining a vigilance on those local issues.

Today we have heard LNP members opposite engage in discombobulating, dissembling and dismal politics. They simply cannot say 'yes' or agree to a proposition. They have walked in here and talked out of both sides of their mouths. They have tried to walk both sides of the street. I have heard them comment on foresight. Members should make no mistake: the original lack of foresight belongs solely to that unimaginative mob opposite. They are the ones who originally opposed this stadium. They wanted it located at Hamilton. Today, despite that woeful lack of imagination and foresight that the stadium could become the world-class success that it is today, they come in here and seek to claim some sort of credit for foreseeing this issue.

We know that Campbell Newman has a desire to be seen as 'Captain Hindsight'. That hindsight must extend back many years—to 2003 when the stadium was originally developed. We must imagine that in 2003 Campbell Newman knew that Frank Lowy was going to open his wallet and fund an A-league competition in Queensland, that he would attract a Brisbane side to Suncorp Stadium and that, even though they were last on last year's table, this year they would come home with only one loss and win. Back in 2003 that much must have been entirely foreseeable and clear to those opposite. According to those opposite, back in 2003 they knew that James Horwill, Will Genia and Quade Cooper would come together and take the Reds to the title. Back in 2003, Quade Cooper was probably still in New Zealand, but that much must have been self-evident to those opposite. We should ask them what their tip is for the Titans for next year, given the amazing ability for foresight that they seem to have. They would have predicted that for the first time in 19 years the Wallabies would have beaten the All Blacks here in Brisbane. At the start of the year, despite the turmoil at the 'Broncs' when they were known as the 'Baby Broncos' and were predicted to have a challenging rebuilding year, it must have been self-evident to those opposite that the Broncos would go on to have a season record-equalling 18 wins, finishing third, thus being placed to capture the flag.

Let us have none of this sophistry. Let us be clear: this year the confluence of events resulting in the success of the major sporting teams at Suncorp Stadium has, in fact, been a crowning achievement for the state of Queensland and for those opposite to try to attach their own foresight to it is nothing more than dismal politics. Ultimately, we have the ability to introduce legislation that will provide flexibility for the stadium to be put to its highest and best use into the future. I noted the shadow minister's criticisms of the structure of the bill. A part of the bill does deal with 2011, as it needs to do because of those circumstances. Thereafter, there is a separate mechanism to deal with this issue flexibly into the future, to provide for it to be set by regulation.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mr FRASER: I take that interjection because that is wrong. Another speaker, the member for Toowoomba South, has already put the complete opposite argument for the LNP. He said that a regulation is subject to parliamentary disallowance. The member for Toowoomba South, whose advice I

would take over that of the member for Gympie, advanced the argument that, in fact, we should not pursue that for entirely the opposite reason the member for Gympie is now proposing. There will be parliamentary disallowance and parliamentary oversight of any future change.


The point to make is this: some people support a complete removal of restrictions. It is true that Stadiums Queensland put that proposal to government. As the Minister for State Development, I was responsible for the ultimate approval of the stadium. In that position I was asked, by the stroke of a pen, to approve that. I disagreed that that was the way that as a government we should pursue this. Instead, this government proposed that we would legislate; that we would provide for open community consultation, as we have; that we should come into this parliament and legislate it and provide a mechanism for future parliamentary oversight. That is the standard we have pursued through transparency and community consultation.

Ultimately, the community has spoken and a clear majority supports changing these conditions. Seventy per cent—a clear majority—of the community I represent supports changing the conditions. They support changing the conditions not only for football matches but also for concerts. Last year three concerts were held at the stadium. Obviously, many world-class acts make a huge investment to bring their shows to Australia. Therefore, it is important that they have the opportunity to book the stadium for two nights to make the projects attractive. It is important that the Brisbane community and the Brisbane market have the capacity to support two events. It is plain that in the future if two world-class acts want to come to this state we can offer both two nights. Again, a clear majority of people support that.

Today I have heard many low-rent political arguments being advanced by those opposite who pretend to speak for the community that I represent. I heard many of those arguments when we debated the change to introduce concerts to the stadium in the first place. What has been the overwhelming experience since then? The community supports it and the broader community supports it. It has been unquestionably good for the stadium, the city and this state. In this place the best thing any of us can do is to do the right thing in representing our communities. I am speaking for the majority of the residents of the community that I represent. More to the point, we are doing the right and the common-sense thing in providing for a change to allow Suncorp Stadium to be used into the future.

I disagree with those who believe that the stadium should never have been put there in the first place. Ultimately, when you make a decision to change something people will disagree along the way. Only the impotent are pure. None of us should aspire to be elected to this place to simply be a vessel and reflect whatever it was that the last person said to us. Ultimately, we should do the right thing and I believe that the government is doing the right thing. Sometimes to stand up and do the right thing means that you will attract some criticism. We have to work on these issues and that means changing the parking conditions. We will do that. In concert with the Brisbane City Council, we will change the restriction on Fridays to 4 pm. We should increase the parking fine from \$75 to \$200. With the Brisbane City Council we need to do better on street clean-ups, and we will. We need to make sure that there is a full review of the traffic management plan as there should be and as has been committed to at the stadium management advisory committee on Saturday.

Make no mistakes about it: the community supports this change, the state supports this change; it is the right thing to do. It has been done with community consultation. It has been done with an enduring commitment to make sure that those issues, which inevitably arise when a stadium is located in a vibrant inner city, can be dealt with. In the end, this is about getting the balance right. I believe that we have the balance right. I believe that many people like to live next to Suncorp Stadium because it is a world-class venue and it should be utilised as such. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.40 pm): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I speak to the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011 this afternoon. I was a member and minister of the Borbidge government at the time it was decided that Lang Park needed to be upgraded or we needed to look for another venue. I put on the record here today that I was one of the ministers in that government—and some of those people are still around now—who supported the upgrade of Lang Park. It is wrong for people opposite to say that everybody on this side of the House was opposed to it at the time. It was about looking for the best venue and the venue that was going to pay tribute not only to rugby league but, as we are witnessing now, to other sporting events such as the Roar and also rugby union. As the Treasurer just rightfully said, with this legislation before us we will be able to hold more concert events, which are currently limited to three but will be increased to four. That again goes to show what a great venue it is for the arts as well as for sport.

The only thing that I can be critical of Lang Park for—and I hope in time we can see it addressed—is the parking adjacent to the stadium. That is something that has been a thorn in the side of many patrons over a long time. I think it is also a thorn in the side of the police as they try to manage traffic at events such as State of Origin matches and the events that the Treasurer just mentioned such as the game that was played last Sunday evening where the Broncos defeated Manly. We should be addressing this via town planning. Whether it is the Labor government or us in government, we should be looking at how to address this concern.

I congratulate the government on making certain that we do retain that final here in Brisbane this week. Hopefully, we will be able to hold many other finals. Darren Lockyer—and I have never met him personally—is a fine young Queensland, a fine young Australian and an iconic figure not only for rugby league but also for sport in general in this state and this nation. He is a very humble man. I believe that that *Courier-Mail* photo on Monday morning clearly demonstrated the quality of our young people who are out there acting as icons and as leaders in sport. When you look at that photo of Darren Lockyer looking at his little child on the front page, it goes to show that we all have a heart and a reason for wanting to be successful.

Every time I have been to Lang Park—I always call it Lang Park but we should call it Suncorp Stadium because of the sponsors—I have enjoyed the game, win or lose. Even when my own beloved Bulldogs were defeated by the Broncos I still enjoyed going there. I know I do not receive a lot of support from people in this chamber, and the member for Keppel is not here this afternoon. It is about quality rugby league and quality teams enjoying a quality venue. Lang Park is that quality venue.

My son has been to Millennium Stadium in Cardiff and I know my colleague the member for Toowoomba South has also. My son said to me, 'Dad, this place is on a par with the Millennium Stadium.' I remember I sat at Lang Park one night and watched the Scotsmen play the Poms in a World Cup game. I sat right behind the crossbar at one end. I could hear the Scotsmen singing and carrying on and I thought, 'I can't see much of the football because of the flaming crossbar,' but I still enjoyed the Scotsmen's antics and their singing. It was a great event and a great occasion.

This legislation seeks to increase the threshold so that an extra 25,000 people can visit this venue and be a party to this great event that we will witness here again this weekend. I do question the subject of the regulation. Will this provision reappear as a regulation? That is something that we have to look at in future legislation. We can play politics with things all day, but the fact of the matter is that we should get it right the first time. When this legislation was drawn up initially, maybe there were issues that we did not recognise would reoccur down the track in four, five or 10 years time. Hopefully, we will see outcomes that will be advantageous to not only rugby league in Queensland but also now soccer and rugby union.

I do want to touch on something else briefly. Darren Lockyer, Wally Lewis and Artie Beetson are iconic figures in rugby league in Queensland. When we look at current rugby league players—and I look in my own area of Central Queensland and people like Matt Scott, who plays with the North Queensland Cowboys, and also big Dave Taylor from Blackwater playing with South Sydney—as well as former players such as Steven Bell and Alan McIndoe from Emerald, these are all iconic players from Central Queensland. As we are all well aware, Central Queensland is currently in a bid to have Queensland's fourth rugby league team, which is based in Rockhampton, instated in the national competition. Rockhampton needs an international class stadium of the standard of Skilled Park on the Gold Coast. Land is available adjacent to the Rockhampton State High School, the Southside Swimming Pool and the showgrounds. They could all be a very inspirational part of the CQ's support bid.

Rockhampton is the gateway to the wealth generator of Central Queensland where Queenslanders enjoy a quality of life and the wealth coming out of the coal division and also the wealthy cattle area and grain industry in Central Queensland. The Premier has said that she would look at building a stadium there equivalent to Skilled Stadium on the Gold Coast. We have that sort of quality of players coming from everywhere. They come from North Queensland and everywhere. Look at Darren Lockyer and Artie Beetson coming from Roma. They are two of Australia's greats. Central Queensland also needs conference facilities to seat up to 1,000 people. This could all be incorporated in a stadium of that magnitude. That facility could also incorporate committee rooms, dining areas et cetera. The LNP is supportive of the CQ bid for a fourth team in the Queensland NRL competition. If the bid is successful, we would certainly look at providing a stadium for Central Queensland.

When we build these stadiums—and the new tennis complex was built here a couple of years ago—we are giving Queenslanders the opportunity to take advantage of world-class facilities so we can see our sportsmen and women excel at international, state and national levels in world-class venues and stadiums. It is absolutely paramount that we recognise the needs of the future generations of this state by addressing these issues. We need to be encouraging Queenslanders to play sport at every level in every nook and cranny of this state so that we can see more of the great athletes like Cathy Freeman, Darren Lockyer, Rod Laver and those types of people. They are out there every day, but it is up to us as Queenslanders, as members of governments and members of constructive positive oppositions to ensure that these venues are here for the future generations of Queenslanders to enjoy not only in the next 10 or 20 years but forever and a day.

When it comes to sport, not everybody is a winner, but one of the things that our state does excel at is the loyalty it has to its own and the loyalty and parochialism in ensuring we do have the best for those who want to participate. Whether they are an A grade, B grade or C grade player, it is about performing. We play to win, but if we do not win that is bad luck.

I wish the Brisbane Broncos every success for the remainder of this season. Nothing would make me prouder than to see Darren Lockyer go out in his final game as the winning captain of this great club. If he can bring the premiership back to Queensland, every Queenslanders would be so proud. Even though I am a Canterbury Bankstown supporter, I would be proud of Darren Lockyer and the Brisbane Broncos.

Mr DOWLING (Redlands—LNP) (3.50 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the principle of the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. The bill seeks to amend the Major Sports Facility Act 2011, which in essence allows Suncorp Stadium to host up to 24 sporting events in the 2011 calendar year with crowds in excess of 24,999 spectators. We support that strategy that enables larger crowds—crowds of up to 35,000 spectators—24 times this calendar year. However, there are number of ongoing issues—issues such as crowd behaviour, alcohol and violence and traffic congestion—which I will touch on later in my contribution. Those issues are negative, but they are in the minority. I hasten to add that. But, as they say, it is always the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, and we legislate for the minority to ensure those little things do not go wrong. The issues of traffic and noise are key issues and they have not been addressed. There is also concern about the haste with which this decision has been made and that this legislation has been rushed through. As a committee member I can only raise concerns from my point of view, but the committee report does confirm that that view is shared by the committee.

I commence my contribution by recognising the outstanding success of our sporting codes—as pointed out by the member for Mount Coot-tha, that outstanding success is something that was not forecast—with rugby union having a remarkable change of fortune, surpassed only by that of the Brisbane Roar. I pay particular attention to the tremendous success of the Brisbane Roar as they prepare to continue their undefeated run, or at least I hope they continue that run. When the Roar run on to Suncorp Stadium for the curtain-raiser for season 2011-12 on 8 October, they will hopefully extend their run of games without a loss to 29. I am looking forward to attending that game with my son and one of my best mates. The game will also have the added hype of being the curtain-raiser for the season, and it is also set to be a thriller as it is a replay of last season's grand final. I suspect they will surpass the 25,000 crowd cap as well. If the game coming up is half the game that was played last year—with the same result, of course—then it will be a standout, and I suspect that a large crowd will be in attendance. I will be hanging in until the very last second of play, as I did the last time when I was fortunate enough to see what can only be regarded as the goal of the season.

This legislation is an example of Labor failing to properly plan for the future. While I take on board the comments of others that they could not foresee the run of fortune that rugby union and football have had, with the growth and everything else happening in Queensland, that is what planning is about. Suncorp Stadium was built at a time in history when there was only a single vision, and that vision was of rugby league. Labor failed to recognise that other codes could excite Queenslanders, as we have seen. This bill also has some deceptive tone to it, allowing that any future changes could be regulatory thus avoiding the spotlight of scrutiny.

Suncorp Stadium is now home to the Brisbane Broncos, the Queensland Reds and the Brisbane Roar. The Broncos are on track to take the trifecta, and I hope that will occur because there would be nothing more exciting than to see Darren Lockyer holding aloft the NRL holy grail, knowing that this is his home ground, and returning that trophy to Queensland.

But issues were overlooked in this legislation. I saw this bill as a tremendous opportunity—and I know it was discussed in the committee—to investigate and address issues that have been raised over the years and that have been exacerbated over the years. They are not things that happened just last week or midway through the year because of the good fortune of our football codes. The issue of noise is not addressed in the bill, but it is still a real issue for those whose lives are disrupted. There is the issue of traffic congestion and issues associated with alcohol and violence. In a perfect world—and I echo the sentiments of many on this side, as well as those opposite—a facility of such a high standard should be used to its optimum. In order for that to happen and before that can happen, the government needs to address the symptoms that go with large crowds. That means addressing the noise, addressing the traffic, addressing the alcohol, addressing the violence.

I have used the facility many times myself and I have found that the public transport works and it works well. I travel to games on either the bus or the train. While I accept that this legislation is extending the number of games and capacity only for one year, it is still does not address the core issues. We have a great facility. It should be used more often. It should be used to encourage and promote family, because that is what sport is about. It is about family—be it the family of Queenslanders, be it the immediate family unit, be it the family of supporters such as my poor colleague the member for Gregory, who is a Bulldogs fan, or those of us who are fans of the Broncos or the Roar or whoever it happens to be. We are a family of sorts in support of those codes.

Ms Jones: Yippee! We're family.

Mr DOWLING: We are a family of parliamentarians. I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove.

We do need to address the issues. It is about creating a positive environment. It is about celebrating life in Queensland. It is about managing population growth. This stadium was redeveloped in the early 2000s, and since then we have seen tremendous growth in Queensland's population. We have not kept pace with that. Planning is a moving feast; it is about staying ahead of the game. Planning for the growth of football and rugby union has not kept pace. Also, as was pointed out by the member for Mount Coot-tha, the cost and the magnitude of concert tours that travel around the world need to be addressed. Queensland, or more specifically Brisbane, needs to be a destination for those kinds of activities. We have heard about the contribution to the economy of those sorts of events and activities.

It is about making sure that we are a 21st or a 22nd century city, that we are ahead of the game. That is where we need to be focusing. We need to be addressing those issues to remove all of the complaints, to remove all of the hostility, to remove all of the resistance, to having a sporting facility in your backyard. When you get all of those other things right—when you get all of those ducks in a row—then you have the community behind you rather than in front of you challenging it. With those few remarks I will just say: go Roar!

Mr KILBURN (Chatsworth—ALP) (3.58 pm): I rise to support the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill and to congratulate the minister on bringing the bill to the House. In doing so, I would like to talk to a number of issues, particularly some of those raised by the member for Gympie in his speech, and quite a bizarre speech it was! The negativity that goes on in this place about something that is so positive is amazing. At the end of the speech of the member for Gympie I do not know whether he was supporting it or not supporting it. He made comments about the fact that we talk about ancient history. We have to talk about the history of this process, because the member for Gympie in his speech has tried to rewrite history. I remember hearing from those opposite—not from all of them; I note the words of the member for Gregory—the incessant complaints about the money that this government was spending on building stadiums. They went on and on about it being a white elephant, about our priorities being wrong, about it being a waste of money. Now they stand up in this place—

Mr Rickuss: You weren't even in parliament.

Mr KILBURN: I take the interjection. I did not have to be in parliament to hear the bleating of those opposite about this. They went on about this when we built Suncorp Stadium. They went on about this when we built the stadium on the Gold Coast. They have complained about every piece of infrastructure that this government has built for as long as I can remember. But then they stand up in this place and regularly try to take credit for it and be all supportive of it. It is a joke. The negativity has to stop. This is a good-news story about something in Queensland that is benefiting Queensland and the people of Queensland. The government has taken on board this success and has made some sensible, legitimate changes to embrace that success and enable it to continue.

We had some better contributions from members opposite a bit later in the debate. The incoherent ramblings of the member for Gympie and the member for Maroochydore were, to say the least, embarrassing. Usually the speeches of the member for Gympie—apart from when he talks about Traveston Dam and his eyes glaze over and he goes into some sort of monk-like chant—are not too bad. I thought to myself, 'Why was the member for Gympie's speech today so bad?' I thought that it must have been as a result of the riding instructions that he received from a member of the public who we now have running the LNP. Those riding instructions would have been, 'Sound like you support the stadium—we do not want to put the football players offside—but you have to sound like you are opposed to the Labor government. Have a go at the crowds for being drunk and disorderly but do not bag them too much because we want a lot of them to vote for us at the next election.' This sitting on the fence and not having a position has been a regular position for the LNP ever since I have been in this place. But it has become a lot worse since we have a member of the public from outside this place imposed on the LNP and running this place. Those opposite simply refuse to have a position on anything.

So we compare the generalisations and the ravings from the member for Gympie with the very sensible, well-thought-out statements from the member for Mount Coot-tha who represents the area. He talked about the fact that the vast majority of people recognise the need for this change and support this change. We live in a large metropolitan city with lots of things going on nowadays. That means that at times people are going to be inconvenienced. I do not underplay that inconvenience.

The people in my electorate are inconvenienced every time someone drives on the Gateway Motorway to go to the Gold Coast. The people in my community have a bit of inconvenience every time someone takes off in a plane from Brisbane Airport and flies overhead. But that is not an excuse to shut down the Gateway Motorway or not use it after eight o'clock at night or cut the hours of use of Brisbane Airport.

Mr Reeves: The Belmont Rifle Range.

Mr KILBURN: The Belmont Rifle Range is another great sporting facility which is supported and was built by this government—run by this government—

Mr Gibson: Who's rewriting history now?

Mr KILBURN: I will withdraw that statement. That was wrong. That is well supported by this government. One of the comments made by the member for Gympie is that those on his side of the House support sport and those on our side do not. He can say that because they do not actually have to do anything. They do not have a plan. They have not given us a funding commitment. They have not guaranteed to continue any of the funding that this government provides.

In the time that I have been here I have seen a very committed and well credentialed Minister for Sport. I see him regularly supporting sport not only at the elite level but at a grassroots level. I will give members some examples. Last week I was at the Cougars Weightlifting Club at the Chandler centre. A new floor has been put in there. The members there having a competition said that they are told regularly by sportspeople from around Australia how impressed they are by the level of support for grassroots sports clubs in this state.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr KILBURN: I am responding to the comments that were made by the member for Gympie that there is no support for sport on this side of the House. We have seen support for elite sport teams through the building of stadiums through to support of grassroots sports. In my area that includes support for sports like weightlifting. We have the Clem Jones Centre which runs the active inclusion program. There is a whole range of activities.


We also had a flood at the start of this year. We saw how quickly this minister was out repairing tennis courts and repairing sporting stadiums. Suncorp Stadium was under water and it was repaired. Sporting facilities throughout the state were repaired. That is the level of commitment we get from this government. It is absolutely committed to supporting sport at all levels in this state. That is in stark contrast to the motherhood statements that we get from those opposite. There is no real commitment to continuing to support those sporting facilities.

I congratulate the Minister for Sport for getting on board. If we listened to the member for Gympie we would think that everything is terrible and out of control and nothing works properly. Last Sunday with a lot of other people from my electorate I went down and parked at the park and ride at Carindale—which, according to the LNP, does not exist—got on a bus and went on the new busway straight to Suncorp Stadium. We went into the stadium. There was a great atmosphere. I did not see any problems being caused. People had a great day. We got on the bus and came home. So we went on a busway that would not be there if it were up to the LNP to a stadium that would not be there if the LNP had its way to watch a great day's sport.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr KILBURN: It would not be. That is the simple fact. The LNP did not want the stadium. Those opposite have never supported that sort of infrastructure. After this government has made the hard decisions and built something those opposite get their photograph taken there and take credit for it when they opposed the decision every step of the way. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot oppose the tough decisions that are required to get the funding to build infrastructure and then take credit for the infrastructure when it is built.

Once again today we heard in an appalling speech from the member for Gympie a rewriting of history and an attempt to appeal to every single person. That is the mantra of the member of the public who is running their party. Apparently not one of them in this House is capable of actually running the LNP. So they import a member of the public to do it. That person then tells them to try to appeal to everyone, do not ever have a position on anything, make sure you are very vague, never commit to funding anything and try to appeal to everyone. It is only a matter of time before the public starts to cotton on and see through this charade and see that the only people actually doing anything, actually building anything and actually committed to providing things for this state is the Bligh Labor government. We will continue to do that for a long time to come.


 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (4.06 pm): I also rise to speak in support of the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011. I congratulate the Minister for Sport, Phil Reeves, who has been spoken about a moment ago by my colleague, for showing no hesitation in introducing this bill to the House to ensure that we get the home final for the Brisbane Broncos this weekend. This bill cements Queensland's reputation as an international sporting hub, capable of holding world-class events and, as such, the economic return to Queensland in hosting these world-class sporting events is substantial. In fact, the minister is correct when he says that these events are good for fans, good for jobs and great for our economy.

This is because everyone knows that Queensland is where Australia shines and not where we stop residents and tourists from enjoying themselves because of a self-imposed cap set around 10 years ago. In fact, over the last 10 years we have seen significant population growth in Brisbane and in the south-east corner. Coupled with our recent sporting success, this means it is time we relooked at this issue.

Increasing the cap gives us a chance to show the world that we have the ultimate sporting playground. It shows that we do not let red tape get in the road of more important events that are valued by the community and shine the spotlight on Queensland. This is important because today Queensland has a global reputation for coordinating and hosting major international events such as the Brisbane International Tennis Tournament, the Quicksilver Pro surfing event, the Rugby League World Cup—which is my favourite—and the upcoming festival of rugby coming to the Gold Coast in November 2011.

This international and local focus on Queensland and our events are a real economic driver, particularly for our tourism industry. Suncorp Stadium plays a significant role in our ability to host great sporting and other events, and the people agree. I can say this because I note that the minister recently recognised the one millionth visitor to go through the gates at Suncorp Stadium. I can guarantee him that many of those people who attended those particular events have either come from the electorate of Ipswich West or around that area. My electorate has many people who enjoy going to games of rugby league particularly but also other events as well.

The popularity of this iconic venue—the hallowed grounds—is just one more reason Queensland continues to be the greatest events state. Just look at last Sunday's game when Locky had nearly 51,000 people come through the gates to see him. I believe that we will see a full house again when the Broncos take on the Warriors this weekend. On a note closer to home, I want to conclude by offering my best wishes to the local Brothers and Fassifern rugby league sides in Ipswich who will be competing in the grand final on Sunday afternoon. I can confirm that the member for Lockyer, who is the representative for the Fassifern region, will be there as well, and we have agreed to make a special donation and contribution to the player of the match, even though I know it is going to be a Brothers player. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (4.09 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all members who participated in this debate. I believe most members will agree with me when I say that we must ensure that Queensland's world-class standard sporting facilities, including Suncorp Stadium, are not encumbered by red tape, bureaucracy and inflexible arrangements. Queensland is renowned for its excellent sporting venues and its well-managed and popular sporting events. Our reputation as a premier sporting destination depends upon our ability to respond to changes in our state, national and global environments. We must continue to keep Queensland as the champion events state.

I would like to take this opportunity to respond in detail to the Community Affairs Committee's report in relation to the bill. In its report, the Community Affairs Committee asked for further information regarding how the government will mitigate and manage possible adverse impacts on residents and businesses around Suncorp Stadium as a result of the bill. I would like to point out that Suncorp Stadium has already hosted 12 events in 2011 with crowds over 35,000. Even with such large crowd numbers, the operational, traffic and emergency plans that Suncorp Stadium has in place have been more than up to the task. These events have run smoothly, with very few significant incidents reported.

Suncorp Stadium works closely with Brisbane city transport, Queensland Rail, TransLink, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Queensland Ambulance Service to ensure that crowd movement and behaviour is managed and that any negative impacts on surrounding communities are reduced and effectively managed. Impacts arising from increases in traffic congestion and a reduction in available street parking are addressed through Suncorp Stadium's transport control plan. The transport control plan works on a number of fronts to ensure people can get to and from major sporting events quickly and safely and with minimal disruption to local residents and businesses.

The key aims of the transport control plan are to protect local residents and businesses from any negative effects of crowd or traffic intrusion before, during or after events; discourage private car travel and maximise the use of public transport to and from the stadium; minimise disturbance to local and regional traffic flows and public transport operations before, during and after events; and ensure public safety on plazas and walkways to and from the venue. So far this year Suncorp Stadium has hosted 12 major sporting events with crowds greater than 35,000 people, and the transport control plan has ensured orderly and efficient management and movement of crowds and traffic on these days.

Since Suncorp Stadium was opened in 2003, major upgrades to infrastructure have occurred to improve traffic and transport operations. The Roma Street-Caxton Street pedestrian link through the Barracks site is now in operation, improving pedestrian flows around the stadium and reducing the impact of events on the local road network. The opening of this link means that all of the traffic, public transport and pedestrian management infrastructure associated with the stadium redevelopment has been completed. In addition, public transport use to and from the stadium has averaged around 85 per cent since the stadium opened. This keeps cars off local streets and ensures patrons get to and from the stadium quickly and efficiently.

Like the member for Chatsworth, I had the pleasure of attending Suncorp Stadium on Sunday. Two of my proudest achievements since being a member have been being involved in (1) the Suncorp Stadium redevelopment and (2) the development of the South East Busway. I had the pleasure of travelling from Garden City on the world-class South East Busway to and from the game on Sunday and

then attending the world-class Suncorp Stadium. It was terrific to be there and terrific to see how efficient it is continuing to run. Regular scheduled train and bus services are not cancelled in order to provide sufficient capacity to meet regular commuter and additional event services on event days.

With respect to community safety, such as potential increases in alcohol fuelled violence, Suncorp Stadium has arrangements in place with the Queensland Police Service on event days, including after events. Stadium hirers are required to pay for Queensland Police Service officers to be on the ground on event days to manage pedestrian, traffic and bus movements and address any instances of public nuisance around the stadium. The level of policing for each event is determined by specific factors, including the expected size and demographics of the crowd. The current policing model in place for Suncorp Stadium has shown that it is more than able to cater for crowd sizes over 25,000.

The liquor licence conditions applying to Suncorp Stadium require responsible service of alcohol. People are not allowed under the liquor licence to take alcohol away from the premises. Brisbane City Council's entertainment local law establishes a maximum noise threshold for event days. This threshold does not vary according to crowd size and applies regardless of whether the stadium is hosting an event attended by 25,000 or 50,000 people.

Finally in regard to the committee's report, retrospective application of the bill from 1 January 2011 will mean that the definition of a major sport event changes for the calendar year. This will mean that approximately 11 events already held during the year with crowds of between 25,000 and 35,000 will no longer be defined as 'major sport events'. Retrospective application is required to ensure the stadium can legally allow crowds larger than 25,000 to attend highly popular events during the remainder of 2011.

In response to the member for Gympie, who delivered a rambling speech and contradicted himself by claiming to be a fan of the stadium and then reverted to usual LNP tactics of talking it down, I remind the member that if his side of the chamber had been in office the stadium would never have been redeveloped into a world-class venue that has already attracted one million patrons in 2011 and has delivered massive injections into the local economy. If there was any year that we needed those massive injections into the local economy, it was this year.

The opposition criticised this government for redeveloping Lang Park into Suncorp Stadium, just like they did over Metricon, so it is a little bit too cute of them to claim to be supporters of sport and of the stadium. The opposition opposed the Bligh government's investment in sport and events which have helped make Queensland the champion state. The opposition is on the record as opposing and attacking this government's decision to build Suncorp Stadium.

The member for Gympie might ask the member for Warrego what he meant when he told this parliament in 2001 that the opposition saw the redevelopment as unsuitable. He might also talk to the former member for Beaudesert, who is on record in *Hansard* as calling the stadium a white elephant. He might also talk to the former member for Moggill, who did not think people would catch public transport to the game and that it would not work. As I have already said, public transport use has averaged around 85 per cent since the stadium opened.

Stadiums Queensland regularly monitors the number of events and crowd sizes at Suncorp Stadium, and there has been a history of fluctuating crowd size numbers at events over the last three to four years. The member for Gympie deliberately did not talk about the 2008 figures; he started with the 2009 figures. What the member for Gympie did not mention, so cutely, was that in 2008 there were 23 events with crowd sizes above 25,000 and that this decreased to 16 events in 2009—not the upward trend that he was talking about—and then there were 20 events in 2010. In recognising this fluctuation in crowd sizes, Stadiums Queensland continued to monitor events at Suncorp Stadium throughout 2011. When it became known that the cap was likely to be exceeded, action was taken in the form of this legislation.

Opposition members have said that we waited too long, but I remind them of why the Broncos made last Sunday the farewell game for Darren Lockyer. The Broncos had to make a decision a couple of months ago to make sure that they had an event and they did not know they would definitely be in the final, so that is why they decided to make the game last week—even though I am confident the Broncos will have two more games at Suncorp Stadium this year. In June, we were not sure that the Reds were going to play one final at Suncorp Stadium let alone the grand final. So, as soon as parliament came back after the budget sitting and after the Reds were in the semifinal and the final, we announced what we were going to do and the member for Mount Coot-tha had community consultation. At the very next parliamentary sitting, we introduced the legislation and now today—the very next sitting week after that—we are debating the legislation and passing it.

The 'Captain Hindsights' of the opposition are well and truly here. The reality is that those opposite did not know that the Reds were going to play in the two semifinals. I was hoping that they would, but it was only a hope. The years 2008 and 2009 show the fluctuations. However, in reality, we were not confident that the Broncos were going to make the semifinals. I think they can go all the way now, just quietly, but it must be good to be 'Captain Hindsights' and have such hindsight. They might be able to work out who is going to be leader after Christmas!

In recognising this fluctuation in crowd sizes, Stadiums Queensland continued to monitor the events throughout 2011, and, when it became known that the cap was likely to be exceeded, action was taken. Furthermore, the purpose of the inclusion of a head of power in this bill to enable crowd sizes in future years to be set by regulation provides a mechanism to respond to the growth in the number of events at the stadium and the potential for crowd sizes to grow. This is proper planning. Temporarily lifting the cap for 2011 enables events to continue to be held at Suncorp Stadium for the remainder of the year. Obviously we did not know that if another 500-odd people went to the Socceroos game the cap would have already been reached and obviously parliament does not sit until after the finals series this week, and that is why the bill is being debated now.

Addressing future years' needs as they become known is not only practical but sensible. Importantly—and this is the most important point from some of the contributions by those opposite—the process that we are implementing here today allows for community consultation on the definition of major event crowd sizes. I am disappointed that members opposite, including the member for Toowoomba South, seem to be intent on misrepresenting the process of establishing the definition of a major sports event by regulation as denying the community a voice. The member for Mount Coot-tha and Treasurer quite clearly said that the opposite is the case, as opposed to setting a new cap today or removing it altogether. The community has not asked for the cap to be removed. Therefore, having a mechanism by which to set future crowd levels which also enables a consultation process to take place is the best outcome for the community. The bill is about event numbers and crowd sizes, and the claim by the member for Gympie that on the one hand the community is concerned about events but on the other hand there should be no cap at all seems to directly contradict itself.

In response to the member's claims that the stadium is being run down, which is just another negative attempt to talk down the venue his party never wanted to see, once again his facts are wrong. Despite the shadow Treasurer's claim in his budget reply speech that stadiums are a waste of money—they were his words—this government invests in our venues and maintains them. Stadiums Queensland has a rolling five-year capital works plan for Suncorp Stadium which is included in the government's forward estimates. These funds and specific projects are prioritised in consultation with the hirers and the venue managers to ensure the stadium is maintained to meet both the hirer's needs and contemporary standards. For example, over recent years at Suncorp Stadium the western grill terrace has been closed and air conditioned, the concourse has been repainted, the carpets have been replaced as required and of course there are the massive recovery works following this year's flood. The western stand and the player facilities are being upgraded as an outcome of the flooding but not just replaced on a like-for-like basis. They are being upgraded—

Mr Gibson: That's an outcome of flooding, not planning!

Mr REEVES: No, it is being upgraded as a result of that. There is a full condition assessment carried out every three years to ensure the stadium's assets are being maintained. These types of works—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr REEVES: The honourable member opposite might want to listen to this part. These types of works are funded and carried out every year. The same cannot be said of the Brisbane City Council, which had to launch a public appeal to repair City Hall. Where was the sinking fund for that work? It did not exist. What about Brisbane City Council swimming pools? Has the LNP administration budgeted for sinking funds for those venues? No. It plans it in the out years. Those opposite have no idea about accrual accounting. There are the forward years of capital and operational budgets. I would prefer to listen to the players who use Suncorp Stadium to see what they think of Suncorp than listen to the member for Gympie. Darren Lockyer has said—

I have played at stadiums all around the world but nothing compares to Suncorp Stadium here in Brisbane! It is a world class sporting venue, great atmosphere, great playing surface and I love performing there. It brings out the best in me.

And aren't we happy that it does! Queensland Reds coach—a New South Welshman, but we will not hold that against him—Ewen McKenzie was reported in the *Courier-Mail* in July this year as saying—

Playing at Suncorp helps. It's the favourite venue of the players.

Have these sportsmen got it wrong, or is the opposition being negative for the sake of politics? Where would that sort of attitude leave Darren Lockyer or Mal Meninga when they called on the Suncorp crowd to pull them through? Negativity is just not what being a Queenslander is all about. If the teams followed the opposition lead of negativity, where would they find themselves? Last! If Matt McKay in the dying minutes of the Roar game was as negative as the member for Gympie, it would not have inspired the Roar to victory when they were 2-0 down in those dying minutes of the A-League grand final. No, the Roar knew never to give up. The Roar knew to stay focused. They went from 2-0 down with 15 minutes to go to scoring two goals to equalise and force a penalty shoot-out, and they emerged victorious. The government shares the spirit of our teams and talks up Queensland; it does not talk it down. Our sporting teams have a positive attitude to their codes. Like the Bligh government, they know that nothing beats Queensland.

The LNP has always opposed Suncorp Stadium and once again today has been full of criticism and negativity. Instead of getting on board and championing Queensland as the events capital of Australia, the member for Gympie and his friends want to knock and criticise. Queensland is no doubt the champion state because this government has ignored the negativity of those opposite and invested in facilities and venues that drive our success, and we will continue to do so.

Finally, the LNP game plan has been revealed for all to see. It has one plan and one plan only: talk Queensland down. If it can knock the world-class Suncorp Stadium that is world renowned then it can knock anything to do with Queensland. It criticises major events and tries to deny Queensland the social and economic benefits that flow from this government's investment in world-class venues. It just astounds me that members opposite can come in here and make the statement that it is not a world-class venue. I know that the member opposite was there on Friday night, but you have obviously not looked at back of house of Suncorp Stadium or front of house of Suncorp Stadium.

Mr Gibson: What happened at the Tri Nations game?

Mr REEVES: I take that interjection. The power loss was as a direct result of the stadium still being repaired as a result of the floods.

Mr Gibson: But that's world-class, then?

Mr REEVES: Those opposite were deniers of the GFC. Now they are deniers of the flood and its impacts. No-one denies that. That is why we had to replace the oval a couple of weeks before the Reds semifinal—because of the floods. That is why the players have temporary but very good dressing-room facilities at the moment and we are widening and expanding the dressing-room facilities—because of the floods. If we asked any of the players who have played there since the floods or any of the spectators who have been there since the floods, they would say it is still a world-class facility and in fact probably the best facility in the world for rectangular sports. Anyone saying otherwise is obviously just wanting to be negative for negativity's sake.

As even the member for Toowoomba South said—he was there the other night; within 24 hours there were two games with about 90,000 people attending—the stadium looked first class. It is first class and it continues to be first class. For the member opposite to come into this House and say otherwise is not only an affront to the people who manage the stadium and an affront to the million Queenslanders who visited the stadium this year alone but it just proves, once and for all, what the LNP game plan is here—and that is to be negative, negative, negative.

The people of Queensland are not fooled. The people of Queensland want to look for positives. They look forward to the great success of our sporting teams and the great success of our stadiums. Not only is it great for fans, not only is it great for jobs, but also it kicks goals for the Queensland economy and that is what we will continue to push.

The member also referred to antisocial behaviour and at least acknowledged that the level of such behaviour is very low. For the benefit of the House I am happy to report that in the 2010-11 year there were nearly 1.2 million patrons who visited the stadium. Despite such huge crowds there have only been a very small number of incidents, accidents, complaints or arrests on event days or nights.

The member for Maroochydore made wild claims about the concerns of the community going unanswered. The Treasurer has provided a good overview of the consultation mechanisms that are in place to respond to any concerns and the process works well. Concerns raised through the recent community consultation meeting in August have been taken back to the Stadium Management Advisory Committee, which includes government, Brisbane City Council and community representatives. The committee is now addressing those concerns that have been raised.

The member for Gregory made a definite statement on the position of the opposition when it comes to guaranteeing a stadium will be built in Rockhampton if a licence is granted to the Central Queensland NRL team. This is more than we have heard from the LNP, I must say, and I think the likelihood of a stadium being delivered by the LNP is very slim for a range of reasons. We know the LNP opposes stadiums. We know they opposed Metricon. We know what the member for Clayfield said in his budget reply speech. We know Campbell Newman is on record saying that he would like the private sector to fund a Rockhampton stadium. The LNP did not support Suncorp, it campaigned against Metricon at the last election, and I would not hold my breath if I lived in Rockhampton and wanted the LNP to deliver a stadium.

Mr Schwarten: Only a Labor government ever brings anything to Rocky.

Mr REEVES: Exactly right. I take that interjection from the member for Rockhampton. In conclusion, Queenslanders love getting together with friends and family at live sporting events. It is our way of life. It has been an important part of growing up in Queensland. For newcomers to Queensland, being a part of these live sporting events can be a way of engaging with and feeling a part of the local community. Watching our favourite football, rugby union or rugby league teams live with our family and friends has and will continue to play a major role in building our relationship with and our connections to our communities.

Queenslanders have enjoyed going to these events for generations. There is no need for us to stop it happening now. It is part of our way of life. It is important, therefore, to future proof Brisbane's world-class sporting venue Suncorp Stadium. I would therefore conclude by reiterating that the Major Sports Facilities Amendment Bill 2011 is required to ensure that Suncorp Stadium can maintain its status as a world-class venue. I think I speak for all in the House when I say we will love watching the Broncos play two finals there and go on to play the grand final, unfortunately, in Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.

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


Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

 **Mr GIBSON** (4.34 pm): With regard to the provision at section 30AL, which provides the head of power for regulation, can I get the minister to explain to the House and put on the record whether the regulations that will be coming through will be of a permanent or a temporary nature? The reason I am asking this is that on 1 January we go back to a threshold of 25,000, but this clause allows a crowd size as prescribed by regulation. What I am asking is the point at which the regulation comes in. Will that have a time limit to it of 12 months, as we are seeing with this amendment for 2011, or will that then hold permanent until such time as a further regulation is introduced?


The second point with regard to this is what will be the trigger for the introduction of that regulation? Will it be, as we faced this year, the number of games clicking over 25,000 and that being the reason to bring the regulation through or will the trigger be after a period of consultation the regulation is introduced and, if so, what would the estimated time frame be for that public consultation?

Mr REEVES: I thank the honourable member for the question. My intention is to make it a permanent one, obviously subject to future regulations, and my intention is to have the regulation start from 1 January prior to the end of this year.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (4.36 pm): I move—


That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. PG REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (4.37 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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


Motion agreed to.

ELECTRICITY PRICE REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 15 June (see p. 1844), on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (4.37 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate with respect to the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill. This bill was introduced in June of this year by the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities. The title of the bill speaks for itself. The purpose of the bill is to replace the methodology for determining notified electricity prices and allow for the introduction of a new price setting methodology which is to commence on 1 July 2012.

The single greatest policy matter likely to ever affect electricity prices in Queensland, and for that matter Australia, is Labor's carbon tax. The minister, the Premier, the Treasurer and the rest of those opposite know it. This bill before the House is part of a process, as is this debate. Later I am going to go into some detail regarding ministerial letters, direction notices, the QCA electricity review and its reports. Contained within all these documents are many references to terms like 'carbon', 'carbon pricing', 'emissions' and 'carbon pollution reduction schemes'. I want to make it very clear—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Member for Buderim, make it very clear in terms of the bill that is before the House. It is a very, very restricted bill and you are aware of the requirements.

Mr DICKSON: With respect, the title of the bill is very, very clear. It is the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011 and one of the biggest impacts on that bill will be the implementation of the carbon tax.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed.

Mr DICKSON: The debate on this bill is directly related to accommodating the impacts of a carbon tax on electricity prices and the costs here in Queensland. Those matters are the reason we are here today, debating this bill. During budget estimates this year the CEO of CS Energy, Mr 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 the job-destroying carbon tax. The carbon tax will account for around 50 per cent of electricity generating operating costs. On 12 July during the estimates hearing, in responding to a question from a colleague, the member for Clayfield, the Treasurer stated—

... there is now work being undertaken to analyse not only the information that has been provided by the federal Treasury in terms of their own work and assessments but looking in particular towards the assumptions around that, undertaking an independent analysis of that through our own Treasury and beyond the likely undertakings with external advice where appropriate. 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.

Indeed, it did take close to six weeks for the Treasurer to release the modelling. We know that it hit the table during the last sitting. Throughout the 54-page document there are many references to the Australian government's modelling. Last month in Canberra, at the COAG meeting, the Prime Minister was asked by the New South Wales Premier to release the state-by-state modelling on the impacts of the carbon tax. Guess what? The Prime Minister refused to release the modelling. I suspect that this is simply code for 'certain states are not going to cop it in the neck', particularly resource states such as Queensland.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know that you have already mentioned to the honourable member that he needs to restrict his comments to the provisions of the bill. No clause in this bill mentions the carbon price that has been announced by the Commonwealth government. Indeed, it cannot mention that because the legislation for the announcement of a carbon price has not even been introduced into the Commonwealth parliament, let alone passed by it. Therefore, it does not refer to carbon price whatsoever in terms of this bill. I ask you to rule accordingly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I would caution the member for Buderim that, as I originally said, it is a very limited bill so be very careful where you stray.

Ms Male interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Pine Rivers, I do not need any assistance, thank you.

Mr DICKSON: The Treasury modelling is a cynical attempt to somehow hide the truth about the carbon tax and its impact on Queensland, thus offering the Premier some misguided protection from this Labor policy. However, that is not good enough and it will not work.

I note also that there is at least a five per cent discrepancy between the New South Wales and Queensland Treasury modelling on the impacts on electricity prices. The Queensland Treasury modelling document makes references to the Australian government's modelling. However, all Queenslanders, my colleagues and I want to see the nitty-gritty of the government's modelling from the federal government on a state-by-state basis. We on this side of the House know that the Queensland government is terrified of what the state-by-state federal Treasury modelling would reveal and how it would impact on Queenslanders.

The state Treasury modelling reveals three small paragraphs on the impacts of Labor's carbon tax on household power prices. The Treasury modelling document states—

Using the Australian Government's estimated 10 per cent increase in retail electricity prices due to carbon pricing, the average Queensland electricity bill would increase by \$190 next year as a result of carbon pricing.

The document continues—

In addition, the Government announced the intention to implement an inclining block tariff (IBT) for residential customers on Tariff 11. With this work underway, the Queensland Competition Authority is due to provide a draft report including estimated prices for 2012-13 by the end of March 2012, and a final report by the end of May 2012.

So there we have it: the government is all over the shop in relation to electricity prices in Queensland. It has had one review that produced three reports. It has called for another review, with the final report due in May next year. Now we have the state Treasury modelling utilising half-baked nationwide federal Treasury modelling as to the impacts of the carbon tax on electricity prices in Queensland.

The bill amends the Electricity Act and the Electricity Regulation in an effort to replace the benchmark retail cost index, which is used to determine and notify electricity prices in Queensland. The bill also amends the Electricity Act following changes to the conditions of eligibility for connection to the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme, which commenced retrospectively from 8 June 2011. I will provide some background that is important to the matters contained within the bill.

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 minister's letter makes very interesting reading. Paragraph 4 of the letter gives us the vibe of what the letter and the accompanying direction notice was really all about.

Within the direction notice there are four mentions of then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Within the minister's letter there are six mentions of the CPRS—yes, six. Therefore, this direction to the Queensland Competition Authority was all about paving the way for Labor's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. As we know now, since the Prime Minister's office has come under new management, Kevin Rudd's CPRS has been rebadged by Julia Gillard as the carbon tax. The minister's letter to the Queensland Competition Authority states—

It is the Australian Government's intention to introduce a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme on 1 July 2011. The CPRS will be Australia's primary policy tool to deliver low emissions outcomes and put a price on carbon in a systematic way throughout the economy.

Central to the effective implementation of the CPRS, and promotion of energy efficiency initiatives, is an electricity pricing regime that leads to changes in consumer behaviour that support a carbon constrained economy.

Noting the intent of the CPRS is to internalise costs of carbon emissions in consumption decisions, COAG agreed on 30 April 2009 to amend the Australian Energy Market Agreement to specify that, where retail prices were regulated, energy cost increases associated with the CPRS shall be passed through to the end use consumers.

There we have it. The ultimate goal direction given to the Queensland Competition Authority was to find a way to have electricity consumers pay more for electricity, with a view to satisfying proponents of the carbon tax. In fact, contained within the final report of stage 1 by the Queensland Competition Authority we find the following: among the matters considered in stage 1 of the Queensland Competition Authority review, the authority was asked to consider how to pass through to consumers the costs associated with a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, an expanded renewable energy target scheme and/or any other environmental obligations introduced by the Commonwealth or Queensland government.

On 31 May this year, the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities issued a ministerial media statement heralding the introduction of this legislation. The media statement was titled 'Minister disappointed at QCA electricity pricing decision'. Within that very media statement, the minister admitted that—

... the impact of the Commonwealth Government's revised Renewable Energy Target (RET) also contributed significantly to the QCA price increase.

We must not forget that this renewable energy target scheme is Labor's initiative. It is important for Queenslanders to keep that in mind when they go to the ballot box. The minister's media statement further states—

The RET contributed 3.19 percent to the QCA pricing decision of 6.6 per cent. Without it, Queenslanders would only be facing a price rise slightly lower than the current consumer price index of 3.6 per cent.

The minister cannot have it both ways. In 2009 he directed the QCA to consider how to pass through to consumers the costs associated with the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme and expanded renewable energy target scheme. Now, in 2011, he is trying to hide behind Labor's renewable energy target, blaming it for the size of the increase. How is that for hypocrisy?

Even back in 2009 this state Labor government was investigating how to punish the public with increased power prices to satisfy the ideologies embraced by the Greens and the left-wing lunatics. It is interesting that, since Julia Gillard backflipped on her intention to not introduce a carbon tax, our Premier and various ministers have been pressed as to whether they support the Prime Minister's decision. What have we heard from the Premier and other government members? Up until recently all we have heard were weasel words. Now there is a squabble between the Premier and the Prime Minister over the carbon tax.

It was reported in the *Courier-Mail* on 27 July that the Premier had ridiculed suggestions by Julia Gillard that losses to the state's coal fired power stations from the carbon tax would be offset by an increase in the value of green energy sources. That highlighted precisely what the Premier thinks about

Labor's green energy future. Prime Minister Julia Gillard has said that the Queensland government would benefit from an increase in the value of green energy assets, but the Premier hit back saying that this benefit would be tiny compared to the losses to be suffered by the coal fired power stations. Here is the kicker: the Premier said—

While we have put very significant investment into it, it is largely owned in the private sector. So the suggestion that the loss of value to our state-owned generators will be in any way compensated by what will be an increase in the value of renewable generation is a very, very, very long way away.

The Premier is confirming what we all suspect: Labor's carbon tax policy and associated green energy future is all smoke and mirrors. These Labor policies will hurt Queenslanders. We just have to look at what was reported in the *Australian* last Friday: Labor's renewable energy plan could see consumers belted with \$1.5 billion extra in electricity costs in 2012. Because of the high Australian dollar, there is an absolute tsunami of cheap solar panels coming into Australia from Asian countries. Australia's biggest energy retailer, Origin, has warned that Julia Gillard's plan to create a \$10 billion green energy fund to provide new subsidies to solar industries will force power costs even higher. The flood of solar components from overseas is only set to get bigger.

We also learned last month that Australia's last remaining manufacturer of solar cells will close down its plant in Sydney. So much for Labor's supposed green jobs bonanza! There are 30 workers who are employed in the green energy industry who have just been shown the door. Labor's green energy jobs policy is in a shambles. Its policy is not in any way helping to develop a green economy with green jobs. It is presiding over a policy that is going to push jobs offshore.

Previously, when pressed by the media and the LNP, the Premier talked about wanting to see the finer details before supporting Labor's carbon tax, but the intention is clear. I will highlight the government's intentions very soon. I can clearly see from the stage 1 report that all the government was concerned about was having the QCA investigate how Labor's state government could pass on the cost of such a tax to poor old Joe Public, the electricity consumer. In fact—and I alluded to this earlier—references to 'carbon', 'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme' and 'carbon price' are made no fewer than 58 times in the QCA's report.

Accommodating a carbon tax is—and always has been—the very building block for this entire process. On 11 May this year the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities also issued a media release. In that release on the question of power prices the minister stated—

And we are still waiting on what impact the Federal Government's Carbon Tax will have as well.

Even the minister was foreshadowing that Labor's carbon tax is going to add to the hurt. If the truth be known, all of those opposite know that a carbon tax will significantly increase energy prices and this government and the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities are determined that Queensland will pay the price for Labor's carbon tax. In fact, during the second reading of this bill—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I have looked at the explanatory notes and I can find no mention of carbon tax. For 15 minutes now the honourable member continues to talk about carbon tax. I wonder when we will get to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hoolihan): Order! There is no point of order. If the member reads the explanatory notes he will find a mention of carbon.

Mr DICKSON: In fact, during the second reading of this bill on 15 June this year the minister stated his and his government's position. The minister said—

The amendments will also provide sufficient flexibility to deal with any unidentified policy changes or market upheavals.

The minister continued—

In particular, this approach will ensure the regulatory framework is flexible enough to allow any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations to be captured and passed through to customers.

That is absolutely rock solid proof that this bill is all about making Queenslanders pay Labor's carbon tax. Remembering that the QCA review formed the basis of this bill, the stage 1 report continues—

In this regard, the Authority notes that state and territory governments, including Queensland, have agreed ... that, where retail price regulation is retained at the commencement of the CPRS, carbon costs will be passed through to consumers. As a result, any price setting methodology will have to meet this requirement.

The stage 2 final report from the QCA released in November 2009 has some very interesting reading as well. Within the report we read the following—

Undoubtedly, there will be winners and losers from the proposed changes. Those who are currently paying prices above their true cost of supply or who are able to adjust their use of electricity to take advantage of new tariff options should benefit from the proposals suggested by the Authority. Correspondingly, those who currently benefit from lower prices or are unable to modify their use are likely to be worse off.

At the end of the review the QCA concluded that an overhaul of the current price setting framework was warranted and proposed that an alternative price setting methodology based on the network plus retail cost build-up approach and a new set of retail tariffs be introduced.

With respect to a delegation to the QCA under the bill, clause 8 states—

- (3) The terms of reference may specify the following—
- (a) the period for which the price determination is to apply;
 - (b) the time frame within which QCA is to make and publish reports on the price determination;
 - (c) the particular policies or principles QCA is to consider when making the price determination;

This bill is taking into account the imminent introduction of Labor's carbon tax. I also wish to speak about proposed section 90AB of the bill which sets out rules for the publication of the notified prices. Subsection (2) states that the pricing entity must at least one month before the start of each tariff year announce its final price path determination and publish notified prices by gazette notice. Here is the interesting bit. A failure to comply with subsection (1) does not invalidate or otherwise affect the price determination. Why is that the case? Why the get-out clause for the Queensland Competition Authority? Rules are rules, are they not? I would like the minister to clarify this section of the bill when he gets the opportunity.

We on this side of the House will not support Labor's new, vague laws without knowing how the new electricity prices will be determined. We support abolishing the current electricity price structure but, until the Bligh government gets the definitive state-by-state modelling from Julia Gillard and tells Queenslanders how much electricity prices will go up due to the carbon tax, we cannot have any faith in the state government's figures. Its track record is too poor. It cannot be relied upon to get it right, whether it is asset sales, fuel subsidies, council deamalgamation, water restructure, government fees and charges or, indeed, Labor's power industry restructuring. Let us not forget the infamous claims that no-one would pay more for electricity under Labor's electricity reform.

This bill also amends the Electricity Act to allow for changes to the conditions of eligibility for connection to the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme as from 8 June 2011 retrospectively. I note that no public consultation has been undertaken on the changes to the Solar Bonus Scheme. The reasons for that will become very obvious. There is a clear objective within the bill to introduce an individual system cap of five kilowatts and a limit of one small photovoltaic generator system per premises for customers to be eligible for a feed-in tariff of 44c per kilowatt hour. The schedule 5 definition of 'small photovoltaic generator' means a photovoltaic system with a total rated inverter capacity up to the amount prescribed under a regulation or, if no amount is prescribed, five kilowatts.

Within the bill under section 44A and schedule 5 the definition of a small photovoltaic generator as in force immediately before the commencement continues to apply to the qualifying generator after 8 June 2011. We are told that customers with existing connections to the scheme that are above five kilowatts in size will continue to be eligible for the solar bonus tariff. The explanatory notes accompanying the bill state—

Recent advice from Queensland electricity distribution entities indicates a growing number of customers applying to install multiple large solar PV systems, each up to 30 kilowatts in size, on a single premises in order to secure a guaranteed return on investment. The explanatory notes continue—

The connection of multiple large installations for investment purposes is not a policy objective of the Scheme.

My question is: what did the government think was going to happen? It introduced this scheme encouraging consumers to jump on board and, as a sweetener, introduced rebates for people to install the system. I can recall the propaganda from the government telling people how they would be able to sell excess power back into the grid and what a benefit it would be for everybody. In fact, during the estimates hearing on 14 July 2009 the Premier, in answering a question about 'bright ideas' from the member for Mount Isa, was regaling the committee with the virtues of the feed-in tariff scheme and its benefits. The Premier stated—

From 1 July 2008 to 30 April this year, 4,200 customers across the state connected to the feed-in tariff. We have exported 725,000 kilowatt hours to solar energy at a value of over \$320,000. So from an industry that was barely existent, in less than 12 months we have seen some 4,200 customers take up the opportunity. We are looking, obviously ... at exporting that to the world.

During question time on 13 April 2010, the Premier stated—

When we initiated the Solar Bonus Scheme, which is a net feed-in tariff of 44c a kilowatt hour, we had just 1,200 solar PVs on Queensland homes. We introduced that program in July 2008. Since then, in less than two years, we now have almost 23,000 Queensland householders signed up and reaping the benefits. What are the benefits? First of all, they are reaping the benefits of generating their own power and seeing a cut to their electricity bills, but for those who have generated surplus power and have put it into the grid they have received money back.

The Premier continued—

We have seen 6½ thousand new customers sign up this year alone ... I am happy to advise the House that in just nine months we are now generating 36 megawatts of power ... That is a testament, I think, to the enthusiasm with which Queenslanders are embracing solar power.

So I would like to think it would naturally flow that obviously the larger the system the larger the feed-in. So am I missing something, or is it not the case that the government had no issue with the number and size of the systems being installed originally? The Premier, as I have outlined, was over the

moon about the amount of power being fed back into the grid by consumers. But now the government wants to limit the number and size of systems eligible for the feed-in tariff. If it initially had a problem with the number and size of the PV systems that could be a part of the scheme, why did it not introduce a cap in the first instance?

I think it has come down to a question of money. The government is broke and now it is backpedalling on the scheme. But I also think there is another reason for the size limit of the PV systems. I will go into that in a minute. It has to do with the current infrastructure's ability to be able to accept above a certain level of solar penetration into the network. And there is a surprise there for the customers too.

I note that the advice being relied upon by the minister for this amendment to the bill is coming from the energy distributors. Obviously, the energy distributors are also losing out on profits to the larger PV solar systems. So they are pressuring the government into this course of action. And there are a group of people out there in the community who do not qualify for the feed-in tariff scheme at all—residents of manufactured home parks.

I have received very lengthy correspondence from a number of residents in manufactured home parks. They have installed PV systems on their roofs in order to lower their power bills and at the same time feed back into the power grid in an effort to make some small amount of money from 'doing the bright thing'. However, they have been advised—and I have it in writing from the minister—that they do not qualify. It is the case that if the homeowner does not have a direct contractual agreement with a power provider—in other words, if they do not get a bill from the power company with their name on it—they do not qualify for the tariff. In a lot of manufactured home parks this is the case. The parks are bulk metered and the residents get a bill from the park owner. My colleague the member for Coomera highlighted this flaw in the legislation during the debate here in June. He noted—

People in manufactured home parks miss out on ongoing rebates for installing solar panels. An individual living in a house next door to a manufactured home park could get the rebate, but if they decided to sell their house and move into the park they would suddenly miss out on the rebate on an ongoing basis.

On 14 April 2011 the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities signed a letter to a resident of a manufactured home park at Eagleby. The minister's letter stated—

The Scheme's main objectives are to make solar power more affordable for Queenslanders, stimulate the solar power industry and encourage energy efficiency.

To be eligible for the scheme, customers must have an agreement in place with their electricity distributor, in your case Energex and have the appropriate metering installed.

In the situation you describe, the residents of the resort have no direct relationship with an electricity retailer or distributor, and will be ineligible to participate in the scheme.

Whilst we are talking about solar systems and feeding power back into the grid, I bet the punters out there will be very surprised to learn that, as things stand now, there is a limit to how much energy captured in their PV systems can be fed back into the grid—yes, a limit. It is a pretty low limit. Back in May—well before the 8 June deadline for installations of the smaller PV system—a gentleman from Mudgeeraba applied to Energex to have a 10-kilowatt solar PV system installed at his home. To his surprise his application was knocked back. Why was it knocked back? His application was knocked back because the penetration of energy from solar into the grid in his area had reached 30 per cent—yes, only 30 per cent. The gentleman contacted me and, in turn, I wrote to the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities.

I was thinking to myself that Labor is forcing the carbon tax upon us supposedly to facilitate renewable energy markets. This cannot be right. You know the mantra, Mr Deputy Speaker: the more renewable energy the better. So the minister replied to me, and I will quote directly from the minister's letter. He stated—

... Energex engaged consultants to review the appropriate penetration levels of solar PV systems to avoid customers experiencing quality of supply problems, especially during times of light load on the electricity distribution network and when there are high levels of solar penetration for example during the middle of the day ...

The minister's letter continues—

As a result Energex informs me it has been rejecting new applications for connection ... where the penetration of solar PV systems had reached thirty per cent in certain areas ... his application was rejected on those grounds.

Since, however, Energex has agreed to allow the gentleman's application as a trial to see whether the network can operate above the 30 per cent solar penetration limit. Labor at both a federal and a state level have fallen over themselves telling us we must do this, but it may be somewhat more prudent to first have infrastructure in place to cope with higher levels of solar penetration than 30 per cent.

As I have already said, this bill is all about making Queenslanders pay for the cost of Labor's carbon tax implications for the power industry. These are measures aimed at appeasing the whims of the extreme left. We are constantly told about the top 500 polluters. It started off as the top 1,000 polluters but that was going to expose too many companies for the government's liking. Too many companies would have no doubt passed on the cost of the carbon tax to voters, so they scaled it back to the top 500 polluters. When discussing this bill, I think it is important to note exactly who are the top 500 polluters.

On the question of electricity, which we are discussing in this bill, I have seen a list of the alleged top 50 polluters. Remember we are talking about electricity. The alleged top seven polluters are electricity companies. There are 13 electricity companies in the alleged top 16 polluters. Indeed, 17 electricity companies are in the top 50. There are also a few gas companies in there as well. That is just the top 50. We all, except those opposite, want to know who the top 500 are. We do not know, the community is not being told and even the entities do not know if they are captured by Julia's top 500.

As a case in point, during my recent travels I asked the CEO and chief financial officer of one of the largest councils a question. My question was: what impact would the \$23 per tonne carbon tax on methane emissions from their landfill tips have on the ratepayers' household rates? The answer was that they have no idea because they have not been told whether they have made the run-on side for the top 500 polluters. Again, it is a question of electricity pricing that we are debating presently.

I am informed that just one of this Labor state government's water bodies, Unitywater, uses \$8 million worth of electricity per annum priced on today's tariff system. The Queensland Treasury modelling reports only 2½ lines on electricity costs as they relate to water. It states—

Electricity costs represent less than 2 per cent of the overall costs of operating the South East Queensland Water Grid. These costs are not material to overall operation of the Grid within the announced price path.

But, as we know, Unitywater is a distributor-retailer to the consumers, so what will the carbon tax do to water prices for end use consumers when Unitywater passes on the carbon tax inflated electricity cost to them? As I have said, there is no mention in the Treasury modelling of the impacts on retail water costs even though we know that Unitywater uses \$8 million worth of electricity per annum. It only talks about the insignificant costs of bulk water supplies to the grid. The political deals done by both federal and state Labor have let the greenie out of the bottle. The bottle for the rest of us is how we get the greenie back into the bottle.

I am going to move that all words after 'Bill' be omitted and that the following words be inserted—
'be now referred to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee for consideration and report in accordance with chapter 23 of the standing orders'.

I will speak to the logic of referring this bill to a committee. I believe this parliament needs to be open and transparent to the people of Queensland. That is why the new committee system was set up.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! Are you going to do that now? You would need to seek the leave of the parliament to move a motion without notice.

Mr DICKSON: With respect, I took advice from the Clerk earlier and he said to do this within my 60-minute time frame.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure, but if you want to move the motion you would need the leave of the House to move the motion.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will take your direction. If I need the leave of the House I am happy to seek leave of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You need to seek the leave of the House to move the motion. I am not sure whether that is what you are doing now, but if you want to move a motion in relation to what you are doing you would need the leave of the House to do that before you could then put the motion.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will continue on with my speech and talk about what I am going to move and I will seek leave at the end of my speech to move the motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is fine.

Mr DICKSON: I believe it is time for the Queensland parliament to be absolutely open and transparent with the people of Queensland. The committee system has been set up to do that. I see this as an opportunity for every member of this House to put forward their ideas and suggestions and to give the people of Queensland the opportunity to come before us and let us know their opinions. As I have stated through my speech, nobody understands totally the impacts of the carbon tax.

There is a discrepancy between the New South Wales and Queensland Treasury figures of five per cent. If there is a five per cent increase above the 10 per cent increase that Queensland predicts—and we are being told it could be as high as 20 per cent—what cost-of-living impacts will that have on electricity consumers? How will they be able to cope?

I believe there is bipartisan support for most of the bills that will go before the committees. More than anything else, I see this as an opportunity to do what this parliament was meant to do when it was set up by our forefathers—that is, to represent the people of Queensland and to give them a say in this House. It is not only the impacts of the carbon tax that are at issue but also the cost increases for gas.

This legislation will come into play in June 2012. The cost of gas is due to go up substantially within the next 12 months to two years. We are hearing from some that it could go up by nearly 200 per cent within the next two to three years. It is very cheap at the moment. That is all well and good but what happens when the price of gas goes through the roof? Who is going to take responsibility for that? Do we just let this go through to the keeper and the poor old punter on the street cops it in neck with their electricity bill? We have the opportunity through the new committee system, which we went to so much trouble to set up and which we all supported, to look at this bill.

This opportunity does not come very often. It is like a train going through a station. We have an opportunity to jump on the train not knowing where it is going, not knowing if there is a rail line ahead, not knowing if there is a bridge down. By sending this bill to the committee we would be able to look at all the implications and understand the impacts of the carbon tax and what the new structure will be. Will it charge people from 2.30 in the afternoon until 10.30 at night 40c a unit? Will it charge from 10.30 at night until 2.30 in the morning 10c a unit? I do not know. I do not know whether the minister knows what the electricity retailers and electricity providers are going to put forward. Who knows what the QCA is going to come back with as its determination. Are we just going to sit on our hands and when the time comes and this comes before parliament are we all going to say that it is fine, we will let it go through, the QCA can take recommendations from the electricity wholesalers and producers and we again hit the punter in neck?

I do not know whether everybody out there realises what is going on in the world at the moment, but the German market dropped by 5½ per cent last night and 25 per cent in the last month. That is one quarter of their wealth down the drain. That has happened right through Europe. The United States is not looking real flash at the moment either. Do not think that we are exempt in Australia. This is a cost-of-living issue that will go directly to the heart and soul of everyday mums and dads.

I will give an example from when I have done Meals on Wheels, which I do every now and then. I once went into the home of an old lady in the middle of winter. She was sitting in the dark watching her old TV and she was all rugged up with her ugg boots on and her doona over her trying to keep warm. I asked, 'Why haven't you got your heater turned on?' and she replied, 'I can't afford it.' What do government members think this will do to that individual? And that was only one person I saw when I was delivering meals; there are a thousand out there whom I would not have seen.

I ask the parliament and both sides of the House to support this recommendation that I am putting forward. Let us be open. Let us be transparent. Let us let the people of Queensland see what we are up to. Let us prove that the committee system can be efficient and effective and can deliver an outcome that we can all be unitedly proud of in this House.

I cannot emphasise enough the cost-of-living impact on people. I think all members in this House, regardless of whether they are with the LNP or the ALP or are an Independent, know that the cost-of-living issues are affecting people. It is very easy sometimes to sit back and let these things slide through, but today I beg and ask members to support the people of Queensland, to support this House and what it was established for and to support this amendment. I will read my amendment again. I move—

That all words after 'Bill' be omitted and that the following words be inserted:

'be now referred to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee for consideration and report in accordance with chapter 23 of the standing orders.'

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask leave of the House—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): No, I have just had advice that you do not need the leave of the House. Under standing order 141, you are permitted to move your motion without the leave of the House. So you have just done that.

Mr DICKSON: I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will conclude my speech by asking members to please take on board what I have said about those cost-of-living issues. Take it in your mind, take it in your heart and really think about the mums and dads, the grandmas, everybody who is related to you. I am sure all members have a family member doing it a bit tough. I ask members to think of them before they move forward in what I believe will be the wrong direction. There is an opportunity to do the right thing by Queenslanders, and I think forwarding the bill to the committee is the right thing to do. Give it a go.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (5.22 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the shadow minister. The committee system was introduced into this chamber to give a greater opportunity for the impact of legislation to be understood not only by the general public but by us as members of parliament. Electricity pricing is intrinsic to the quality of life for people in the community. It is one of the commodities in households in my electorate—as I am sure is the case in every electorate—that has risen exponentially in the last 12 to 18 months, and it is projected that it will increase again.

This bill gives an insight into further increases but little information in terms of quantum. I think it is important for us as members of parliament to understand the impact on householders right across the demographic—for young families, people living on their own and the elderly. As the member for Buderim said, the elderly will be impacted greatly. I believe a reference to the committee for public hearings and submissions would be a step in the right direction in terms of understanding the impact of this legislation. I support the member's amendment.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (5.23 pm): The government will be opposing the amendment moved by the member for Buderim, and let me be very clear as to why the government will be opposing it. It is in no way a means of shutting down appropriate and detailed analysis of moving to a new means of determining electricity prices in this state. What we

have done over the last three years is map out a very detailed strategy using detailed analysis by the QCA in terms of inquiries into the existing means of determining electricity prices through the BRCI. The QCA has found that the BRCI is in fact broken as a means of determining electricity prices. The question then becomes: what do we replace it with?

We have already referred this matter to the QCA. The amendments before the House today simply go to supporting the referral to the QCA that has already been made. The act currently provides for quite detailed reference to the BRCI. So whilst the QCA is undertaking its work—as it already is—this bill simply removes referral to the BRCI as the means of determining electricity prices.

In terms of moving to a new system of determination by 1 July next year—and if we do not do that we will be locked into the BRCI for one more year, and that is in nobody's interests—we will have the benefit early in the new year of the detailed report of the QCA. In effect, that will answer so many of the questions that the member for Buderim and the member for Gladstone have already referred to. They are appropriate questions, but they will be answered by the work that has already been referred to the QCA and which will be published early next year. We will all have the opportunity to analyse that, and then there will be further amendments brought to this House under the new committee system that will allow for exactly what the opposition is attempting to do.

I am not being critical of what the opposition is suggesting. I am simply saying that this is pre-empting a logical process that has been put in place which will allow analysis once the QCA has finished its work. To have the new parliamentary committee undertake the work that the opposition is suggesting is pre-emptive of the work that the QCA is already undertaking. It is sensible and logical that the strategy being mapped out by the government in moving from the current BRCI to the new system is followed in terms of the work being undertaken by the QCA, and then further amendments will need to be brought into this place early next year. That is why we are opposing this amendment. As I stated at the beginning, this is not about opposing analysis by the parliament of a new means of determining electricity prices; we are opposing it on the basis of it being a pre-emptive amendment and not appropriate in the circumstances to bring this matter to a logical conclusion.

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

AYES, 36—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, McLindon, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

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

Resolved in the negative.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dickson, adjourned.

MOTION

Carbon Tax



Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.34 pm): I move—

That this House notes that:

1. It has now become apparent that the proposed carbon tax will increase the cost of living for all Queenslanders and
2. The proposed carbon tax will have a devastating effect on the state budget and the Queensland economy and
3. The compensation provisions offered to Queensland and Queenslanders are grossly inadequate

And therefore on behalf of all Queenslanders who will be so detrimentally affected this parliament categorically opposes the introduction of Julia Gillard's carbon tax.

It is time that this Bligh Labor government stood up for Queensland and started governing for Queensland instead of itself and its political mates in Canberra. It is time that the government stood up for Queenslanders rather than Julia Gillard and her failing government in Canberra. Queensland will be hit harder by the carbon tax that Labor and the Greens are determined to impose on the Australian people. The carbon tax being imposed on Queensland by the Gillard and Bob Brown coalition will devastate families and industries across Queensland and the government, the Premier and the Treasurer are silent in their defence. Queensland has already become the most expensive state in which to live. Already Queenslanders are crying out for relief from the spiralling costs of living under this failed state Labor government. Queensland has become the most expensive state in which to run a motor vehicle, with massive hikes in registration costs and the introduction of a new 9.2c per litre fuel tax, and the carbon tax will add to that cost.

Despite the Premier's promise that no-one would be worse off under Labor's electricity reform, energy costs have already spiralled by more than 60 per cent over the last five years—60 per cent over the last five years—and the carbon tax will add to that cost. Labor's bungling of South-East Queensland's water assets will see household water prices double according to the current price paths, and the carbon tax will add to that cost. Stamp duty changes will add \$7,000 to the cost of buying a new family home. Bus and train fares have doubled in just five years under this failing government, and the carbon tax will add to that cost. Queenslanders have been suffering and just when they feel that they cannot take any more along comes Labor's carbon tax, and the Premier and the shrill Treasurer over there refuse to stand up and say anything in defence of the Queenslanders who will be impacted.

There is no doubt about it: Labor's carbon tax will drive up the cost of living across-the-board. Even conservative estimates indicate that families will be hit with an extra \$515 per year. Household budgets will have to stretch to find an additional \$200 a year to pay electricity costs. Food costs will rise, even by the most conservative estimates, as transport costs increase due to the flow on from the impact of the carbon tax. Personal income tax rates will rise for the first time since the 1980s when the 15 per cent rate will become 19 per cent and the 30 per cent rate is expected to jump to 33 per cent. Some 110 Queensland companies that operate wholly and solely in this state will be slugged hard by this new tax and many more will suffer the same fate even though they operate in multiple states. It is estimated that under the Labor carbon tax Australian businesses will have to spend more than \$3 billion a year purchasing abatements from overseas. That is without doubt an additional \$3 billion worth of tax on Australia's competitiveness.

So why won't the Premier stand up for Queensland? Why won't the Treasurer stand up for Queensland? Why won't the Treasurer do the sums and realise that Queenslanders will be worse off? Why is this government so focused on governing for itself and the Labor Party and governing for Julia Gillard and her failed regime in Canberra and not for Queensland or Queenslanders? Why won't they stand up to ensure that Queenslanders are not hurt by this short-sighted policy? The Treasurer has stated on ABC Radio—

I strongly support pricing carbon.

That is the Treasurer's response—not a word in defence of Queenslanders, not a word in defence of the Queensland economy but an ideological commitment that says, 'I strongly support pricing carbon.' Today we saw the Minister for Energy describe the cost to the Queensland economy of a carbon tax as 'just simply a statistical blip'. He went on to say—

It does not amount to any significant impact on the growth of our economy.

The man is living in a fool's paradise. Obviously the minister's understanding of the term 'blip' differs from common usage. Queensland Treasury's own modelling found the impact on the Queensland budget alone would be \$1.2 billion over the next four years and it is estimated that the carbon tax will cost the Queensland economy \$500 billion over the years to 2050. But what will this mean for Queenslanders' jobs? By 2020 the carbon tax will cost Queensland 21,000 jobs. So the government's own modelling shows the impact over the next 40 years will be half a trillion dollars and tens of thousands of jobs. Some statistical blip!

What we also know is that the Queensland Treasury modelling did not ask the question that is the elephant in the room. Treasury's modelling asked, 'What if the world acted and Australia and Queensland did not?' But it did not ask what the more ambitious action meant for Queensland. It did not model what looks like the most likely outcome. It did not ask, 'What if Australia and Queensland act but the rest of the world does not?' The government has assumed there will be a global agreement on emissions reductions in the next short amount of time, but how realistic is that assumption?

Unlike Labor, those of us on this side of the chamber live in the real world. The reality is that global action is not in sight. There is no reasonable expectation. Europe is the only region with anything approaching an emissions trading scheme of any sort. No less than the *Guardian* newspaper recently ran a damning analysis of this scheme and its failures, yet Queensland Treasury did not cost the impact of unilateral action on carbon. It was a question too far. This government deliberately chose not to ask what the impact of unilateral action would be to our economy and international competitiveness. It feared the answer it would receive. The reality is that the impact on Queensland's economy and the cost of living would be far, far worse than the Treasurer admits or his released modelling indicates. That is a message that the government should have received loud and clear from the industry, from people who spend their business life dealing in the international reality of the investment markets. Gina Rinehart from Hancock Coal recently published an article in which she said—

Most Australian governments have had some understanding of the large capital investment required for long development horizons and the need to attract substantial investment.

That is what should apply to the Queensland government. She went on to say—

Mining is a high-risk business and commodity prices set on the world stage are notoriously volatile over the life cycle of any project.


The carbon tax will impact on our commodity price competitiveness. She went on to say—

There is enormous international competition for capital and governments that introduce greater risk and expense do so at the peril of their own economies and people.

That is what the Queensland government is supporting. That is what the Australian government is doing: it is imperilling our economies and our people. By refusing to stand up to this carbon tax, the Queensland government is imperilling the Queensland economy and the Queensland people.

A string of industry leaders who are considering massive investments in Queensland have delivered the same message that Gina Rinehart from Hancock Coal has delivered to the state government, but they are blind and deaf to the message. They are blinded and deafened by their own ideological commitment. They are blinded and deafened to the message that is being delivered to them by the investment community by their scrambling need to support their Labor counterparts in Canberra.

The carbon tax has become an indication of the extent to which the decision-making processes in Canberra have failed. It has become a threat to the Queensland economy and to the lifestyle of every Queenslanders. There is no greater issue on which Queenslanders need their government to stand up for their state, for their families and for them as individuals. Yet this government—this Premier, this Treasurer and every member who sits on that side of the House—has consistently refused to do that. Tonight we give them the chance to do it. Tonight we give them one more chance to join with us and to oppose Julia Gillard's carbon tax.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.45 pm): I second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition here tonight. If there is one thing that distinguishes Labor, it is Labor's love of taxes. Labor members never saw a tax they did not like or could not increase. In Queensland we have seen a 9c a litre fuel tax, a waste tax, an increase in land tax, removal of the principal place of residence concession, myriad increases in levies and fees, 24 per cent-plus increases in car registration, increases in driver licence fees, 30 per cent increases in tolls on the Gateway, support for the minerals resource rent tax and before that the resource super profits tax, the federal flood levy and now, on top of that litany of tax disasters supported by every Labor member of this House, we see every Labor member standing up and supporting Julia Gillard's and Bob Brown's big new carbon tax. When it comes to imposing taxes on the people of Australia and the people of Queensland, Labor has no shame and cannot be trusted. It always promises one thing and always delivers another when it comes to taxes.

So we turn to the cost of living, one of the issues raised in the Leader of the Opposition's motion tonight. It is becoming more apparent each and every day here in Queensland that the Labor-Greens carbon tax will increase the cost of living for all Queenslanders. It does not matter where you live in this state—it does not matter if you are a family living in Ashgrove with a tax supported by the member for Ashgrove in this place; it does not matter whether you are living in Cape York with a tax supported by the member for Cook in this place—under Labor the cost of living will go up and under Labor with a carbon tax the cost of living will go up. The opportunity is here tonight for every Labor member of this House—it does not matter whether you are the member for Ashgrove, the member for Mount Coot-tha or the member for Brisbane Central—to stand up and say no to the Greens' and Labor's big new carbon tax. Those opposite can stand up for Queenslanders and preserve them from the increased cost of living.


If we look at the government's own modelling we see that the average Queensland electricity bill will increase by \$109 next year. That is on top of the Queensland government's charges that have seen increases of over 60 per cent over the last five years and on top of the \$118 that will be incurred this year. Increased electricity costs will add to the cost of public transport. What did we hear the Minister for Transport say when this modelling was put out? She said that the government will bear the \$5 million that will be paid as a result of the increased costs. Well, 'the government' is code for 'the taxpayers'. Mr Speaker, no-one knows perhaps better than you that the cost of paying for public transport will go to the bottom line of the transport department's bill and it will have to be paid by the taxpayers of Queensland.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: The member for Ipswich does not care about the increase in costs and charges paid by her constituents. On Friday I walked through Riverlink Shopping Centre and I heard what people there thought about the member for Ipswich. Modesty forbids me from saying it. When it comes to the cost of living, they know that the member for Ipswich is also supporting this carbon tax. As they go about their business they will be paying more for it. They will be paying more for houses. The HIA and Master Builders estimate that the increase in the cost of an average residential home in Queensland will go up between \$5,000 and \$6,000. That will be added to the cost of a family home in Queensland.

That is the implication for people in terms of the cost of living. What will be the devastating impact this will have on the Queensland economy? We know that it will wipe out \$1.2 billion between 2012-13 and 2015-16. That is what the modelling in this report shows. What the Treasurer has not said is that the

cost to the economy between now and 2049 will be something between \$500 billion and \$700 billion—over half a trillion dollars lost in productivity growth when one looks at the changes. If this carbon tax is so good, why is it costing so much? Why do the reports say that state product will be affected and productivity will be going down? There is much more to this. The reality is that every Labor member should join the LNP in opposing this job-destroying carbon tax all the way. They should fight for Queenslanders. They should be about making sure that Queensland is a can-do Queensland again.

 **Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (5.50 pm): I move—

That all words after 'House' be deleted and the following words inserted:

- Supports the need for action on climate change and acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of economists agree that pricing carbon is the most economically efficient way to deal with climate change; and
- Recognises that Queensland's high-carbon economy presents particular challenges in taking necessary action to deal with climate change; and
- Calls on the federal government to provide further assistance to Queensland to facilitate the transition to a cleaner energy economy.

Let us not take the pens-down-feet-up approach of the opposition. It has sought to recycle—at least they believe in some sort of recycling—its constant claim, because it has nothing to offer and nothing to proffer. This motion is about where one stands on the reality of climate change and, more to the point, whether one has the ticker to do something about it.

Mr Seeney: You don't even have the ticker to say it. You couldn't even say you support it.

Mr FRASER: Does anyone believe that great friend of the environment, the Leader of the Opposition, and the man who used to be formally known as Jeff Seeney? He is a man who comes in here as a mere shadow of the person he used to be. He is forced to read out the song sheet written for him by some young Liberal on level 6. He used to pride himself on baking people who read out a document in here. He is nothing more than a puppet. It is like an horror version of *Mr Squiggle*. The world is upside-down, Miss Jane, because we have a Leader of the Opposition who has completely debased himself in pursuit of the craven political opportunity that he sees before him.

We have to ask ourselves: if this mob really believes their own hype and if they really think that they are on the cusp, why are they all so unhappy? The reason is that they can see it, taste it, feel it and want to believe it, but they know that they are going to get there with a lunatic. They thought that they had brought a brand-new puppy that was going to be the light of their lives, but in fact they have brought a yapping mongrel of a dog that is running around the house, tearing up the furniture, barking at everybody, making a mess of itself and making a show of everyone.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock.

Mr SEENEY: I have given the Treasurer almost two minutes to address the amendment that he moved. He accused us of having nothing to offer and nothing to proffer. I think his avoidance of the subject confirms that he has nothing to offer. Mr Speaker, I ask you to rule on relevance.

Mr SPEAKER: I would ask the Treasurer to be relevant.


Mr FRASER: The point is that they have been sold a pup. What do the reports say that those opposite are trying to verbal? They state—

The introduction of a carbon price is estimated to have a relatively small impact for Queensland over the next decade.

Members opposite do not let the facts get in the way of the hysterical scare campaign that they have been seeking to prosecute.

The report states that between now and 2019-20 with a carbon price the state's economy will grow by 41 per cent. That is more than the nation, which is set to grow at 34 per cent during that period. With a carbon price, around 474,000 additional jobs will be created across the state in the same time frame. Those opposite campaigned for the GST and said that it was useful tax reform to be pursued in the national interest. Last year, the GST raised \$48 billion. It was a genuine great big new tax on everything and these characters said it would not hurt a bit. The carbon price will raise \$7.7 billion, which is one-sixth of the fiscal impact of the GST. These jokers are hysterically running a dishonest and untruthful campaign aimed at scaring people for base political purposes. They seek to pretend that this reform is not the way to deal with climate change, even though it is supported by the majority of economists. Let us remember that the GST had a 2.5 per cent impact on prices. What will be the impact of a carbon price? It will be way less than that at 0.7 per cent.

Who said that the estimates are on song? Who has said that they see this effect on the economy? None other than the Governor of the Reserve Bank. When it comes down to it, I will take what the Treasury says and I will take the Australian Treasury modelling, which has been replicated by us and which the Governor of the Reserve Bank has said is in line with his own estimations, more than I will take any of the empty rhetoric, discombobulating spin and untruthfulness of those opposite who refuse to confront the issue. Ultimately, this is a test of whether you can deal with climate change and stand up for what is right in the long-term interests of the state, which is exactly what we are going to do.

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Treasurer's amendments. In doing so, for a moment I will take us out of this heightened and exaggerated place to a place where real people live. Sunday was Father's Day. On Sunday I went mountain biking at Grandchester with my dad. Early on in the ride I had a stack, so I left my dad, who rode on with his mate, and found myself sitting in a coffee shop in Grandchester with a couple of hours on my hands. At that coffee shop I got chatting to an older couple sitting at the table next to mine. We chatted about what we each did. Those really lovely people wanted to talk about the issues that are confronting the country right now. One of the issues that they wanted to discuss was the carbon tax.


The lady spoke about a number of things that I know are of concern to average Australians. Knowing what I did, she asked me, 'Isn't the carbon tax going to hurt the economy and cost jobs?' She asked why Australia should lead. She asked if she would be worse off and she wondered whether the Prime Minister had told the truth in this debate. Those genuine people had genuine concerns. It was not like the debate that we are having in this House, where people who are informed and who do know better exaggerate people's concerns for their own ends. They are genuine people and they were asking genuine questions, and I chatted to them.

Those people were worried about the price, but knew little about the comprehensive system of tax cuts that would mean that they would not personally be worse off. They asked why we should lead and I think they were genuinely surprised to find that right now in the world 32 countries have a working carbon tax and more countries are moving towards it. They were worried about jobs, but they knew little about the comprehensive regime of protection for energy-intensive trade-exposed industries.

While they knew what the Prime Minister had said before the election, when I chatted to them about it they considered that Labor, of course, has had a policy of pricing carbon for the past decade, since 2001, I think, when Kim Beazley went to the election saying that we would sign Kyoto and that the mechanism that is now proposed has come out of the hung parliament that, of course, this government did not choose. In talking to those people it was clear that, like most Australians, they genuinely believe the science of climate change and have a real concern that we should do something, not so much for the sake of their future but for that of their children and their grandchildren.

So I reflected on what was the right thing to do, knowing that these people are concerned about the change of a carbon tax but knowing, too, that climate change is real and is something which we, as people who choose the burden of responsibility, need to address. In answer to that question, my view is that pricing carbon, knowing the science, is the right thing to do. Those people opposite come in here and tell us either the crackpot position that climate change is not real or, worse than that, that we should accept the science and then for reasons of political expediency argue that it is right to do nothing about it. I believe that we are bigger and better than that as legislators and as a nation.

We have a responsibility to price carbon. We as a government will continue to take up issues of design with the federal government, but we will not squib this enormous generational challenge. We will not say that for us it is all too hard, and that is the alternative proposition which tonight is being put.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (6.00 pm): I cannot believe what I have just heard from the member for Ipswich. The amendments that the government has moved in the chamber this evening are what Bob Brown wants in relation to the carbon tax that the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, is implementing.

Mr Fraser: You're not pro the pup. Where do you stand on the question of the pup?

Mr JOHNSON: The Treasurer can sit back and listen. I listened to him. If he does not have anything fruitful to say, he might gain something from hearing what I am saying.

We have a hung parliament in Canberra, and this is a desperate bid by this Queensland government that does not have the intestinal fortitude to come out and say, 'No, we oppose a carbon tax. We do not stand for anything fruitful or beneficial. We support Julia Gillard hanging on to power in Canberra at the expense of some 14,000 jobs in Queensland directly and indirectly due to the loss of generation of jobs in the coal industry.' We will lose some 4,700 jobs in the coal industry in this state. This is all because we have a government that does not have the guts to stand up and be counted by the people it represents. Tony Abbott will tell the Australian people exactly what they want to hear when it comes to a carbon tax.

Ms Jones interjected.


Mr JOHNSON: They will tell the people of Ashgrove and the people of every electorate in this nation exactly what they want to hear and they will vote it down. The minority want it, the majority do not. I always thought you listened to the majority.

Here in Queensland, regional Australia will once again bear the brunt of these Labor ideologies. The freight cost alone for heavy transport will rise by \$1,800. Today I have spoken with meat producers. I am told that this tax will result in an extra cost of between \$4 and \$6 a head for every beast slaughtered in this state. That will be passed on to the producers who in turn will pass it on to the consumers. On top of that, we are going to witness a 10 per cent increase in power charges for those top 500 operators who fall under the mantle of this carbon tax stupidity. This carbon tax will impact the most on Queensland coal communities. We will see more bankrupt infrastructure because of the ineptitude of this government.

We have roads that are in a deplorable state. We can talk about fuel, oil or bitumen sealing. I see that the Minister for Main Roads is in the chamber tonight. I would like to know the increased cost on road infrastructure charges in this state. It will be horrific. There will be a further impost on the infrastructure-building program of this state and this nation because of this ridiculous, ludicrous policy that the government in Canberra has put forward to try to hold on to power in a corrupt, non-viable way. It is going to cost \$7,000 more to build a family home, the cost of road building will increase and vehicle registration will rise by 24 per cent—I think the shadow Treasurer mentioned that—all because of a naive, illiterate federal government that wants to secure its power base by supporting the Greens.

This is an irresponsible tax, especially when you consider that we produce less than six per cent of the world's black coal. Countries like Mongolia are finding coal seams that we cannot even dream of in this country. The cost of production here will be so much more than in those Asian countries. We see what is happening in Siberia at the moment in relation to the coal deposits that they are unearthing. They are much closer to the European markets and to the markets of India and China, which do need our black coal.

I say to the Treasurer: for God's sake, please wake up to the fact that we facing a bankruptcy situation in this state because of your poor policies, poor planning and poor vision. We will see more jobless people, people with higher mortgages, increasing interest rates and people throwing their keys onto the bank manager's desk and saying, 'We can't handle it anymore,' all because Labor is trying to hang on to power through ill-conceived, ill-thought-through policies that are going to drive this nation to bankruptcy for the next three generations.

 **Hon. VE DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (6.05 pm): If you accept the weight of economic opinion then you accept the need to price carbon as the most efficient way to deal with climate change. Pricing carbon is a significant economic reform and is especially important for a state like Queensland. We are a state with tremendous mineral resources, including the new LNG industry, a great food-producing state and the state of iconic natural resources such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree rainforest.

Of course, the weight of scientific evidence also underpins the need for action on climate change. The Queensland government, therefore, recognises that pricing carbon is in the long-term interests of the state of Queensland. The Queensland government has, therefore, welcomed the release by the Prime Minister of the details of the carbon price mechanism, an emissions trading scheme, commencing with a fixed-price period for the first three years.

It is pleasing to note that the design of the carbon price mechanism adopted seven of the nine conditions that Queensland set in a public submission to the Commonwealth in May this year, including compensation for households and support for important Queensland industries. Firstly, we argued that Queensland households must be given financial assistance, with special attention afforded to low-income families to compensate for the impact of higher prices. Secondly, the package reflects Queensland's demand that emissions-intensive, trade exposed industries must be afforded compensation. I was pleased to see that \$9.2 billion will be allocated over the first three years for industry assistance. I am particularly pleased that the proposed recession buffer assistance to industries under the previously proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme has been retained as we recommended. This is particularly important for Queensland, given the difficulties faced by industries here following the floods and cyclones.

Thirdly, the Queensland government argued strongly for adequate assistance for emissions-intensive coalmines. Nearly \$1.4 billion has been set aside nationally for a coal sector jobs package, targeted at the most affected mines. Fourthly, we told the Commonwealth that Queensland's expanding and developing liquefied natural gas industry must qualify for emissions-intensive, trade exposed industry assistance.

Fifthly, I am pleased that the Commonwealth has exempted transport fuels for passenger vehicles and light commercial vehicles, consistent with our submission. Sixthly, Queensland demanded that agriculture be excluded from carbon pricing, which the package has done. We called on the Commonwealth to support carbon-farming opportunities in rural Queensland including biosequestration projects, and I am very happy that credits from the Carbon Farming Initiative will be tradeable in the

emissions trading scheme. This outcome is a huge win for Queensland's agriculture sector and comes after intense advocacy from our government. Our government commissioned groundbreaking research from CSIRO on the scope for biosequestration in Queensland because we saw the benefits of carbon farming for landscape restoration and the financial viability of our primary producers.

Finally, the Queensland government stated that significant funding from the package should go towards new technology and research and development. This is reflected in a new \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation and \$3.2 billion for the Australian Renewable Energy Agency.

Of course, there are people on the other side of the House who we know do support the concept of a price on carbon. We know this because they have come out and said so publicly. As we all know, the previous leader, the member for Surfers Paradise, showed his support in a private member's bill that would have seen Queensland go it alone with a state based ETS. The member for Surfers Paradise said in the House—


There will be a financial incentive for new industries as well as old industries to become more efficient and a significant stimulus to innovation, research and development and environmentally friendly activities such as revegetation.

It is not just former leaders who have thrown their support behind an ETS. The current leader has also been a fan. When he was in the Brisbane City Council as its mayor three years ago he wrote in support of the former carbon pricing proposal proposed by the Rudd government. Mr Newman's submission stated—

Council supports in principle the CPRS—
the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme—

and that it can play a significant role in the reduction of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, and assist in the transition to low carbon technologies and business practices.

Of course, let us not forget the Howard government. In office it had committed to an ETS well before it lost office. So I would have to say that it sounds like it is Liberal Party policy. But, unfortunately, here in Queensland they have sold out to the lure of a good scare campaign and have been taking the lead from Tony Abbott in providing inaccuracies to the people of Queensland and to the people of Australia.

 **Mr DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (6.11 pm): First of all, I would like to say that the LNP does not support a carbon tax. How about this for a policy? Let us set about cooling the planet from an office block in Canberra and at the same time make Australians poorer! Isn't that magnificent? Is it any wonder that Julia—23 per cent—is in the death throes of her prime ministership? We have seen poll after poll on the issue of this carbon tax. The message is loud and clear from Australians. The message is: leave us out of this ridiculous scheme. This is all about wealth redistribution and nothing to do with pollution reduction.

We keep hearing about big polluters from Labor. They are saying that the big polluters will pay. Just who are the big polluters anyway and how many are there? Labor cannot even get the numbers right. First it was 1,000, but then Labor ran away from that number because it would capture too many companies which would directly pass on the costs of a carbon tax to voters. Then it was 500. And then it was 400.

Last month the secretary of the federal department of climate change, Blair Comley, was giving evidence in Canberra to a parliamentary inquiry into the proposed carbon tax. The federal department of climate change is the Labor government's office in Canberra that I mentioned earlier—the place from which they think they are going to cool the planet by making Australians poorer. The secretary stated that the 'number of emitters that we think will be covered is more in the order of more like 400'. But then the climate change secretary had to rectify his statement, and now we are back to 500.

I have seen a list of the alleged top 50 polluters. There are 13 electricity companies in the alleged top 16 polluters. Indeed, there are 17 electricity companies in the alleged top 50. There are a few gas companies as well. So what they are really telling us is that the utility companies who charge customers are the big polluters. But this carbon tax is for the greater good of the nation! It is so fanciful that I think Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan have taken their idea of the 'big polluters' from Greek mythology. As a letter writer noted just recently, 'big Plutus' is the Greek god of wealth. While 'big Plutus' might be the Greek god of wealth, when we hear those opposite, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer proclaiming that the big polluters will pay, the big polluters are obviously Labor's 'god of wealth redistribution'.

But we all know who is going to pay the carbon tax. We are! Everybody will pay. Whether it is through electricity bills, water prices, the cost of goods and services, we will all pay. Labor wants to turn every power point and every light switch into a branch of the Taxation Office. These loony Labor green policies must be dumped. We learned only a couple of days ago that the US is going to shelve its new air-quality standards because of fears about the impacts on the US economy. But Labor blindly trudges on.

Yesterday the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities told a conference in Brisbane that the carbon tax "will not amount to any significant impact on the growth of the economy over the next 10 years'. The interesting thing about what the minister said yesterday is that last month in Canberra at the COAG meeting the Prime Minister was asked by the New South Wales Premier to release state-by-state

modelling on the impacts of the carbon tax. Guess what? The Prime Minister refused to release the state-by-state modelling on the impacts of Labor's carbon tax. I think that is well and truly enough said. In fact, that speaks volumes. Labor knows the truth about the great big new carbon tax but it does not want the rest of Australia to know about it.

The PM has form. Before the last federal election the then PM told the people of Australia, 'You will not face a carbon tax under any government I lead.' I think we were misled. The Queensland Premier said before the last state election, 'We will not sell the assets of Queenslanders.' I think we were misled. The Premier also said, 'We will not abolish the fuel subsidy.' I think we were misled. There is one way to fix this problem and that is to vote Labor out at a federal and a state level and to put in a government that really cares about the people of Queensland.

I will tell members right now that a can-do coalition government will dump any carbon tax if it is implemented here and Tony Abbott, I am sure, will get rid of it at a federal level. This is the biggest mistake Labor has ever made. Look at the polls. They are getting it wrong. They are taking no notice of the people of Australia. They are going to pay them back for it when they go to the election. They are going to take their power bills and their water bills and they are going to get rid of you lot. You are gone.

Ms JONES (Ashgrove—ALP) (6.16 pm): Tonight I am calling on the LNP to be honest with the Queensland people—that is, let us have a look at what they support. They support Tony Abbott's direct action plan. Don't you? Every single one of them. Let me go to the *Australian* on 3 September—'Tony Abbott's direct action plan will cost double that of Labor's carbon tax.' Let me go to the *Herald Sun*—'Tony Abbott's carbon plan will be more expensive.'

Mr Seeney: Who are you quoting?

Ms JONES: I am quoting the *Australian*.

Mr Seeney: Yeah? Who?

Ms JONES: I am quoting the *Australian*.

Mr Seeney: Not the publication. Who?

Ms JONES: Very close to Julia the *Australian* is. It gives her a lot of favours. I am also quoting Tony Abbott's own plan where he says that he will spend—

Mr Seeney: No. Who are you quoting?

Ms JONES: Tony Abbott's plan, in his own words, says that he will spend over \$3.7 billion of Australian's hard-earned taxpayer dollars—straight out of the pockets of ordinary Queenslanders—to pay polluters to pollute. That is his plan. Contrary to our policy, which is actually to tax the polluters, Tony Abbott's direct action plan comes straight out of the bottom line of Treasury—\$3.7 billion out of taxpayers' pockets. That is the policy they stand for. And the economic modelling shows that it will actually cost Australian households \$720 a year. So it is about time that the LNP in Queensland actually—they have gone quiet now.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left. I call the honourable member for Ashgrove.

Ms JONES: Mr Speaker, we know that the LNP are full of hubris, that they think that this election is already won and they think that they do not have to be—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: They have all been interjecting on it and they interject on it every day. What the LNP—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. The member for Ashgrove has the call.

Ms JONES: What is particularly distressing for me is that, because they are so full of hubris, so arrogant, they think that this election is won and they do not have to be honest with the people of Queensland. I will be putting out a press release tonight saying that the LNP supports slugging Queensland households \$720 a year under Tony Abbott's plan, which costs twice as much as the proposal by the federal government. They will actually be costing householders more. That is the part that they do not want revealed and that they do not want to be truthful about with the people of Australia. That is the part that they will not talk about. They know that banging on about tax means that everybody up in the gallery gets scared about it. But what they will not tell us is: where is the magic pudding for the \$3.7 billion? Member for Callide, where is that coming from? It is coming straight out of the pockets of ordinary Australians. That is right. There has not been any scrutiny of their policy.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. It is impossible to hear the person I have called. I call the member for Ashgrove.


Ms JONES: But, Mr Speaker, I know that those opposite will not take my word for it. So let us have a look at what the Economic Society of Australia found when it surveyed its members. We know those opposite do not trust scientists. They probably do not trust economists. The Economic Society of Australia is reported in the *Australian Financial Review* as saying—

Labor's carbon tax package has been endorsed by economists as a much better economic policy than the coalition's direct emissions payments, and that is why they support it.

When they surveyed over 580 economists across Australia this is what was said with regard to the opposition's plan—

The opposition's direct action plan to tackle climate change is a good economic policy—62 per cent disagreed with it.

I know they are all laughing, patting their bellies and thinking that they are going to be on this side of the House and that they can take everybody for granted, but they need to start being honest with the people of Queensland that the direct action policy of Tony Abbott that they endorse will cost, according to all the modelling—even his own analysis—twice as much as the policy being put forward by the federal government in Australia. It is about time they owned the policy that they support. They cuddle up to Tony Abbott and support his policy that will slug Queensland households \$720 a year. Stand up for working Australians!

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.21 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition against the Gillard Labor government's proposed carbon tax. As the shadow minister for agriculture, I want to talk about the serious impact that Labor's carbon tax will have on a very important part of Queensland's economy—our vital agricultural sector.

I want to highlight the impact the carbon tax will have on agriculture because the Bligh government has its head in the sand on this issue. I asked the Minister for Agriculture during the recent budget estimates what strategies the Bligh government would put in place to overcome the increased cost of farm inputs and the loss of market share against imported products that Queensland's farmers would suffer as a result of Labor's carbon tax. While the Minister for Agriculture admitted the carbon tax would have an impact on agriculture in Queensland, he advised Labor would rely on yet to be delivered productivity gains from yet to be undertaken R&D projects to maintain the competitiveness of the Queensland agricultural sector burdened with the carbon tax.

R&D productivity gains should be delivering increased profitability and sustainability to Queensland's farmers, not attempting to compensate for bad public policies forced on agriculture by the Gillard government. The Bligh government, and in particular the Minister for Agriculture, need to stand up for Queensland agriculture on the issue of the carbon tax and not roll over for their Labor mates in Canberra.

There was a lot chest beating from the Premier and the Treasurer in the House this morning about private investment in infrastructure projects indicating a return of confidence in the Queensland economy. As usual, the Premier and the Treasurer have cherry picked reports about the economy to suit themselves and have reinforced the problem of the two-speed economy.

Only yesterday Rabobank released several farmer confidence surveys taken last month for primary producers across Australia. What did those reports say about the confidence of farmers in Queensland? The results of the survey indicate that farmer confidence has now dropped to its lowest levels in nine years. It found that 52 per cent of the Queensland farmers surveyed expected the agricultural economy to worsen over the next 12 months—significantly more than the 23 per cent with that view surveyed during the previous quarter. Why did farmers express those concerns? Some of them nominated the high Australian dollar. Some of them nominated the extreme weather conditions experienced earlier this year and the impact they had on returns. However, more than half of them—54 per cent of them, in fact—cited concerns with government intervention and policies as the major factor undermining their confidence in the agricultural economy. They nominated specifically the ridiculous ban on live cattle exports and Labor's carbon tax as having a dampening effect on confidence. Queensland farmers said increases in electricity costs, driven up by the carbon tax, will add to already high fuel and fertiliser prices.

As a proud North Queenslander, I know North Queensland is a powerhouse of agriculture in this state. It is such a strong contributor that Rabobank chose to undertake an additional survey of North Queensland farmers. North Queensland farmers have even less confidence in the Queensland agricultural economy than farmers in other areas of the state. Indeed, 55 per cent of North Queensland primary producers expect the agricultural economy to worsen over the next 12 months, up from 28 per cent in the previous quarter.

Once again, the significant decline in confidence in this survey was driven by concerns around government interventions and policies—namely, and understandably amongst Queensland farmers, Labor's stupid ban on live cattle exports, but also the carbon tax, which they say will have significant implications for the agricultural sector in this state. So not all the sectors of the economy are brimming with confidence despite what the Premier and the Treasurer said this morning. Farmers are specifically

nominating Labor policies such as the carbon tax as the reason. The Bligh government is ignoring the concerns of Queensland farmers about increased irrigation and refrigeration costs and the increased cost of farm inputs and transport as a result of the carbon tax.

While direct emissions from agriculture will not attract Labor's carbon tax, all the inputs that go into agriculture will. Imported agricultural products will have the advantage of not having the carbon tax built into their production costs. Labor plans to slug agriculture with the carbon tax through the back door rather than the front door. The agriculture minister and the Bligh government have no credible plan to support Queensland farmers against carbon tax and this government should be condemned for abandoning one of Queensland's most important industries.

Tonight the LNP is giving the agriculture minister and all state Labor MPs an opportunity to support our farmers, reject the carbon tax and do the right thing by Queensland.

Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (6.26 pm): In rising to support the amendment moved by the Treasurer, I think it is important to start by recognising that any member who has spent some time in this place, as I have, will remember that year on year for, in terms of my experience, the last 18 or 19 years when it comes to progressive initiatives to protect the environment of this state at every step of the way the old Nats in this place have opposed them. It was only a number of years ago when we phased out broadscale tree clearing to reduce the number of trees—750,000 hectares of remnant vegetation—being cleared that the old National Party opposed us every step of the way.

But do we hear ongoing complaints about that? No. Why? Because it is understood by any sensible Queensland, any sensible Australian, that that was an important initiative to improve environmental outcomes for Queensland. In fact, it was so good that it delivered the outcomes that John Howard was looking for in terms of his commitments under Kyoto. But did we get one dollar from Howard for that? No. He took the benefits of carbon emission reductions, stuck them in his back pocket and on he went.

So we come to today where yet again it is up to Labor to do the heavy lifting when it comes to environmental policies to benefit not just this generation but generations to come. There is no misunderstanding on this side of the House that we need to move to a market based mechanism to price carbon, to allow the market—the market that the LNP used to be such great fans of and committed to—to determine how we respond to one of the great, if not the greatest, challenges facing Australia and indeed the world today.

Yet for base political purposes we see the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition tonight—he who opposed the ban on tree clearing every possible step of the way. Does anyone speak about that now? Did we see the collapse of the grazing industry? Did we see the end of agriculture in this state, whether it be in North Queensland or out in the south-west?

Mr Seeney: Where did I say that?

Mr ROBERTSON: My word you did. I remember well the member for Callide and the member for Southern Downs saying that this would be the end of agriculture as we know it.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Stop the clock—

Mr ROBERTSON: This latter-day convert to the ban on tree clearing—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member finds it offensive.

Mr ROBERTSON: The record will always show—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister!

Mr ROBERTSON:—that the member for Callide opposed that ban every step of the way.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister! The member found the comments offensive. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr ROBERTSON: They may be offensive but they are not untrue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON: And I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, on a further point of order: I find the minister's subsequent comments offensive as well and I ask him to withdraw those as well.

Mr SPEAKER: The minister will withdraw.

Mr ROBERTSON: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us get on with it.

Mr ROBERTSON: But when the vote came on the legislation in this House to stop broadscale tree clearing, where did you stand? You stood against it. You opposed it every step of the way, just as you are doing tonight.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will address his comments through the chair.

Mr ROBERTSON: The simple fact is that, when it comes to the environmental protection of this state, the LNP will always go to the lowest common denominator. They have no commitment to the environment in this state. The greatest challenge facing Australia today—that is, to reduce carbon emissions and show some leadership to the world, just as Malcolm Turnbull tried to do, just as John Howard tried to do. The first opportunity you get to sleep with Tony Abbott, you take that option every night of the week. Mr Speaker, there are no two ways about it—

Mr SEENEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think those comments are unparliamentary.

Ms Jarratt: It wasn't personal, Jeff.

Mr SEENEY: It was not personal, member for Whitsunday, but it is unparliamentary by anybody's standards. I suggest that the minister should reconsider his comments and withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take the point of order. I must say that I will need to check *Hansard* to check the words. Let us get on with it.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is a strange form of puritanism we are engaged in tonight, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! What I will do, Minister, is this: let me check *Hansard* overnight and if indeed the words are unparliamentary I will ask you to withdraw them tomorrow. Let us get on with the debate.

Mr ROBERTSON: Absolutely, but I have to say that that one came out of left field—or should I say right field—on this occasion.

The amendment moved tonight is about ensuring that Queensland participates in an important initiative and that we get the right deal. The one thing that has never been mentioned by those opposite is the fact that the Commonwealth government has already announced the significant compensatory mechanisms that it is prepared to put in place. We think we can do better; we want to do better. We want more money from the Commonwealth to participate in pricing carbon and we will continue to advocate accordingly. What we will not do is engage in denial. We will face up to the realities of carbon change, make the necessary decisions to move Australia forward, establish a leadership position in our part of the world internationally, as we should, and ensure that we have a long-term future for this state to be the sustainable state.

Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.

AYES, 46—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Male

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seene, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER: Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 46—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Finn, Fraser, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Schwarten, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Struthers, Sullivan, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Male

NOES, 34—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Horan, Johnson, Knuth, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Messenger, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seene, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- Supports the need for action on climate change and acknowledges that the overwhelming majority of economists agree that pricing carbon is the most economically efficient way to deal with climate change; and
- Recognises that Queensland's high-carbon economy presents particular challenges in taking necessary action to deal with climate change; and
- Calls on the federal government to provide further assistance to Queensland to facilitate the transition to a cleaner energy economy.


Sitting suspended from 6.40 pm to 7.40 pm.

ELECTRICITY PRICE REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2810, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (7.40 pm): I rise to join the debate on the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011, introduced by the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities, the honourable member for Stretton, on 15 June 2011. This bill seeks to amend the Electricity Act 1994 and the Electricity Regulation 2006 to allow for the replacement of the current benchmark retail cost index methodology for determining notified electricity prices. In addition, it provides a legislative framework to allow the Queensland Competition Authority to develop a new electricity pricing methodology and retail tariff structures to commence from 1 July 2012. Amendments are also proposed to the Electricity Act 1994 to make changes to the conditions of eligibility for connection to the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme to commence retrospectively from 8 June 2011. As honourable members have already heard from the shadow minister, the honourable member for Buderim, we on this side of the House support abolishing the current electricity price structure and will give our support in principle to this bill but place on record that we are very cautious of changes to electricity prices without knowing how they will be determined. Given former Labor Premier Peter Beattie's irresponsible promise that no Queenslanders would pay more for electricity under his reforms, we know this Labor government cannot be trusted.

This bill has been introduced as a result of the Queensland Competition Authority review into electricity prices and tariff structures instigated in 2009 by the Premier and the Treasurer. The Bligh government is proposing significant changes to the way electricity prices are determined in Queensland, which begs the question as to why this legislation could not pass through the new parliamentary committee system. There it would be subject to bipartisan scrutiny—a fair call considering the magnitude of the changes proposed and their widespread effect, reaching every household across the state; a fair call considering the lack of detail around electricity pricing at a time when Queenslanders are struggling to meet basic cost-of-living items, items that have soared in cost under this Labor government. The honourable member for Buderim moved to have this bill referred to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee, but once again Labor used its numbers to sidestep the newly implemented process for accountability and consultation. It did not take Labor long to short-circuit its own rules for personal gains.

To facilitate these changes, this bill purportedly seeks to remove reference to the current BRCI methodology in the Electricity Act 1994 and install a more enabling legislative framework with enough flexibility to deal with any identified policy changes or market upheavals. As stated in the explanatory notes, this includes any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations to be captured and passed on to the end user—that is, Queensland households. It is these comments pertaining to carbon costs that are of most concern to the LNP. The good folk of Queensland have copped a flogging from this state Labor government over the past decade, with soaring utility costs slugging everyday families, pensioners, charities and businesses. Now the imposition of the federal government's looming carbon tax—one of the stated reasons for the upheaval of electricity pricing legislation—will add further burdens to already struggling Queenslanders right across the state. This is a tax on our weekly grocery bills, a tax on our family homes, a tax on small businesses and a tax on our tourism, manufacturing, aviation and transport industries, not to mention electricity. Clearly, this debate is about accommodating the impacts of the federal carbon tax on electricity pricing here in Queensland.

As the shadow minister highlighted, the QCA review and this subsequent bill are paving the way to pass carbon costs on to the end user—the consumer. This arrogant, debt-laden government likes taxing Queenslanders. Each time its incompetence is revealed, it brings in another tax. This time it is supporting its federal Labor mates while Queensland's Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business—also known as the 'Minister for Hide and Seek'—told operators trying hard to keep their heads above water to 'just wait and see'. Comments from CS Energy CEO David Brown during the estimates committee hearing confirmed that the carbon tax is going to hit electricity generators hard. Queensland Treasury modelling revealed that the average Queensland home will be slugged with a \$190 price hike on their annual power bill next year due to the carbon tax. The impact on our state's economy is looking bleak, to say the least.

Treasury modelling says that the carbon tax will cost the state budget between \$251 million and \$360 million each year, totalling \$1.2 billion between now and 2015-16 due mainly to lost revenue from our state owned electricity generators. But the Prime Minister brushed aside this significant financial impact and instead tried to sell us on the increased value of our state's green energy assets, which will be a pittance compared to the loss suffered. And it is no secret that our manufacturing industry has been ground to a pulp by successive Labor governments and that many green energy products, like solar, are sourced from overseas. There are no jobs for Queenslanders there. On top of this, energy retailer AGL

has warned that the impending LNG export boom will actually mean that the cost to power Queensland's generators, which are becoming increasingly dependant on gas, could soar as the generators face gas costs at export market prices.

Further provisions in this bill will tighten eligibility for the Queensland government's Solar Bonus Scheme—another sign of a government failing to keep its head above the rising tide of debt, a government unable to afford its own policies. A cap will be introduced of five kilowatts and a limit of one photovoltaic generator system per premises will be eligible for the feed-in tariff of 44c per kilowatt paid back to the household for any excess power generated by their system. According to the minister's second reading speech, the average household simply wishing to generate power for everyday use should still be covered. However, the restrictions are aimed at those installing large systems, up to 30 kilowatts, for investment purposes. We heard this evening from the shadow minister, the member for Buderim, of a case of a gentleman in Mudgeeraba who simply wanted to purchase a 10-kilowatt system and who had that request rejected. The new provision will apply retrospectively to systems installed after 8 June 2011, but systems put in before this date will not supposedly be affected.

I want to commend residents in the suburb of Elanora in my electorate for their eagerness to embrace solar power. Elanora rated third highest in terms of solar panel installations for homes on the Gold Coast in the last financial year, with 554 connections made in that time. However, in the last five years electricity bills have increased by 63 per cent under Labor. In real terms, that equates to a rise of \$700 on the average household bill since 2006. Cost of living, including high electricity, water and car registration fees, rated overwhelmingly as the No. 1 concern for some 3,000 respondents to my electorate-wide survey last November. Sadly, I am sure the number of those affected would have increased substantially this year as further cost increases hit households in the new financial year. I was wondering what residents in Labor members' electorates are telling them, but then I realised that they probably do not ask because if they did they would hear how angry people are not just about electricity prices but about every other thing they use on a daily basis.

All Labor members are in complete denial, refusing to believe that their government could possibly do any wrong, pouncing on LNP members who dare to carry the concerns of their constituents into this parliament, accusing them of talking down Queensland. What a lot of rot! I challenge those members to survey their constituents and listen to what they are saying.

According to figures released by the QCA in the September 2010 quarter alone, 5,873 households, including 1,137 pensioners, had their power cut because they could not pay their bill. In that same period, 6,246 were participating in a hardship program as they struggled to pay off their bills. In May the QCA announced a 6.6 per cent rise in 2011-12 electricity prices—higher than the expected 5.83 per cent proposed in December. The real shock came, though, with the revelation that the greater than expected price rise was actually due to thrifty Queenslanders not using as much electricity as predicted over the recent cooler summer. As such, the cost to maintain and repair Queensland's extensive electricity network was not fully recovered from consumers' electricity bills. This paved the way for the government owned distributors, Ergon and Energex, to recoup their losses through a greater price increase.

Regardless of need, proposals for upgrades to electricity infrastructure through established communities are not often well received by residents. However, after enduring enormous stress and countless hours of lobbying and public protests, the shock announcement by the minister during estimates to suspend and review the Energex Mudgeeraba-Tugun network upgrade has resulted in mixed feelings amongst the local community. Members of Stop The Overhead Powerlines, while pleased at the decision not to proceed, have approached the announcement with caution as they do not trust this government and view it as a stay of execution, so to speak.

Mr Robertson: You just have no joy in you, do you? Nothing makes you happy.

Mrs STUCKEY: The thought of facing another exhausting, emotional campaign in 12 months time is too much for some of these devoted residents to contemplate.

Mr Robertson: You've got to be a 'glass half full' girl at times, you really do.

Mrs STUCKEY: I would like to place on record that the minister has absolutely no compassion for the people in my electorate because he is interjecting as I talk about the difficult times.

Mr ROBERTSON: I rise to a point of order. I find that comment untrue and offensive and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Currumbin, the minister finds those comments offensive and he asks you to withdraw.

Mr Robertson: The decision I took was all about compassion for the people in your electorate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, order! Member for Currumbin, he has asked for a withdrawal. He finds the comments offensive. I would ask you to do so.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. Just like the water debacle and copious pieces of legislation all designed to—

Mr Robertson: The Sophie Mirabella of the Queensland parliament.

Mrs STUCKEY: Now the minister is muttering as he walks around the chamber, not even in his seat. I want to tell the people of Currumbin that this is very offensive to a speaker who is on their feet trying to defend them. Just like the water debacle and copious pieces of legislation all designed to slug the poor old consumer, this latest electricity bill is almost certain to do the same. Beattie's promise that electricity prices would not go up as a result of Labor's electricity reforms still rings loudly in many Queenslanders' ears, and Campbell Newman and the LNP will not let them forget.



Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (7.53 pm): Mr Speaker—

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr Robertson interjected.

Mrs Stuckey: Rudeness is your trademark.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members on my right. The member for Bundamba has the call.

Mrs MILLER: I think the member for Currumbin has just gone to a new low in this chamber by putting on record a personal insult to our great Minister for Energy. I think the people of Currumbin should be well aware of the insulting, ridiculous behaviour of the member for Currumbin in relation to that.

Mr Robertson: I was wounded. I am a sensitive guy.

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection from the Minister for Energy. He is a sensitive person.

Mrs Stuckey: Why don't you get on with your speech?

Mrs MILLER: I will be getting on with my speech, member for Currumbin. You are just showing your rudeness once again. I would like to speak in relation to the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill before the House. I recognise, unlike the Neanderthals over there on the other side, that climate change is real and that everyone in Queensland is vulnerable to its impacts. Our government has a strong history of action to reduce emissions. In fact, the Queensland Gas Scheme requires 15 per cent of our power generation to be sourced from gas. That is just one example. In fact, our minister here tonight would be well aware that in the great electorate of Bundamba, which I am very proud to serve in this parliament, we actually have a gas fired power station. The gas fired power station is called Swanbank E.

Mr Ryan: We've got a gas fired power station over there, too.

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection from the member for Morayfield. It is very important to realise that we have a trumped up gas fired power station in the member for Currumbin. I can certainly remember when Peter Beattie, who was the Premier at the time, and Terry Mackenroth came out to open our gas fired power station Swanbank E. We had a very good event when we opened that particular power station. We were very proud to stop one of our coal fired power stations and be one of the first in Queensland to be a gas fired power station out at Swanbank. We are very grateful for that. I understand that some of our power workers who were in our coal fired power station swapped over to the gas fired one, which was a very good initiative on behalf of our government.

Mr Robertson: They became carbon neutral.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, we were very carbon neutral. We have always supported a national approach to emissions reduction, but we have also ensured that any scheme to price carbon emissions addresses our unique circumstances in Queensland and also supports our families. Our Labor government is pleased to see that the majority of issues raised in the submission that we put together for the multiparty climate change committee were part of the Clean Energy Future package announced by the Prime Minister. Of particular note is the assistance package for households, worth over \$15 billion. There will be tax cuts averaging \$10.10 per week to compensate for the cost-of-living rise, which is expected to be around \$9.90 a week. It is also pleasing to note that there are specific assistance packages for the coal and liquefied natural gas industries. Again, these were issues highlighted by our government in its submission to this committee.

There are concerns over assistance being made, however, in relation to coal fired generators. Treasury modelling undertaken following the release of the Clean Energy Future package indicates that the economic value of Queensland's government owned coal generators could reduce by \$1.13 billion as a result of carbon pricing. At present, these generators will receive no compensation. However, our Labor government will continue discussions with the Commonwealth Labor government on this issue and we are hoping to get a better outcome for Queensland.

I want to talk about electricity pricing. In relation to the freeze on variable component tariff 11, it is very interesting to note that the troglodytes over there in the LNP are touting a saving—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, I will ask you to withdraw that comment. I do not believe it is parliamentary. While we are at it, I would also ask you to withdraw a previous comment containing the word 'Neanderthal'. I would ask that both those comments be withdrawn.

Mrs MILLER: In deference to your will in this matter I will withdraw. However, I used those comments in relation to scientific terminology.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: In relation to the freeze on the variable component of tariff 11, I understand that the LNP is touting a saving of \$120 under its policy. However, Queenslanders need to know that this promise is only for 12 months. What happens after that? The LNP will jack it up again, as it normally does. Basically, it is another great electricity fiddle. It is just another of the things that they will fiddle with. The LNP plan will also result in starving our electricity network. Our electricity network needs funding and it needs investment to keep pace with our increasing population. Under the LNP—in deference to your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not call them what they should be called and certainly I will not call them what the people of Bundamba want me to call them, because that would be definitely unparliamentary—there will not be enough money spent on poles and wires. What will happen? There will be blackouts and there will be brownouts. As my colleagues the member for Ipswich and the member for Ipswich West, who is in the chair at the moment, know, in my electorate of Bundamba we would sweat in summer because there will be no electricity for airconditioning and we would freeze in winter because we would not be able to heat our houses. That is what we would have under your lot if you win the election. You do not give a rats' about the people of Ipswich. You never have and you never will. In relation to the poles and wires, I would like to put on record what Tim Nicholls has said about the party's desire—

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, take your seat.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, members need to be called by their title.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, I had already picked that up. Member for Bundamba, ensure you use the correct title.

Mrs MILLER: I will call Mr Nicholls the member for Clayfield or the member for 'playfield', because he does have horseracing in his area. He said—

One has to ask: why not sell the poles and wires as well? Why not sell the generators as well?

Oh deary me! Let's flog it all off. Let's sell the poles, let's sell the wires, let's sell everything.

Mr Shine: Isn't he a senior member of the opposition?

Mrs MILLER: I do not know whether any of them are senior members of the opposition. We do not even have a Leader of the Opposition or a supposed Leader of the Opposition who is a member of the House. The member for Clayfield or 'playfield' went on to say—

Most informed commentators know that this is the best solution to provide adequate power efficiently and with little risk to government.

You cannot trust anything they say. They will fiddle with electricity and they will fiddle with our lives. That is what they like to do.

To the people of my electorate and the people of Queensland generally I say this: that mob over there will do and say anything to con people into voting for them. Be careful what you wish for. If you wish for an LNP government, you will get the worst type of people in government, because they will do and say anything just to con you into voting for them. We know what it is like. I remember what it was like growing up under the Bjelke-Petersen government. They starved my electorate of everything. We did not have decent schools. At Bremer, I spent my whole time at high school in temporary classrooms. They were disgraceful and disgusting. You lot would sell off the electricity industry, you would sell off everything. That is what you are like.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Through the chair, member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: You are spivs and scumbags.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, you will withdraw those last two comments. They are unparliamentary.

Mrs MILLER: In deference to your ruling, I will withdraw those comments. However, I would like you to understand that in relation to the LNP more colourful language would be used by members in my community. That was the nicest description I could put on them.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those comments have been withdrawn, thank you.

 **Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (8.04 pm): I rise to support the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011. I note the observations of the previous speaker, the member for Bundamba, who said that located in her electorate is a gas fired power station of which she is aptly proud. Of course, in the Barron River electorate there is a hydro-electric power station. The Barron Gorge Power Station is one of the earliest hydro-electric power stations in the state. It is still going strong which is thanks, I must

say, to the commitment of the Stanwell Corporation and the Queensland government to maintaining our renewable energy power generation assets, including the Barron Gorge Power Station. Over the past number of years, significant investments have been made in upgrading the Barron Gorge Power Station. This year's budget has an allocation of \$6.44 million to extend the life, the capacity and the efficiency of that important renewable energy asset that, happily, is located in the Barron River electorate. That power station supports jobs and it supports North Queensland's well-deserved image as a generator of clean green energy.

Our renewable energy assets, including the Barron Gorge hydro-electric power station and other hydro-electric power stations on the Tablelands, as well as our wind energy assets, existing and planned, are very much a part of the fact that, compared to other regions of Queensland, we produce a low carbon footprint. Unlike other parts of Queensland, we do not have heavy carbon emitting industries, but we have a well developed renewable energy sector through our wind and hydro-electric generation assets. That is the way that we want it and that is the way that we want to see it developed in the future. We want more renewable energy assets located in Far North Queensland. We think that we have the right location, the right conditions and the right support in our community to develop our renewable energy assets even further and to build on the good work and the good reputation that we have already achieved, not only through our renewable energy assets but also because of the wonderful natural assets that so many people want to visit.

This bill is important because it will enable a more flexible pricing structure to be put in place to meet the exigencies of the future in terms of impacts in the electricity sector. Of course, that is a good thing. We need the flexibility in our pricing mechanism to respond to future events, to be nimble, to be pragmatic and to be effective in the way that they do that. The most important thing about this legislation is that it enables a new pricing structure to be put in place that more rationally reflects the consumer demand for electricity throughout this state. Quite frankly, a situation where the users of more electricity pay less and the users of less electricity pay more had outlived its usefulness in this state, if it ever had it in the first place.

The new system of inclining block tariffs that is going to be enabled by this legislation is a much more sensible approach. It is an approach that will encourage people to be more energy efficient in their consumption of electricity at a household level. That, after all, is what people have demonstrated they want to do. They want to have the capacity to do that through a more rational pricing structure, which this legislation will deliver. We have seen that in the extraordinary take-up of the various schemes that have provided incentives for people to install solar systems. That take-up has been enthusiastically embraced throughout the state, including in tropical North Queensland, including in my electorate. It is providing jobs in a resurgent renewable electricity sector. There are many firms that have expanded and have put on a number of workers to install solar panels on roofs throughout our region. People want to make a difference and they have embraced those schemes and they have utilised them.

Importantly, this legislation does put in place some restrictions on those who would have seen those incentives and subsidies as a mechanism to make money out of the Solar Bonus Scheme and similar schemes. That was never the intention of those schemes. So I am glad that the legislation imposes a five kilowatt cap on those solar schemes so that their original intention can be preserved and so that we can have a sustainable renewable energy solar panel sector and industry throughout our state and our region.

In conclusion, I wish to mention a couple of things. I want to acknowledge that electricity consumers in the regions throughout Queensland enjoy competitive household electricity prices because of the subsidy that this government has in place to ensure that regional consumers of electricity are not disadvantaged on price compared with their friends in South-East Queensland in the city. It is all very well for members opposite to carry on about statements that were made in the parliament about the consequences of retail competition. As we all know, retail competition was something that was only ever going to occur and was envisaged to occur in South-East Queensland. It is not that it cannot occur elsewhere, but the practical result of the introduction of retail competition was that it would be concentrated in South-East Queensland. Our government has proudly maintained its commitment to keep retail electricity prices competitive with those that are offered in South-East Queensland, in the bush, at places like Rockhampton, Western Queensland, Far North Queensland—everywhere outside South-East Queensland.

Mr Dickson interjected.


Mr WETTENHALL: I can hear members opposite interjecting but I have not heard them make the same commitment to subsidise the electricity costs of consumers in regional Queensland that this government has proudly preserved for many a long year and is preserving in this legislation. Let us hear—

Dr Douglas interjected.

Mr WETTENHALL: I hear members opposite from South-East Queensland interjecting. Let us hear a policy commitment from the LNP for once just on one issue. Let us hear from them whether or not they are committed to maintaining the subsidy for regional electricity consumers in the bush. Let us hear from them.

Let us remember what they did commit to in 2006. In the 2006 election campaign the member for Southern Downs, then the Leader of the Opposition, committed to putting electricity underground throughout Queensland—another uncosted and irresponsible promise. Let us hear a responsible and costed promise from the LNP for once. Let us hear them commit to maintaining the subsidy for electricity consumers in the bush, because that is a commitment that this government has honoured and has made for many years.

I thank the minister for bringing this legislation forward. It is going to enable a more flexible pricing mechanism and, most importantly, one that will provide proper and rational incentives for people to save electricity and save costs throughout Queensland.


 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (8.14 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I firstly thank you for the opportunity to speak to the legislation. I congratulate the shadow minister on his presentation of our point of view of this legislation and his support of the legislation. Might I also congratulate the member for Bundamba. That was one of the best speeches I have heard and I look forward to reading that in the greens tomorrow!

I rise to speak just briefly on one of the issues that is concerning me and my electorate and that is the connection of solar power to some of the residences in my electorate. Contractors are coming in and quoting and then installing solar panels on homes without actually contacting Ergon to find out if those solar panels are able to be connected to the Ergon Energy network. I will go on to explain this. I have written to the Minister for Energy in regard to this matter.

A decision has been made that only three kilowatts can actually be connected to the network if you have single-phase power. If, indeed, you wish to connect more than that, you have to have two- or three-phase power. Unless there is an investigation into the network that supplies power to your residence, you will only be allowed to connect three kilowatts to that system. If there is, indeed, a need to upgrade the system from your connection to the high tension line back onto network, that cost will be attributable to the householder. There is a real issue there. In recent times Ergon Energy has been sending a fax to the installers of solar power. There are still issues out there.

Only last week a member from my community approached me in regard to the matter. They had a four kilowatt system and 2.5 kilowatt inverters installed. That was obviously over and above the ability to connect into the system. Their supplier initially quoted on a three kilowatt system for \$10,500 but then talked them into installing the bigger system. Now they find that, for an extra \$7,500, they are unable to connect into the Ergon system. Indeed, in order to get their \$7,500 back, they have to go and talk to the supplier of the system. In the current situation they cannot connect that extra system into the supply. There is an issue there. I am pleased to say that Ergon has seen what it needs to do in terms of moving quickly to send out to the suppliers any information they need to contact Ergon before they quote on a system and make sure that the system can be connected into the supply.

Thankfully, I have had the opportunity to speak to this bill. One of the big issues in my electorate is that more and more people find that, when they look at the contract, they realise they possibly will have liabilities in terms of connecting their system into the network. Quite frankly, some of them are really concerned about signing that document because they are signing a document that has no parameters in terms of their liability in connecting to the system. Obviously, if they connect into the system and there is an oversupply of power into the local area and that causes damage to neighbours' appliances et cetera they can be liable for that. There is an issue there. I would like to bring that to the attention of the House.

 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (8.19 pm): At the beginning of this debate I would like to draw to the attention of those opposite, including the minister, who seems to be a little jumpy about the mention of a carbon tax in this debate, standing order 139, 'Scope of second reading debate'. Standing order 139 states, 'Debate on the second reading may address the principles of the bill.' I now draw the minister's attention to his government's own explanatory notes of this bill which state—

The amendments will also provide sufficient flexibility to deal with any unidentified policy changes or market upheavals. In particular, this approach will ensure the regulatory framework is flexible enough to allow any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations to be captured and passed through to end use customers.

So by the reading of the government's own explanatory notes, some of the main principles of the legislation are future carbon costs, market upheavals, the additional costs associated with environmental obligations and the legislative ability to pass those costs on to the end-use customers. I would like to address all of those principles in my speech tonight.

Put simply, the legislative heart of the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill pre-emptively changes the existing rules governing the pricing of electricity to accommodate and to facilitate a federal carbon tax or any other economic disincentive to produce carbon—for example, an emissions trading scheme. So those opposite would have us ignore and avoid discussing the very essence of this legislation. Why? Naturally, they are embarrassed. They have been caught out welcoming Gillard's carbon tax in this legislation. They have been caught out making plans to increase the price of electricity for pensioners, families, small businesses, manufacturers, tourism operators—the whole gamut of society and business—for no environmental benefit. And I will repeat that again: for no environmental

benefit will people be paying more for their electricity. The world's climate will not stop changing just because we are paying more money in taxes to federal politicians. Here is the reality of climate change, Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kilburn): Order! Member for Burnett, I accept your opening statements about the fact that the explanatory notes allow for the impact of carbon pricing and the flow-on effects of electricity. This debate is not about, however, whether the carbon tax will change the climate. If you want to speak about the carbon tax in the way that it increases electricity prices, as set out in the explanatory notes, that is fine and you can continue. This is not a debate about the carbon tax and climate. The member for Burnett has the floor.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you for your direction, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am simply making the point that there is a direct correlation between the ideology and the rationale behind a carbon tax and increasing the price of electricity. Pensioners in the Burnett are expected to pay more for their electricity because of this legislation, because they have the end belief that they are doing something positive for the environment, that they are doing their share to stop world climate change. That is a horrible deception. Pensioners are shivering because they think, 'Well, we'll do our bit. We'll lessen the greenhouse gases emitting into the air,' which those on that side are saying is changing climate.

There is another explanation for climate change, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I am going to canvass that explanation for climate change. I believe in climate change. Members here have asked whether I believe in climate change. Of course I believe in climate change. Climate has been changing for millennia.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Burnett, I will once again say that I have no problem with you talking about the impact of a carbon tax on the price of electricity and how this bill will compensate for that. However, I will reiterate that this is not a discussion about the carbon tax and climate change or climate change in general. If you are going to speak about climate change, I ask you to come back to how the carbon tax when it is brought in—if it is brought in—impacts directly on electricity prices and how that relates to this bill.

Mr MESSENGER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take your direction. I will go back to the explanatory notes of the government. That is probably the best way to explain it. The explanatory notes of the government state—

In particular, this approach will ensure the regulatory framework is flexible enough to allow any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations ...

The key question is: why do we have environmental obligations with this particular piece of legislation? The reason we have environmental obligations is that there is a belief by those opposite that we can stop the world's climate from changing by changing our spending patterns and the emission of man-made carbon. I believe that there is another theory, and that theory is this—

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is now engaging in debate as to whether our climate is changing or not.

Mr Wilson: He is actually canvassing the Deputy Speaker's ruling.

Mr ROBERTSON: And indeed canvassing your previous ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. As you have correctly ruled, should the member confine his comments to the issue of the price on carbon as announced by the Commonwealth, then that is well within the purview of this bill. But to canvass whether climate change is happening or not or the reasons for that goes way beyond the province of this bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burnett, I will rule on this point of order. I have now stated twice to you quite clearly that I am happy for you to speak about the carbon tax in relation to the price of electricity in Queensland. That is what this bill is about. You can talk about that for the entire time that you are on your feet, and I will let you do that. As soon as you go back to the realms of whether a carbon tax is going to change the climate, it is not relevant to this bill. This is your final warning. If you want to talk about the carbon tax, you will talk about it in relation to specifically the price of electricity in Queensland. That is your third and final warning and if you continue I will sit you down.

Mr MESSENGER: Thank you for your direction, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will try to follow your directions. The argument that I have, Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr Reeves: No. You can't argue. He has ruled on it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I do not need the assistance of other members. The member for Burnett and I will get through this process without the assistance of everyone else.

Mr MESSENGER: The *raison d'être* for a carbon tax, which will increase the price of electricity, is climate change. I think I am on safe ground there; I hope I am. The philosophy of climate change is driving the reason for a carbon tax. We will have a carbon tax; ergo we are going to have an increase in temperature. They are the logical sequences that we are dealing with. The whole point of this legislation is to facilitate and preplan so that we can have a carbon tax imposed in our state.

The reason that people will be paying more for their electricity ultimately comes back to the fact that they want to do something about climate change. They want to do something positive. They want to feel good about it. When they pay their electricity account and they see an extra \$500 per year, they can say, 'Well, we paid that extra \$500 because we're doing our bit for climate change. We're stopping man-made climate change.' Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask this question: what if there was no man-made climate change? What if the climate was going to change anyway? They would be paying that extra money in electricity charges for nothing—for absolutely nothing.

As soon as we read the word 'reform' in a bill presented by this government, the question that immediately springs to mind is: how much extra is this going to cost? The minister in his second reading speech said—

To allow a new price setting methodology to be implemented, amendments to the Electricity Act and Electricity Regulation are required.

I suspect that this is code for we are going to see increases in electricity prices. There is no specific statement by the minister saying that electricity prices are going to increase, but I would take it as implied. If this bill passes this House, I do not see that we are going to see a decrease in electricity prices. If I thought that we were going to see a decrease in electricity prices I would support this bill.

There has already been a crisis in the supply of electricity in this state. We know that Queenslanders are fed up with electricity prices. Much of this is due to the dividends paid to the government. Former Premier Beattie ripped so much out of the electricity suppliers that it caused a running down of the infrastructure, maintenance issues, brownouts and then steep increases in electricity bills to pay for the maintenance. We are now heading for another crisis because this Labor government and Labor federally refuse to invest and build coal fired power stations. The reason for this lack of political will to invest and build coal fired power stations is this fear of creating greenhouse gases, this fear of offending the green lunatics who are running the country at the moment.

In order to cover up for the fact that they have failed to invest in coal fired power stations, which would keep our electricity prices much cheaper if we did not have a carbon tax, Labor governments federally and in this state have conned Queenslanders into thinking that they can solve the looming electricity crisis by installing solar panels. They cannot. A modern 21st century country and economy needs baseload power. Renewables cannot provide baseload power for a modern 21st century economy. When the wind stops blowing, when the sun stops shining renewables, solar and wind, are useless for baseload power purposes. The only reliable forms of baseload power are coal, gas, as the member for Bundamba talked about, hydro-electricity, as the member for Barron River talked about, and nuclear.

By moving to a system of pricing electricity which takes into account—and I will quote again from the explanatory notes—'any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations' we are moving to a system of pricing which will encourage the building of nuclear power stations in Queensland in the future. I will repeat what it says in the explanatory notes. Once you factor in 'any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations' into future power costs, nuclear power will be one of the only sources of baseload power available to future generations which does not emit man-made carbon and does not attract a tax. Solar power will not provide baseload power for Queensland. Wind will not provide baseload power for Queensland. Hydro will not provide baseload power for Queensland, except in isolated areas. Coal, because of this legislation enabling a carbon tax, will be too expensive after Gillard's carbon tax. We will only have nuclear power if we want to supply baseload electricity to 21st century western society.

The LNP has opposed a carbon tax and the subsequent increase in electricity prices. I would like to remind those in this place that I was opposing a carbon tax long before those in the LNP ever saw the light to oppose this crazy philosophy. When I was a shadow minister in the LNP and previously in the National Party I had formed the opinion after reading the works of Mr Flannery and Mr Gore that, while natural climate change is a reality, man-made climate change is a myth. That is forcing pensioners, farmers, manufacturers, small businesses to pay more for electricity in order to stop a natural phenomenon. It can be described as nothing more than a cruel, heartless hoax.

The only reason for this legislation is the prospect of a federal carbon tax. That is why this legislation is before this place. One of the reasons a federal carbon tax is a prospect is due to the support of two federal Independents—Rob Oakshot and Tony Windsor. Just like the majority of the constituents in the Burnett, the majority of Oakshot's and Windsor's constituents oppose a carbon tax. Some 60 per cent of their respective electorates are like President Obama—they oppose a carbon tax. Oakshot and Windsor have failed to honestly represent the will of their individual electorates and have betrayed their state and their electorate. Oakshot and Windsor have failed to honestly represent the will of the majority of Australians and have betrayed their country.

Overseas business competitors in America, China, India and Brazil, who will never pay our carbon tax and increasing electricity prices, will benefit from an Australian carbon tax by making our farmers, manufacturers, miners and tourism operators less competitive and productive. Oakshot and Windsor should resign immediately. They should join Labor and the Greens. They do not deserve the title of Independent. An Independent puts people before political parties. Oakshot and Windsor have put the Greens political party and the Labor political party before their people.

This bill allowing the government to increase electricity prices could also be preparing the way to sell off our electricity assets. If there is a sale of electricity assets, the price will go up. The government is broke, it needs more money out of electricity assets and the electricity assets, of course, are a prime target for privatisation. The LNP, if it forms the next government, would most likely vote to sell off our assets and then blame the private company for future electricity price increases.

For the record, I will give the people of Queensland and the Burnett a guarantee that I will not vote for any asset sales of state owned electricity assets—and unlike those on the opposite side of the chamber, people can trust me to keep my word—in this or in any future parliament that I might be lucky enough to be elected to. It is up to the LNP and Labor during this debate to give a guarantee to the voters of Queensland, including those in the Burnett, that they will not sell off or privatise electricity assets.

Mr Robertson: I'm happy to do that.

Mr MESSENGER: Okay. I take the interjection from the minister. He is happy to give a guarantee for his government that it will not privatise any electricity assets. I look forward to reading that in his summing-up.

Mr Wilson: It is now in *Hansard* so you do not have to wait.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Members on my right.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left. Member for Burnett, please return to your speech.

Mr MESSENGER: I acknowledge the fine contribution from the shadow minister, the member for Currumbin and other members of the LNP. But I am disappointed that from their comments it appears that they will not be officially calling for a division on this legislation and taking a vote. There is enough doubt that has been expressed on this side of the chamber about the integrity of this bill.

I will not be supporting this bill for two reasons. Firstly, Labor refuses to subject this bill to scrutiny in the new committee process. Secondly, this bill prepares the way for an increase in electricity prices due to—and I quote once again from the explanatory notes—'any future carbon costs or additional costs associated with environmental obligations'.

I was elected to this chamber to fight for the pensioners of Burnett, to fight for the farmers of Burnett, to fight for the small business owners—the people who are finding it very hard to meet the rising costs of living these days. If this bill goes through this place then naturally the price of electricity will rise once a carbon tax is imposed. The only hope that we have of keeping a lid on electricity prices is to stop the carbon tax and to keep the electricity providers in state ownership.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (8.39 pm): I rise to speak on the Electricity Price Reform Amendment Bill 2011, a very important bill for Queenslanders. There is no doubt that cost of living is an issue for many Australians and that electricity bills contribute to those concerns. In Queensland we are luckier than those in some other states, where electricity price rises have been much higher than in our state. Since 2009-10, for instance, in Western Australia electricity prices have increased by 42.79 per cent and in New South Wales by 55.4 per cent.

However, there is no mistaking the impact in our own state, which is why I have been very pleased to promote so strongly to the people of the Bulimba electorate the initiatives that the Bligh Labor government has put in place to help people manage their energy bills—initiatives like the removal of the \$113 ambulance levy from electricity bills; increased electricity rebates for seniors and pensioners; the ClimateSmart Home Service that will save householders up to \$480 a year on their electricity bills; the Queensland government Solar Hot Water Rebate, which offers a rebate of \$600, or \$1,000 for qualifying low-income earners, when replacing an electric storage water heater with a heat pump or solar water heater; and the Queensland Solar Bonus Scheme, which pays eligible households and other small customers for the surplus electricity generated from solar photovoltaic panel systems which is exported to the electricity grid.

That is why I am very pleased to support this bill, which will introduce a fairer and more flexible electricity-pricing system for Queenslanders. We have seen the Queensland Competition Authority, despite the protests of the government, set some gut-wrenching electricity price increases over recent

years—most recently the 6.6 per cent increase which was set in place to operate from 1 July this year. In 2009, the Queensland government directed the Competition Authority to do a comprehensive review of electricity pricing and tariff structures in Queensland. Overall, the QCA concluded that existing tariffs are not cost reflective and recommended that a new pricing mechanism, whereby the final price paid by consumers reflects the true cost of supplying the electricity, be implemented.

In response to those findings, the Queensland government decided to replace the existing benchmark retail cost index methodology for calculating notified electricity prices with a new pricing framework which does more accurately reflect the costs of supply. Maintaining a reliable and secure electricity network will not be possible unless retail electricity price increases are based on the genuine increases in supply costs. With the passing of this bill, the BRCI methodology will be replaced with that more transparent system. The authority will conduct community and stakeholder consultation about the components it should consider when determining regulated prices, using a cost-reflective methodology. It will then use that methodology to calculate future Queensland electricity prices that apply from 1 July 2012.

What will this mean for residential customers? The existing tariff 11 will incorporate an inclining block tariff structure. This is designed to encourage customers to conserve electricity by charging a fixed supply charge and a series of consumption blocks priced so that the more you use the more you pay. In this way, high-consumption customers will be encouraged to reduce their overall energy use, whilst the impact on low-consumption customers of moving to a new tariff structure will be minimised.

As an alternative to the inclining block tariff, residential consumers with an interval meter will have the option to choose a TOU tariff. This tariff will encourage consumers to shift their consumption away from higher priced peak periods to times when prices are lower, enabling customers to reduce their electricity bills as well as reduce pressure on the network from peak demand.

The bill will also give the minister responsible for energy the authority to direct the Queensland Competition Authority to provide information or advice to government on any matter related to the Queensland electricity market. At present, the minister can issue a direction to the QCA but only in relation to conducting a review into any matter relating to the Queensland electricity market. The related reforms in this bill will produce an outcome which I know all will agree is desirable.

I would also like to touch on the amendments in the bill which relate to the Solar Bonus Scheme. The bill seeks to introduce amendments to the Electricity Act for the continuing efficient management of the scheme. These will limit the size of an eligible individual solar photovoltaic system to one five-kilowatt system per premises, where previously the maximum size system eligible was 30 kilowatts. This change has been applauded. When it was announced in May this year, the chief executive of the Sustainable Energy Association of Australia, Professor Ray Wills, said—

The certainty provided by consistent policy approaches using market mechanisms to stimulate the Queensland renewable energy industry is welcomed.


and that other Australian governments—

... would do well to look to the Queensland approach to policy for renewable energy.

Queenslanders, including I know residents of the Bulimba electorate, have picked up the government's solar initiatives in droves, reaching our solar energy targets more than three years ahead of schedule. In April 2010, we set a challenge to double Queensland's use of solar energy in five years. At that time, Queensland had an estimated 250 megawatts of installed solar capacity.


Debate, on motion of Ms Farmer, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (8.45 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Meals on Wheels

 **Mr ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (8.45 pm): I am very grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute in this place to the Meals on Wheels organisation. Originating in the United Kingdom in wartime, Meals on Wheels was founded to assist the frail elderly who wanted to stay in their own homes. Now, almost 60 years later, Meals on Wheels creates almost 15 million meals annually all over Australia from its 740 outlets, and these meals are delivered to the door of some 53,000 clients by almost 80,000 generous-of-spirit volunteers.


I pay tribute to Meals on Wheels everywhere. Volunteers tell me that the regular human contact they provide to the frail, the elderly, the ill, the incapacitated, the recuperating and the lonely sustains their soul just as importantly as the food sustains their body. This is a community service which gives genuine meaning to the word 'community'.

Last week I attended the annual general meeting of the Tewanin-Noosa Meals on Wheels. This very local group produced 1,000 meals in its first year back in 1975-76 in a local church hall. The group moved into its own premises at Wallace House in 1993 on land provided by council, into bricks and mortar provided by the sale of virtual bricks within the local community, and into premises and kitchen facilities resulting from the local Lions Club, Rotary clubs and the Tewanin-Noosa and the Noosa Heads bowls clubs, making that their project of the year. The real bricks were donated. The paint came free. The construction labour was voluntary. An honour board gives perpetual recognition to the volunteering groups and individual people.

Meals on Wheels receives from state government sources about one-third of the cost of the three-course meal plus a drink which it provides to clients in my area for \$7 delivered. In return, it must meet nine accreditation standards and report three times a year. Seven of these nine standards are about policy and procedures, with one for the building and one for the kitchen. In the year just ended, the Tewanin-Noosa Meals on Wheels delivered 31,294 meals to 281 clients by 180 volunteers, who often are older than the clients they serve.


There is much, much more that I would like to put on the public record; however, time does not permit. What I must add is acknowledgement of president Jo Cunningham-Pettet in her fourth term; vice-president Cindy Beasley in her 10th term; Treasurer Ian Brown in his fifth term; and the other members of their stalwart committee in John Fenton, Arthur Frohmuller, Gerry Griffiths, Sandy Thorns, chef extraordinaire Desiree Phillips and assistant Lorrae Naurocki. To these core people and their legion of volunteers, on behalf of the community of Noosa I record my thanks for what you do relentlessly, unflinchingly and selflessly.

Aged Care

 **Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (8.48 pm): On previous occasions I have drawn the attention of honourable members to matters relating to aged care. I have particularly mentioned recently that nursing staff had too much paperwork and that a little less duplication and less reporting of non-critical matters would give our nurses more time with the residents. Today I wish to refer to just one of the eight forms that have to be filled in—the Cornell scale for depression report. Some of the questions asked on these forms are very intrusive. One of the questions on the Cornell form is: ‘Have you stopped doing things you used to do?’ I am told that some residents reflect on this question and, I understand, burst into tears. Other questions on the Cornell scale are designed to detect suicidality. One such question on the form is: ‘During the past week, have you had any thoughts that life is not worth living or that you would be better off dead?’

Questions like that designed to detect suicide are questions that one should not be asking people and, of course, one should not be asking people unless they think it is already in their mind. People should not be given the Cornell test unless a clinician has good reason for thinking they are already depressed. Questions that remind people of reasons for sorrow should only ever be asked in therapy, not just for the sake of information gathering. Of course, the staff who ask these questions ask them with sensitivity and with tact, but the substance of the question is not one that ought to be put to somebody except in the context of therapy. The information required of residents in aged-care facilities is considerably greater than that required by people who have to go to hospitals or other state-run institutions. In the interests of the dignity of citizens in aged-care institutions and in the interests of efficient care, I urge the federal department to review reporting requirements. Perhaps a review will find that funding decisions can be made with much less onerous reporting requirements and in circumstances which preserve more of the dignity that ought to come with age.

Charters Towers Electorate, Mining Industry

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—LNP) (8.50 pm): This morning I tabled a petition on behalf of Herberton residents calling on the minister to reconsider the proposed route to transport copper deposits from the Baal Gammon copper mine in Watsonville. This petition, signed by residents of Herberton and the surrounding districts, draws to the attention of the House the fact that the Baal Gammon copper mine is considering using the main street of Herberton as a route to transport copper deposits from its mine at Watsonville. Kagara mining company advised residents that there will be 30 round trips a day of ore trucks between 6 am and 10 pm. The development of the Baal Gammon mine will bring many benefits to the town, but these benefits should not come at the expense of the lifestyle that attracts many elderly retirees and families to Herberton. The town is situated in a steep, hilly area and drivers will have to use air brakes and change gears at many points as they travel through the most heavily populated residential areas.


The proposed route will force trucks onto the steep narrow roads used by children walking home from two schools and a technical college. There is a duty of care to residents that any transport route would not put children's lives at risk. The route will also run trucks needing to use air brakes past the palliative care wing at the Herberton Hospital and through the central business district, which is totally unsatisfactory, especially considering there are viable alternatives that have been put forward by the

community. Another concern is the steep incline leading into the business district, which led residents to lobby for a pedestrian crossing earlier this year—a request that was rejected by Main Roads. The proposed route will mean elderly residents have to negotiate crossing the main street without a pedestrian crossing while a truck bears down a steep hill towards them.

The people of Herberton want the minister to guarantee that the route most suitable and mutually beneficial is approved for the Baal Gammon mine. There needs to be a common-sense approach that balances the needs of the Herberton community with the requirements of mining developments in the area. I call on the minister to ensure that the people of Herberton get a fair go and find an alternative transport route for the Baal Gammon mine.

On another note, the recent decision by the government to give BHP Billiton the all clear for a 100 per cent fly-in fly-out workforce at Moranbah Cavel Ridge Mine when residents have clearly expressed opposition to such a move is farcical and another example of this government's disregard for mining communities. The community has been fighting for the 70/30 ratio workforce to reside in Moranbah and has invested time, energy and resources into negotiations. The minister has dug out some old commitments and polished them up to make them look like his government has delivered something for this community. A number of housing and youth centre commitments the minister announced have been rehashed and at the same time the minister has tried to set a perception that 80 per cent of the workforce will reside in mining communities. This government's treatment of the mining community of Moranbah is deplorable.


Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct

 **Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (8.53 pm): In keeping with the Bligh government's commitment to the people of the Gold Coast to provide the necessary infrastructure for Australia's sixth largest and fastest growing city, the completion of the first two phases of the Olsen Avenue upgrade a few weeks ago marked a major milestone in the \$178 million roads investment in the Gold Coast health and knowledge precinct. The completion of phases A and B of the Olsen Avenue upgrade between Melia Court and the Smith Street motorway interchange is a major step forward in the development of the precinct. Griffith University is the fastest growing university in Australia and, with the new Gold Coast University Hospital and the public transport hubs serviced by the light rail, it is inevitable that traffic in the area will grow. So it is essential that the road network supports the precinct during construction of the hospital and new university buildings as well as into the future.

Olsen Avenue has been widened to six lanes, with additional turning lanes at the intersection of Wintergreen Drive and Parklands Drive. There is also a new signalised intersection at the new Hollows Way providing direct access to the hospital from Olsen Avenue. The upgrade includes significant safety and access improvements for cyclists and pedestrians visiting the precinct. There is more than two kilometres of dedicated on-road cycle lanes and safety has been improved with signalised crossings and lighting for pathways and accessing the precinct. The Gold Coast health and knowledge precinct is a vital infrastructure development not only for the immediate area but for wider South-East Queensland. The next phase of works, which includes upgrading the Olsen Avenue-Smith Street motorway interchange with longer and additional turning lanes on every entry and exit ramp, is expected to start in mid-2012. This project sustained an average of 302 direct and indirect jobs through these first two phases.

The project team worked with the Gold Coast City Council to mitigate traffic and congestion impacts during the construction. However, as with any major infrastructure project, it is impossible to eliminate congestion and inconvenience and I therefore thank all residents of Southport for their patience and understanding during the construction. The road network in this area is a critical component of the health and knowledge precinct and this is but another example of the Bligh government's planning and building for the future. I look forward to the completion of the Gold Coast University Hospital and the light rail hub and also the building of the extensions to Griffith University, which will generate much more traffic. We now have the road network to cope with the additional volume.

Coochiemudlo Island, Dredging

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (8.56 pm): Tonight I bring disappointing news for the residents of Redlands. They were celebrating the prospect of having the channel between Coochiemudlo Island and Victoria Point dredged on hearing of funding from the state government. Unfortunately, those celebrations are now on hold. I fear the wine and the champagne will be vintage by the time the dredging approvals are granted. This government has recognised the need for the dredging and has contributed \$1.13 million towards the work, and that work obviously needs to proceed quickly. This week alone ferry and barge operations will have to stop running three times between Monday and Friday and over the next two months—September-October. As many as 15 services will be disrupted for the Coochiemudlo Island service. By all accounts, the work will be lucky to be completed by 2013 because

of the approvals process. It is absurd that it should take so long to get critical infrastructure delivered. The dredging can proceed but the spoil needs DERM and Fisheries approval, and that is what will take at least two years, as I am advised.

This is a classic case of a state government and a local government working together in a partnership where only one partner is committed. This partnership is crippled by bureaucracy and red tape and by a government that has lost its way through process. Redland City Council is at a crossroads. It is asking the minister for help—the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure—and for the minister to step up and support it on this issue, and I table a resolution from a Redland City Council meeting where the council is seeking the minister's support.

Tabled paper: Extract from Redland City Council agenda/minutes in relation to dredging at Victoria Point Jetty [5229].

The council is currently in negotiation with ferry and barge operators and is looking to the future. It is hoping to dredge deeper and straighter to ensure that future dredging is less often. This allows for growth in the community on the bay islands and also growth in vessel size, and that ultimately means it will be a much better process environmentally and a much better outcome.


By doing it now the cost variation for the new scope of works will be negligible, but what it will do is save doing the job twice. Redland City Council supports this approach. The ferry and barge operators support this approach. Residents of Coochiemudlo Island support this approach. I believe the minister in funding the project supports the project. How can it take so long to deliver a relatively simple project? I ask the minister how he can stand by and allow DERM to hold up the project for up to two years. I also table the tide sheet for this week which highlights those four tides where the ferries cannot operate between Monday and Friday.

Tabled paper: Information from tides.willyweather.com.au detailing tide information for 5-9 September 2011 [5230].

One of them is highlighted separately because it is 2 am in the morning and does not ultimately affect the ferry service. The other three ferry services are affected.

(Time expired)

Skilling Queenslanders for Work


 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (8.59 pm): A team of 12 displaced workers and job seekers worked on restoring the Jindalee Bowls Club, which was completely submerged in the January floods this year. The Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining, Stirling Hinchliffe, joined me to visit the site and meet the Green Army participants who were funded by the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. The recruits had just finished work on the Western Districts Netball Association headquarters at Graceville, where I was a long-time player in days gone by. This hardworking team moved on to the Jindalee Bowls Club, which received massive damage to the clubhouse, function rooms, bowling greens and grounds during the floods. The lower level of the clubhouse provides space for the Meals on Wheels distribution centre and the Jindalee RSL sub-branch welfare centre. I am happy to say that those community organisations have moved back into a fully renovated space. A range of other community activities, such as senior citizens meetings, Probus meetings, the Chinese Christian church, line dancing and Zumba fitness classes are also held at the clubhouse and, after many months in repair, have resumed their place at the club.

The recruits worked alongside contractors refurbishing these spaces, all the while gaining valuable skills and experience which helped many find long-term employment. On the inside they installed new stud walls and doorways, building brickwork for windows and doing lots of painting; while on the outside they were paving, painting, concreting around the barbecue area and landscaping.

This government fully supports programs which give job seekers the opportunity to build a solid resume to help boost their chances of securing work. We were pleased to provide the Construction Training Centre with close to \$230,000 to fund the participants' wages so they could work on both the Graceville netball courts and the Jindalee Bowls Club. Funding for the project was originally set out for work on creek beds in Coopers Plains. However, flooding meant the funding had to be reprioritised. This was one of 16 projects across the state which we reallocated funding to to provide immediate troops to help with the damage caused by the disasters earlier this year. A further 24 projects have also been funded.

The Construction Training Centre chief executive officer, Phil Diver, who worked closely with the group, said that participants felt extra motivated after having completed the netball court assignment and did an equally magnificent job at the bowls club. Working alongside qualified tradesmen and CTC trainers allowed them to learn a terrific range of skills and work towards a certificate I in general construction which will set them up for new careers. Queensland's Green Army is part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative.


RACQ Rescue Helicopter

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (9.02 pm): Last Friday night I attended a wonderful function to celebrate 15 years of the RACQ rescue helicopter in Mackay and the establishment of that service. I joined about 200 other supporters; Peter Bastable, the chair of the board; and Phil Dowler, the CEO. The helicopter service was established in the Central Queensland region when the need for a service was recognised after a multivehicle accident in Lake Elphinstone 1992. Although there were no fatalities resulting from this accident, three people were taken by helicopter to the Mackay Base Hospital. The helicopter used in this instance was a Mount Isa Mines helicopter which was sourced to transfer patients when the need arose. The MIM Augusta helicopter was utilised on 192 occasions for medical tasks between 1992 and 1995. The helicopter was used at no cost, and pilot Ken Phillips donated his time outside of normal flying hours free of charge.

On 8 December 1994 a public meeting was held to establish the board and the president, John Bird, was elected with Dick Marshall elected secretary and Dennis Connole elected treasurer. The first official medical task was to Hamilton Island on 1 September 1996. That aircraft was a Bell 206 LongRanger which was leased from CHC Australia, which is currently still supplying aircraft to the RACQ rescue helicopter in Mackay. On 13 July RACQ became the naming rights sponsor of CQ RESQ and this has proved a wonderful relationship.

The date of 17 October 2003 proved to be the darkest day in RACQ CQ RESQ's history, when three crew members lost their lives when their Bell 407 crashed into the sea off Cape Hillsborough during a mission to Hamilton Island. The service regrouped and rebuilt to carry on the legacy of those who gave their lives for others. In March 2004 the service had a new superior helicopter in the Eurocopter Dauphin twin-engine single-pilot aircraft. Later in 2004 the RACQ rescue helicopter service was successful in getting a grant to move into a wonderful multifunction building with wonderful service and 24-hour operational ability. The brave people of RACQ rescue helicopter based in Mackay do a wonderful job for our community.

Coates Hire Ipswich 300

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.05 pm): Members in this House might recall that a few weeks ago I discussed being with Mark Winterbottom, Jonathon Webb, Tim Slade and Jack Perkins—four young men who do other things but also race V8 Supercars. I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to do a few fast laps with them at the Ipswich go-kart track prior to the Coates Hire Ipswich 300. That event occurred on 19-21 August—a couple of weeks ago—and I had the very great pleasure of being there both on the Saturday and on the Sunday to ensure the drivers and everyone else had a great time.

Over 50,000 people attended over the three days. Every single one of them, from my understanding, had a fabulous time watching the V8s travel around the track. At the end of the three days everyone would know, I am sure, that Craig Lowndes ended up winning the three races. Tim Slade, who was with me in the go-karts, came second—I think he picked up a few pointers on the day with me. James Courtney and Shane van Gisbergen were there as well.


These young men in particular are a fabulous group of young men who do some wonderful work around the community, not only on the racetrack. On the Thursday night prior to the event we had a welcome reception in Ipswich and I had the opportunity to take along 10 guests. I took along 10 St Edmund's College students who are part of the automotive class. It is a very good school. I might say that I am an old pupil. I took 10 young men along and they had the opportunity to meet with their V8 Supercars heroes. They spent the evening engrossed, listening to these guys. The young drivers were absolutely thrilled to have these young men listening to everything they had to say, talking about vehicles and cars particularly. My lad was one of them in particular who enjoyed the night.

I suppose what it goes to show is that young men who are involved in sport do not necessarily have to be out doing things that are getting caught in the papers and so forth. Of the 28 drivers who were involved in the weekend, 22 took the time to come out to the reception on that night. I say to them: thank you very much for doing what you did for Ipswich. Over the three days they spoke to many, many people. I know that there was not one person who felt they were either hard to get to or difficult people to deal with.

The state government is proud to offer its financial support to secure this great event for the next three years, along with the Ipswich City Council as well as Coates Hire, who are the major sponsors. We hope to see them back over the next three years. We also have two other events, one on the Gold Coast and one in Townsville. But I can tell members that the Ipswich event will be taking off and I am sure that it will be passing those other events in the very near future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tony Cochrane and Shane Howard from V8 Supercars. They were fabulous people and were very impressed with the weekend's events. I should also take the opportunity to thank ministers Simon Finn and Anastacia Palaszczuk, who came up and were part of the event as well.

Fletcher, Mrs J


 **Mr MESSENGER** (Burnett—Ind) (9.08 pm): I bring to the attention of this place the recent passing of a loyal, valued and much loved servant of the people of Queensland, Mrs Jan Fletcher. Jan was a long-term adviser and confidant of conservative governments and oppositions in Queensland and served in many roles, rising to positions such as chief of staff to ministers and principal policy adviser. For many years she was the heart and soul of conservative politics in Queensland. Jan worked with a wide range of politicians and ministers including Tom Newbery, Ivan Gibbs, Russell Cooper when he was police minister and later as premier, and Mike Horan as health minister, to name a few.

Jan Fletcher's integrity was her compass. Jan worked for the community. She never compromised her morals, integrity or what she genuinely believed to be the right thing for the wider community. As the state opposition's senior health adviser, it was Jan Fletcher who listened to a recording of Toni Hoffman talking about Dr Jayant Patel and immediately understood its significance. It was Jan Fletcher who insisted that Toni's voice be heard in parliament. It was Jan Fletcher who insisted that questions must be asked and speeches must be made about Toni Hoffman's concerns. It was Jan Fletcher who insisted on following the correct policy and procedure, and that letters be written to the Medical Board, the health minister and the police. It was Jan Fletcher who held her nerve in the face of adverse headlines and political criticism while those about her with less fortitude weakened and wavered. When the truth emerged, it was Jan Fletcher who collated and reviewed evidence and wrote and prepared all the timelines and support documents for the royal commission.

That is just one example of the many times when Jan had a profound and positive impact on the greater good of the whole Queensland community. The best thing of all, as far as Jan was concerned, was that no-one would have ever known it was she who fought that fight. She never wanted to be in the spotlight. She just wanted to do what was right, especially for those in need.

Today I honour Jan publicly and I do so with great pride. Jan loved her politics, not just for the sake of loving an abstract ideology or dogma but for the good that politics can and will do for people. Jan Fletcher will be deeply and sadly missed by Ian, her husband of 35 years—they were married in 1976—her daughter Emma and son-in-law Tim, and her two gorgeous grandsons, Alexander and William. No doubt she will be missed by the countless people she worked with as well as those she served and helped with her kindness, love, irreverent humour, compassion and intelligence. It was a pleasure and an honour to have worked with Jan Fletcher. May you rest in peace, Mrs Fletcher.

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (9.11 pm): On 5 July 2011, the Australian Senate referred the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill 2011 for inquiry and report to the Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Senate Committee. Last Thursday, I was very pleased to be able to attend the Fire and Rescue Service training school at Whyte Island at the Port of Brisbane with Mick Farrel, the president of the United Firefighters Union of Australia, Peter Marshall, the secretary of the UFU of Australia, John Oliver, the secretary of the UFU of Queensland, Sue Boyce, the Liberal Senator for Queensland, Gavin Marshall, the Labor Senator from Victoria and chair of the committee, and Senator Wright, the Greens Senator, as that committee came to Brisbane to learn a bit more about the hazards firefighters face on a daily basis. The bill in question seeks to amend the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act to provide a presumption that if a firefighter is diagnosed with a stated cancer and has worked for a prescribed qualifying period, it would be presumed that that cancer is a work related illness and the firefighter will be entitled to compensation.

Even though when they start their careers firefighters are usually in the top 10 per cent of healthy and fit Australians, it is a fact that firefighters regularly get a certain number of cancers, including non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukaemia and brain, bladder, kidney, testicular and breast cancers at a rate much higher than that of the general public. In fact, after five years the firefighters involved in the 9/11 rescue have a rate of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma 45 times the average for the general community. Firefighting is a dangerous job and for many years anecdotal evidence has been that firefighters died of a certain type of cancer. A number of reports from Canada and the US have clarified and proven that link. In fact, in seven provinces in Canada and in 43 states in the US this presumptive legislation has been passed.

I have had experience of this as a firefighter. Fires are hot and dangerous. Even though we wear protective breathing apparatus, as soon as the fire was out we would take that equipment off because it was so uncomfortable. We spent the next hour or so walking around the scene, damping down and breathing in toxic fumes and smoke. Even though we did not recognise it ourselves, people could smell the smoke on us. It would come out of our skin for many days.

The Senate committee will hand down a report. I hope they recognise this link. I believe legislation will be introduced that will cover the ACT and aviation firefighters. I ask that, when the time comes, this House takes on board those recommendations and, if necessary, makes the necessary changes to the Queensland workers' compensation act to ensure that we protect the people who protect us.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.14 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, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson