



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2012

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 a letter in respect of assent to certain bills, the contents of which will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the letter for the information of members.

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

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

Date of assent: 6 December 2011

"A Bill for An Act to establish the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation and for related purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Criminal Organisation Act 2009, the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 and the Criminal Code for particular purposes and to make a regulation under the Criminal Organisation Act 2009"

"A Bill for An Act to amend the Holidays Act 1983, the Land Sales Act 1984 and the Liquor Act 1992 for particular purposes and to make minor and consequential amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 and the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990"

"A Bill for An Act about land that is highly suitable for cropping, and to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009 for particular purposes"

"A Bill for An Act to provide for various matters concerning civil proceedings and proceedings in relation to contempt of court in the Supreme Court, the District Court and the Magistrates Courts, to repeal the Supreme Court Act 1995, to amend the Associations Incorporation Act 1981, the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003, the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Cremations Act 2003, the Criminal Code, the District Court of Queensland Act 1967, the Electoral Act 1992, the Evidence Act 1977, the Information Privacy Act 2009, the Judges (Pensions and Long Leave) Act 1957, the Jury Act 1995, the Justices Act 1886, the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991, the Land Court Act 2000, the Law Reform Act 1995, the Magistrates Act 1991, the Magistrates Courts Act 1921, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Retirement Villages Act 1999, the Right to Information Act 2009, the Succession Act 1981 and the Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991, and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Acts mentioned in a schedule"

"A Bill for An Act to provide for civil partnerships and to make minor or consequential amendments of the Acts mentioned in part 6"

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

6 December 2011

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 December 2011, from Her Excellency the Governor to Mr Speaker advising of assent to bills on 6 December 2011 [[6244](#)].

REPORT

Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker




Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the *Statement for public disclosure: expenditure of the Office of the Speaker* of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011.

Tabled paper: Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 [[6245](#)].

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Minister

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have ordered that a ruling regarding a complaint by the honourable member for Mudgeeraba against the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology of deliberately misleading the House be circulated. I have decided not to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. I seek leave to have a statement incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

On 1 December 2011, the Member for Mudgeeraba wrote to me alleging that the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology deliberately misled the House in statements made when tabling photographs on 15 November 2011.

The Member's complaint was that the Minister misled the House during the debate on the Weapons Amendment Bill when tabling photographs from the Member's Facebook page which were of the Member for Mudgeeraba and some members of the Australian military.

The Member alleges that privacy settings would have prevented the Minister from personally accessing her Facebook page and his statements that he 'found' the photos on the Member's Facebook page were intended to mislead the Parliament.

For the benefit of the House I table the Member's correspondence.

It is well established that there are three elements to be established when it is alleged that a member has committed the contempt of deliberately misleading the House:

- first, the statement must, in fact, have been misleading;
- secondly, it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time the statement was made that it was incorrect; and
- thirdly, in making it, the member must have intended to mislead the House.

It is clear that a misrepresentation can constitute a deliberate misleading of the House and a contempt, only if all the elements described above can be established.

On 15 November 2011, I made a ruling in which I invited the Minister to seek the leave of the House to withdraw the document in question. In seeking the leave of the House, which was subsequently granted, the Minister apologised to the House for tabling an inappropriate document.

In this case, I believe the matter was adequately dealt with by the House and I do not believe, on the face of the evidence before me, that any of the elements can be established.

Furthermore, I consider it unlikely that further investigation by the Ethics Committee would adduce such evidence.


I have, therefore, decided not to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee on the basis that it has been adequately dealt with and does not warrant the further attention of the House.

Other matters raised by the Member in her letter do not fall within the definition of contempt of Parliament.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 1 December 2011, from Ms Ros Bates MP to the Speaker requesting referral of a matter to the Ethics Committee [\[6459\]](#).


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Retirement of Parliamentary Librarian

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this Thursday is the last day at work for the parliament's librarian and long-term parliamentary officer, Mary Seefried, before her official retirement later in the year. Mary has worked in the Parliamentary Service for more than 30 years and I am sure all honourable members will join with me in wishing Mary all of the very best for her future. I remind honourable members that a farewell function for Mrs Seefried will be held this afternoon at 4 pm in the Speakers' Hall. I hope all honourable members and staff will be able to attend.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Hynd, Mr TS

 **Hon. AM BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.33 am): I move—


1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late Thomas Simpson Hynd, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Thomas Simpson Hynd, known to those who served with him as Tom, was born in Sydney on 6 July 1930. He was educated in Sydney at the Chatswood primary and Mossman high schools and the Gore Hill Technical College. Following his schooling, Mr Hynd became a master builder and was the owner of TS Hynd Pty Ltd, an electronic door specialist company. In 1985 the Queensland parliament passed legislation to increase the number of seats in this House from 82 to 89. As part of the

redistribution that followed, the electorate of Nerang was formed. Mr Hynd, who had become active in the National Party on the Gold Coast, was selected by that party to contest the new seat of Nerang at the state election of 1986.

In a wide open electoral contest involving five candidates, Tom Hynd was elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as the inaugural member for Nerang on 1 November 1986. During his time in this parliament Mr Hynd was a member of the then newly established Public Works Committee, so he was an inaugural member for Nerang and an inaugural member of that important committee. He also served as Deputy Government Whip from September to December 1989. Mr Hynd also served on a number of the National Party's government party committees across a very wide range of portfolios. He then went on to recontest the seat of Nerang at the state election of December 1989. However, he was defeated by the Liberal Party's candidate at that election, Mr Ray Connor. Tom Hynd as a member of this parliament gave service to the people of his electorate, the people of the Gold Coast and the people of Queensland.

He passed away peacefully on 20 October 2011 aged 81 years and a funeral service to celebrate and remember his life was held at the Federation Chapel of A Gentle Touch Funerals at Mudgeeraba on 27 October last year. I wish to place on record my government's thanks for the years of service that Tom Hynd gave to the institutions of democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Hynd's family and his friends.


 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (9.35 am): I followed Tom Hynd in the seat of Gaven. He was the member for Nerang, but Nerang is part of my electorate. It was the old South Coast seat that was held formerly, for those who remember, by Russell Hinze. As was said, Tom was born on 6 July 1930 and died aged 81 years. He was the son of a coalminer. He was the National Party member for Nerang from 11 November 1986 until 2 December 1989. He served a single term in the Queensland parliament, and it was a tumultuous time in state politics. He was the Deputy Government Whip for the final three months of his term.

Tom Hynd remains a household name on the Gold Coast because he installed probably half of the roller doors on houses that were built, and I note the Premier smiling. For those who may remember, a lot of homes were built at that time and Tom actually built many of those roller doors and they had the proud name of 'TS Hynd and Co.' on them. He largely introduced electronic doors to Queensland where you press the button, as indicated by the Deputy Premier. Many of those doors are still in place on the Gold Coast today. Subsequent to that, Tom entered parliament. He was a very passionate man. He had spent 20 years prior to entering parliament being very involved with the National Party and its predecessor, the Country Party. He had been the vice-president of the south-east zone, which at that time included the region up to Toowoomba. Tom spent many years travelling up and down meeting all of the members of the party, members of the parliament and also encouraging young people and mentoring people.

Tom was a passionate man. He was passionate about many things. He was passionate about his family. He was passionate about the National Party. He was passionate about Joh Bjelke-Petersen, his woodwork and he was very passionate about young people. In particular, he had a special medal made—the TS Hynd or the Tom Hynd medal—which was awarded to young people right across the Gold Coast. The Premier may remember some of this. Tom had a widespread profile right across the coast and he would proudly award this medal, as well as a small legacy that went with it. Many young people had grown from Tom's interest in them.

As has been said, Tom was a master builder. He was a timber craftsman and in his latter years in retirement he made wooden toys with a number of people which he sold at markets in order to raise money for charity. He had spent his years as a senior Rotarian and was passionate about the Rotary Club, particularly the Rotary Club of Broadbeach. That then of course grew and there were many subsequent Rotary branches that grew from there. Tom was interested in charities. He was interested in people. He was also interested in people getting representation. He had a lot of commitment to both the federal campaigns and the state campaigns, in particular for the seat of McPherson. He is remembered very fondly by former members. I have spoken to Mrs Judy Gamin, the former member for Burleigh, former National Party director Mrs June Redman and Mrs Frances Aggugia, all of whom had lots to do with him.

Tom was interested in people and all of them remember his passion for people who were at the bottom end, particularly those who lived in units and who lived in mobile home parks. Tom Hynd was involved in the forerunners of a lot of the policies that we see today. It was a short time in politics, but his contribution was substantial.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (9.39 am): I remember Tom Hynd from the time I first entered council for the Albert shire council in 1988, where I represented the division of Nerang. At that time Tom Hynd was our local state member. It was National Party heartland down there in Nerang at the time. It was the home of many famous names in the National Party. I can still remember National Party

House over at Southport for the gathering of all of those true believers in those wonderful Joh days. Of course, Thomas Simpson Hynd was very much a part of that wonderful era that we had on the Gold Coast.

As I said, I was asked to run for council. I was a local businessman in Nerang itself and I ran for the Nerang division. Obviously, Tom was one of my ports of call in seeking his blessing in this new world of politics that I was just about to enter. As the local member, Tom was a very, very strong advocate for the local region. As I recall he lived down at the Annaroo subdivision—down Mudgeeraba way—because a couple of years later when he left his position after the 1989 election there was some spurious type of development being proposed down at Annaroo and I remember Tom being the champion of the local residents to make sure that that development did not go ahead. I am sure it did not as a result of his very strong lobbying.

Tom was very much a champion for the battlers of the region. Back in those days there were some changes being made to Nerang. The area was becoming very urbanised. In particular Tom went into battle for some residents of a relocatable home at Carrara. I would like to quote a short excerpt of a speech that I made in this House on 26 October 2010 in relation to the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill. I said—

I remember well when the legislation for manufactured home parks came into being through a former member for Nerang. I had just joined council in 1988 and the then member for Nerang, Tom Hynd, had quite a few residents from Carrara in what has turned out in the 22 years that have passed to be the best real estate on the Gold Coast involved in the first sale of manufactured homes. There were many difficulties with the owners of those parks at that time and Tom Hynd took it upon himself to bring their plight into the parliament. First of all, he issued a green paper and then followed it up with the introduction of legislation into this House which saw those home dwellers afforded some protection in the vein of what was originally intended, which was a permanent dwelling place on a site that they rented from the park owners. As I recall, at that particular time the park owners had a different intention, which was ... some lucrative redevelopment of the property in the form of a high-rise or some other tourist development down on the Nerang River. They would then have been able to move the tenants out of that park. However, the legislation that came forward gave those people certainty in life.

I knew quite a few of the people who lived in that caravan park because they were members of the Nerang PCYC, of which at that time I was a member of its committee. Those people were afforded protection through the deeds and efforts of Tom Hynd.

As a very proud resident of that Nerang region, I certainly thank Tom Hynd for his contribution to that Nerang community over those years and for his contribution to the state of Queensland through his service in this parliament. On the passing of Thomas Simpson Hynd I extend my deepest sympathies to his family.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Visitors to Public Gallery

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, will you please welcome to the public gallery the former member for Waterford, the Hon. Tom Barton, and the former member for Glass House, Mr Bill Newton, who are in the public gallery today. I advise the House that question time will commence at 10.15 am.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

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

Strathpine Westfield, Go Card Top-up Outlet

Mr Emerson, from 189 petitioners, requesting the House to allow a retailer at Strathpine Westfield to top up, register, refund and change expiry dates on Go Cards [\[6246\]](#).

Millmerran State School, Years 11 and 12

Mr Springborg, from 583 petitioners, requesting the House to establish Years 11 and 12 at Millmerran State School [\[6247\]](#).

Kairi, Tinaroo Falls Dam Road

Mr Knuth, from 154 petitioners, requesting the House to call in the development approved by the Tablelands Regional Council to subdivide property located at 50 Tinaroo Falls Dam Road, Kairi [\[6248\]](#).

Fairbairn Dam

Mr Johnson, from 2,190 petitioners, requesting the House to rescind the decision by Sunwater to restrict access and use of the Fairbairn Dam and its facilities to ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy this public asset at their leisure [\[6249\]](#).

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

Fraser Island, Management

Mr Wellington, from 38 petitioners, requesting the House to change the way the Government manages Fraser Island and require all future decisions in relation to management of the Island to have the supporting agreement of the Butchulla People [\[6250\]](#).

Bruce Highway, Upgrade

Mr Bleijie, from 779 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Bruce Highway Upgrade Planning Study (Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway) Draft Plan intention to close access to Sippy Downs from the Sunshine Motorway via the one off-ramp and one on-ramp and keep these two interchanges open [\[6251\]](#).

Caloundra South, Old Caloundra Road

Mr McArdle, from 69 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate the Caloundra South developer Stockland's plans to close Old Caloundra Road that intersects with Bellvista Boulevard and to deliver a suitable alternative for residents of Old Caloundra Road [\[6252\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following e-petitions, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(4)—

Queensland Rail, Sleepers, Tendering Process

79 petitioners, requesting the House to guarantee that the 56 official Queensland Sleeper cutters are not financially disadvantaged because of changes to Queensland Rail's procurement system and if they are found to be disadvantaged, the present or future Queensland government fairly compensates those sleeper cutters [\[6253\]](#).

Ferny Grove Railway Station, Upgrade

59 petitioners, requesting the House to speed up construction work at the Ferny Grove Railway Station; provide extra temporary parking and commuter bus services during construction; and to finalise arrangements to build the new Ferny Grove Tavern [\[6254\]](#).

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—

2 December 2011—

[6124](#) Document, dated September 2011, by the Urban Land Development Authority, titled 'Tannum Sands Urban Development Area: Interim Land Use Plan' (refer Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2011: Subordinate Legislation No. 167 of 2011)

[6125](#) Right to Information and Information Privacy—Annual Report 2009-10

[6126](#) Letter, dated 2 December 2011, from the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers) to the Clerk of the Parliament correcting the parliamentary record in relation to an answer to a question without notice on 1 December 2011 regarding offences committed by young people against the person

6 December 2011—

[6127](#) Queensland Law Reform Commission—Annual Report 2010-11

[6128](#) Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts) to Auckland, New Zealand on 11 November 2011—Report to the Queensland Parliament on Ministerial Council Meetings

7 December 2011—

[6129](#) Queensland Police Service—Annual Report 2010-11: Erratum

8 December 2011—

[6130](#) Letter, dated 7 December 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of correspondence and Report 118 from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding proposed treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 23 March and 11 May 2011 and advising as to the online availability of the report

9 December 2011—

[6131](#) Community Affairs Committee: Inquiries into the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Amendment Bill 2011, the Family Responsibilities Commission and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2011, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011 and the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2011: Submissions in relation to the inquiries

[6132](#) Overseas travel report—Report on an overseas visit by the Premier and Minister for Reconstruction (Ms Bligh) to Chile and the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis from 6 to 14 November 2011—Report on Queensland Trade Mission to Chile, and Final Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games bid presentation and host city announcement in the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis

[6133](#) Letter, dated 8 December 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding proposed treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 2 November 2011, and the Treaties and National Interest Analyses for the proposed treaty actions listed in the letter, and advising as to the online availability of the documents

12 December 2011—

[6134](#) Response from the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (Mr Hinchliffe) to an ePetition (1685-11) sponsored by Ms Male, from 628 petitioners, requesting that no mining applications are granted on any part of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve

[6135](#) Response from the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (Mr Hinchliffe) to an ePetition (1750-11) sponsored by Mr Hobbs, and a paper petition (1824-11) presented by Mr Hobbs, each from 366 petitioners, requesting the House to protect rural residences and towns from mining exploration by ensuring a 2 km exclusion zone if requested by the residents; and designate communities under 1,000 population as a town

[6136](#) Magistrates Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2010-11

[6137](#) Childrens Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2010-11

[6138](#) Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal Report 2011

13 December 2011—

[6139](#) Queensland Local Government Grants Commission—Annual Report 2011

[6140](#) Yeerongpilly Transit Oriented Development: State Planning Regulatory Provision, November 2011

14 December 2011—

[6141](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1810-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3), from 1,334 petitioners, requesting the House to stop the concept plan for the Wardell Street/Samford Road Enoggera intersection upgrade, save houses from demolition, construct an overpass on Wardell Street and seek an alternative entrance to the Enoggera Military barracks

[6142](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to an ePetition (1682-11) sponsored by Mr McLindon, from 332 petitioners, requesting the House to investigate and implement additional access and exit routes to improve traffic flow and safety on Southport-Nerang Road and Edmund Rice Drive

15 December 2011—

[6143](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1681-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 447 petitioners, requesting the House to support the establishment of a Fitzgerald style independent inquiry to investigate and uncover political corruption in Queensland

[6144](#) Letter, dated 13 December 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding a proposed treaty action tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 13 October 2011, and the Treaty and National Interest Analysis for the proposed treaty action listed in the letter, and advising as to the online availability of the documents

[6145](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1840-11) presented by Mr Wettenhall and an ePetition (1803-11) sponsored by Mr Wettenhall, from 2,304 and 674 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to urge the government to acquire all necessary permits and licences from commercial fishers (bait fishers only excepted) with fair and reasonable compensation in order to cease commercial gill netting in the Trinity Bay Fishery

[6146](#) Response from the Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology (Mr Finn) to an ePetition (1769-11) sponsored by Dr Robinson, from 21 petitioners, requesting the House to extend the shade along the entire width and length of the Goodwill Bridge, where possible

[6147](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to an ePetition (1775-11) sponsored by Mr Wellington, from 48 petitioners, requesting the House to arrange for everyone who has participated in the ClimateSmart home service to receive the standby eliminators at no additional cost

16 December 2011—

[6148](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr CR Dick) to a paper petition (1811-11) and an ePetition (1746-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and 119(4), from 279 and 179 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to urgently accept the Brisbane City Council's offer to purchase the disused Wynnum Central State School site so that the Wynnum-Manly community can benefit from new and upgraded public facilities to help revitalise the Wynnum CBD

[6149](#) Response from the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (Ms Struthers) to a paper petition (1815-11) presented by Dr Robinson and an ePetition (1781-11) sponsored by Dr Robinson, from 85 and 10 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to consider granting all Queensland Pensioner Concession Card and Seniors Card holders an appropriate rebate for the use of metered Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)

[6150](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1807-11) presented by Mr Bleijie, from 62 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure Caloundra Road has a consistent speed limit by increasing the speed limit from 80 km/h to 100 km/h between the Racecourse Road interchange and Kawana Way (Link Road)

[6151](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1808-11) presented by Mr Sorensen, from 1,066 petitioners, requesting legislation to make the wearing of helmets mandatory for all users of mobility scooters

[6152](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to a paper petition (1814-11) presented by Mr Wellington, from 266 petitioners, requesting the House to change the way the government manages Fraser Island and require all future decisions in relation to management of the Island to have the supporting agreement of the Butchulla People

19 December 2011—

[6153](#) Letter, dated 16 December 2011, from the Premier (Ms Bligh) to the Clerk of the Parliament enclosing a copy of correspondence from the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties regarding proposed treaty actions tabled in both Houses of the Federal Parliament on 21, 22 and 24 November 2011, and the Treaties and National Interest Analyses for the proposed treaty actions listed in the letter, and advising as to the online availability of the documents

[6154](#) Health and Disabilities Committee: Report No. 6—One Funding System for Better Services Bill 2011

[6155](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to an ePetition (1773-11) sponsored by Mr Powell, and a paper petition (1828-11) presented by Mr Powell, from 65 and 223 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to address the unsafe condition of the D'Aguiar Highway specifically between Caboolture and Woodford and the townships of Wamuran and D'Aguiar

[6156](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1838-11) presented by Mr Roberts and an ePetition (1738-11) sponsored by Mr Roberts, from 36 and 206 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to abandon the proposed changes to the Nudgee Road Northbound Gateway on-ramp to Childs Road and seek an alternative

- [6157](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1833-11) presented by Mr Langbroek, from 692 petitioners, requesting the House to impose a six knot speed limit on the Nerang River between the Via Roma and Bermuda Street bridges
- [6158](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1826-11) presented by Ms O'Neill, from 56 petitioners, requesting the House to install noise barriers along the Bruce Highway between the Murrumba Downs exit and North Lakes exit
- [6159](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to a paper petition (1836-11) presented by Dr Flegg, from 750 petitioners, requesting the House to reconfigure the traffic lights at the intersection of Moggill Road and Birkin Road, Bellbowrie to allow for a safe U-turn
- [6160](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1683-11) sponsored by Ms Simpson, from 355 petitioners, requesting the House to de-main Alexandra Parade and to hand responsibility for this road to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council so that they can develop place-making initiatives in the heart of our community, Alexandra Headland
- [6161](#) Response from the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (Mr Wallace) to an ePetition (1789-11) sponsored by Mr Watt, from 222 petitioners, requesting the House to fix the increasing congestion at the intersection of Stafford Road and South Pine Road, Everton Park

20 December 2011—

- [6162](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to an ePetition (1772-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 53 petitioners, requesting the House to restore the Lake McKenzie (Boorangoora) Beach to its natural state to operate without further man-made interference
- [6163](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to an ePetition (1791-11) sponsored by Mr Cripps, and a paper petition (1834-11) presented by Mr Cripps, from 422 and 3,324 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to reverse the declaration of the Halifax Bay wetlands as a national park and convert the area to a recreational reserve under the control of the Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- [6164](#) Response from the Minister for Environment (Ms Darling) to an ePetition (1698-11) sponsored by Mr Ryan, from 492 petitioners, requesting the House to join with the Federal Government in advocating for a total global ban on whaling and for strong international action to be taken against those countries that continue to support national whaling programs
- [6165](#) Education and Care Services National Regulations made by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs under sections 301 and 324 of the Education and Care Services National Law as applied by the law of States and Territories
- [6166](#) Family Responsibilities Commission: Report to the Family Responsibilities Board and the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships—Quarterly Report No. 13—July 2011 to September 2011
- [6167](#) Annual Highlights Report for Queensland's Discrete Indigenous Communities: July 2010—June 2011: Incorporating the Quarterly report on key indicators in Queensland's discrete Indigenous communities for April-June 2011

21 December 2011—

- [6168](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr CR Dick) to a paper petition (1821-11) presented by Ms Johnstone, from 51 petitioners, requesting the House to appoint the current Acting Principal, Mr Peter Vigor, as Principal of the Townsville West State School
- [6169](#) Response from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (Mr Reeves) to an ePetition (1790-11) sponsored by Mr Foley, from 198 petitioners, requesting the House to petition President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and the Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament to use all the influence of their high office to introduce new laws to protect children from the crime of child sacrifice
- [6170](#) Taberna Bore Water Board: Final Report—1 July 2010 to 3 June 2011

22 December 2011—

- [6171](#) Queensland Government response to Crime and Misconduct Commission's report 'An alternative to pursuit—A review of the evade police provisions'
- [6172](#) Response from the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (Mr Roberts) to an ePetition (1743-11) sponsored by Mrs Keech and a paper petition (1813-11) presented by Mrs Keech, from 403 and 1,107 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to give priority to the planning and future construction of a new police station for Ormeau
- [6173](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1835-11) presented by Mrs Cunningham, from 754 petitioners, requesting the House to urgently upgrade the staffing levels and facilities to ensure that the Gladstone Hospital is able to fully service such a large and rapidly growing industrial city
- [6174](#) Response from the Minister for Health (Mr Wilson) to a paper petition (1822-11) presented by Mr McArdle, from 3,980 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the Caloundra City Hospital does not lose any services prior and subsequent to the new public hospital opening in Kawana; continue providing for the future needs of the people of Caloundra by expanding service to cater for the growing population; and continue receiving capital and recurrent funding
- [6175](#) Letter, dated 22 December 2011, from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to the Clerk of the Parliament correcting page 4018 of the parliamentary record in relation to a ministerial statement on 1 December 2011 regarding the number of councillors suspended from council meetings in the last 12 months
- [6176](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1779-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 1,142 petitioners, requesting the House to replace the outdated and ineffective 3 am lockout policy with a comprehensive new strategy that provides safe and enjoyable entertainment areas for patrons, businesses and residents
- [6177](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1718-11) sponsored by Mr Ryan, and a paper petition (1829-11) presented by Mr Ryan, from 340 and 83 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to support the work of the Sentencing Advisory Committee regarding minimum non-parole periods; and increase penalties for certain serious, violent and/or sexual offences and offences committed against on-duty police and/or emergency services officers

23 December 2011—

- [6178](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 7—Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2011
- [6179](#) Response from the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Mr Pitt) to an ePetition (1780-11) sponsored by Mr Dickson and a paper petition (1825-11) presented by Mr Dickson, from 136 and 586 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to encourage the government to assist with the purchase of the land at 53-57 Mill Road, Buderim, in conjunction with the local and federal governments, to deliver much needed community facilities within the local area for the permanent establishment of a Men's Shed
- [6180](#) Response from the Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (Mr Pitt) to a paper petition (1827-11) presented by Mr Horan, from 2,332 petitioners, requesting the House to provide funding for a dedicated Disability Officer for the Toowoomba Regional Council
- [6181](#) Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee: Report No. 3—Examination of Bills: Property Agents Bill 2010, Motor Dealers and Chattel Auctioneers Bill 2010, Commercial Agents Bill 2010, Agents Financial Administration Bill 2010: Interim Government Response

3 January 2012—

- [6182](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1830-11) presented by Mr McLindon, from 1,305 petitioners, requesting the House to refuse to grant development approval to the application for a quarry at Erin View Road, Kerry in the Scenic Rim
- [6183](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1837-11) presented by Mr Knuth and an ePetition (1724-11) sponsored by Mr Knuth, from 339 and 318 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to introduce a change in the conditional registration category for the use of off road vehicles on public dirt roads and lands and endorse a licensing condition to meet public safety controls
- [6184](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to an ePetition (1770-11) sponsored by Mr Emerson, from 49 petitioners, requesting the House to allow a retailer at Strathpine Westfield to have the ability to top-up, register, refund and change expiry dates on Go Cards
- [6185](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1832-11) presented by Ms Davis and an ePetition (1777-11) sponsored by Ms Davis, from 827 and 338 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to urgently provide funding to upgrade the Telegraph Road Rail Crossing to reduce traffic congestion and improve safety for local residents
- [6186](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1841-11) and an ePetition (1801-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(3) and 119(4), from 1,270 and 380 respectively, requesting the House to take urgent action to provide a TransLink park-and-ride facility at Carindale to encourage public transport use and reduce parking demand in surrounding residential streets
- [6187](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1839-11) presented by Mr Wilson, and an ePetition (1817-11) sponsored by Mr Wilson, from 3,976 and 129 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to refer to the Local Government Change Commission to transfer the Hills District from the jurisdiction of Moreton Bay Regional Council to the Brisbane City Council
- [6188](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to a paper petition (1831-11) presented by Mr Malone, from 10,549 petitioners, requesting the House to enable the Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council and be afforded the opportunity to elect their own independent local government council
- [6189](#) Response from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies (Mr Mulherin) to an ePetition (1716-11) sponsored by Mr Moorhead, from 215 petitioners, requesting legislation to ban the use of cat traps in urban environments
- [6190](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Report No. 4—Mount Gravatt Showgrounds Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 9 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6191](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Stock Route Network Management Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 10 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6192](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 56 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6193](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Review of Auditor-General's Reports—Financial Sustainability of Remote Councils: Submissions 19 (part 2) to 21 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6194](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1695-11) sponsored by Mr Messenger, from 84 petitioners, regarding senior managerial positions on the Bundaberg Regional Council
- [6195](#) Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee: Report No. 6—Holidays and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Copy of government response from the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr CR Dick) (Document received 3 January 2012)
- [6196](#) Response from the Acting Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Ms Palaszczuk) to a paper petition (1823-11) presented by Mr Wettenhall, from 1,591 petitioners, requesting the House to remove any provision in the Cairns Airport Draft Land Use Plan 2010 for a Movement Expansion Precinct; and restrict any site development that results in the removal of any mangrove wetland surrounding the Cairns Airport

4 January 2012—

- [6197](#) Response from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to an ePetition (1744-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 78 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately begin the process of de-amalgamating the Redcliffe Peninsula and establishing a Redcliffe City Council tailor-made to meet the needs of this community

5 January 2012—

- [6198](#) Gold Coast Rapid Transit Project Deed between the State of Queensland and GoldLinQ Pty Ltd, dated 5 May 2011 [NB: available on CD only]
- [6199](#) Gold Coast Rapid Transit Deed of Amendment No. 1 (Project Deed) between the State of Queensland and GoldLinQ Pty Ltd, dated 6 June 2011
- [6200](#) Gold Coast Rapid Transit: Project Agreements Summary

- [6201](#) Probity Audit Report: Gold Coast Rapid Transit Project—Operator Franchise PPP, Request for Proposal Evaluation, prepared by O'Connor Marsden & Associates, dated 5 May 2011
- [6202](#) Report of Factual Findings in Connection with the Gold Coast Rapid Transit PPP Project—Project Agreements Summary, prepared by the Auditor-General of Queensland, dated 12 December 2011
- [6203](#) Response from the Acting Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Ms Palaszczuk) to an ePetition (1761-11) sponsored by the Clerk of the Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 119(4), from 486 petitioners, requesting the House to impose a complete ban in Queensland on the private, public and professional use, sale and promotion of prong collars on dogs
- 6 January 2012—
- [6204](#) Mental Health Court—Annual Report 2010-11
- 16 January 2012—
- [6205](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 6—Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011: Government Response
- [6206](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Report No. 6—Portfolio subordinate legislation nos. 88 and 187 of 2011 and forms
- 17 January 2012—
- [6207](#) Queensland Government response to the Crime and Misconduct Commission report titled 'Evaluating Taser reforms—A review of Queensland Police Service policy and practice', dated April 2011
- 18 January 2012—
- [6208](#) Report, dated 4 January 2012, to the Legislative Assembly, from the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Energy and Water Resources, regarding a review into the operation and effectiveness of The Market Rules SEQ Water Market pursuant to section 360ZDC of the Water Act 2000
- 20 January 2012—
- [6209](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Report No. 7—Financial Sustainability of Remote Councils
- 23 January 2012—
- [6210](#) Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee: Report No. 8—Civil Proceedings Bill 2011: Government Response
- 24 January 2012—
- [6211](#) Community Affairs Committee: Report No. 10—Meeting with the Family Responsibilities Commissioner held on 30 November 2011
- 25 January 2012—
- [6212](#) Document, dated October 2011, by the Urban Land Development Authority, titled 'Caloundra South Urban Development Area: Development Scheme' (refer Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011: Subordinate Legislation No. 197 of 2011)
- [6213](#) Document, dated October 2011, by the Urban Land Development Authority, titled 'Ripley Valley Urban Development Area: Development Scheme' (refer Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011: Subordinate Legislation No. 208 of 2011)
- [6214](#) Document, dated October 2011, by the Urban Land Development Authority, titled 'Greater Flagstone Urban Development Area: Development Scheme' (refer Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011: Subordinate Legislation No. 208 of 2011)
- [6215](#) Document, dated October 2011, by the Urban Land Development Authority, titled 'Yarrabilba Urban Development Area: Development Scheme' (refer Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011: Subordinate Legislation No. 208 of 2011)
- 27 January 2012—
- [6216](#) Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee: Report No. 85—Criminal Organisation Amendment Bill 2011: Government Response
- [6217](#) Queensland Law Reform Commission: Report No. 69—A Review of the Law in Relation to the Final Disposal of a Dead Body, dated December 2011
- 30 January 2012—
- [6218](#) Sentencing Advisory Council—Annual Report 2010-11
- [6219](#) Queensland Gaming Commission—Annual Report 2010-11
- 2 February 2012—
- [6220](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 7—Commonwealth Games Arrangements Bill 2011: Government Response
- 6 February 2012—
- [6221](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Report No. 8—Stock Route Network Management Bill 2011
- [6222](#) Transport and Local Government Committee: Report No. 9—Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011
- 8 February 2012—
- [6223](#) Mt Gravatt Showgrounds Trust—Annual Report—1 May 2010—30 April 2011, together with letter to the Clerk of the Parliament (Mr Laurie), dated 8 February 2012, from the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport (Mr Reeves) regarding the late tabling
- 9 February 2012—
- [6224](#) Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee: Report No. 5—Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Government Response

10 February 2012—

- [6225](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Report No. 8—South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 (Note: correct version tabled on 13 February 2012 refer tabled paper number 6243)
- [6226](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 4 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6227](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Biosecurity Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 7 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6228](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Biosecurity Bill 2011: Summary of submissions prepared by the secretariat
- [6229](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Biosecurity Bill 2011: Advice provided by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation on the submissions
- [6230](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 8 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6231](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Summary of submissions prepared by the secretariat
- [6232](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011: Advice provided by the Department of Environment and Resource Management in relation to the inquiry
- [6233](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Protecting Primary Production Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 to 3 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6234](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Chicken Meat Industry Amendment Bill 2011: Submissions 1 and 2 received in relation to the inquiry
- [6235](#) Letter, dated 23 January 2012, from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies (Mr Mulherin) to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee providing a brief on the Hendra Virus
- [6236](#) Letter, dated 8 February 2012, from the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (Mr Lucas) to the Clerk of the Parliament regarding the Commercial Arbitration Bill 2011 and requesting the tabling of related documents
- [6237](#) Commercial Arbitration Bill 2010, model bill as agreed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General
- [6238](#) United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration 1985, with amendments as adopted in 2006
- [6239](#) Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Communiqué, 21-22 July 2011
- [6240](#) Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Communiqué, 7 May 2010
- [6241](#) Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Communiqué, 5-6 November 2009
- [6242](#) Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, Communiqué, 16-17 April 2009

13 February 2012—

- [6243](#) Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee: Report No. 8—South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Land Sales Act 1984—

- [6255](#) Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 249
- [6256](#) Land Sales Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2011, No. 249, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Electoral Act 2011—

- [6257](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 250
- [6258](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 250, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Act 2009—

- [6259](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2011, No. 251
- [6260](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2011, No. 251, Explanatory Notes

Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

- [6261](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 252
- [6262](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 252, Explanatory Notes

Public Trustee Act 1978—

- [6263](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 253
- [6264](#) Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 253, Explanatory Notes

Electricity Act 1994—

- [6265](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2011, No. 254
- [6266](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2011, No. 254, Explanatory Notes

Electricity Act 1994—

- [6267](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 255
- [6268](#) Electricity Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 255, Explanatory Notes

Nature Conservation Act 1992—

[6269](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 256

[6270](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 256, Explanatory Notes

Marine Parks Act 2004—

[6271](#) Marine Parks (Zoning Plans) Amendment Zoning Plan (No. 1) 2011, No. 257

[6272](#) Marine Parks (Zoning Plans) Amendment Zoning Plan (No. 1) 2011, No. 257, Explanatory Notes

Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011—

[6273](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 258

[6274](#) Waste Reduction and Recycling Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 258, Explanatory Notes

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995—

[6275](#) Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2011, No. 259

[6276](#) Workplace Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) Amendment Notice (No. 2) 2011, No. 259, Explanatory Notes

Work Health and Safety Act 2011—

[6277](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) Notice 2011, No. 260

[6278](#) Work Health and Safety (Codes of Practice) Notice 2011, No. 260, Explanatory Notes

Safety in Recreational Water Activities Act 2011—

[6279](#) Safety in Recreational Water Activities (Codes of Practice) Notice 2011, No. 261

[6280](#) Safety in Recreational Water Activities (Codes of Practice) Notice 2011, No. 261, Explanatory Notes

Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Act 2010—

[6281](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 262

[6282](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 262, Explanatory Notes

Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Act 2010—

[6283](#) Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Regulation 2011, No. 263

[6284](#) Personal Property Securities (Ancillary Provisions) Regulation 2011, No. 263, Explanatory Notes

Fair Trading Act 1989—

[6285](#) Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011, No. 264

[6286](#) Fair Trading (Safety Standards) Regulation 2011, No. 264, Explanatory Notes

Building Act 1975, Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002, Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[6287](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 265

[6288](#) Building and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 265, Explanatory Notes

Sustainable Planning Act 2009—

[6289](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2011, No. 266

[6290](#) Sustainable Planning Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 2011, No. 266, Explanatory Notes

City of Brisbane Act 2010, Local Government Act 2009—

[6291](#) Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 267

[6292](#) Local Government Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 267, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Act 2009—

[6293](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 2011, No. 268

[6294](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 8) 2011, No. 268, Explanatory Notes

Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007—

[6295](#) Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 269

[6296](#) Urban Land Development Authority Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 2011, No. 269, Explanatory Notes

Local Government Act 2009—

[6297](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 9) 2011, No. 270

[6298](#) Local Government (Operations) Amendment Regulation (No. 9) 2011, No. 270, Explanatory Notes

Health Services Act 1991, Speech Pathologists Registration Act 2001—

[6299](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 271

[6300](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 2011, No. 271, Explanatory Notes

Weapons Act 1990—

[6301](#) Weapons Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 272

[6302](#) Weapons Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2011, No. 272, Explanatory Notes

Weapons Amendment Act 2011—

[6303](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 273

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[6371](#) Health Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2011, No. 306

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[6425](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 23

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[6427](#) Hospitals Foundations Amendment Regulation (No. 1), 2012, No. 25

[6428](#) Hospitals Foundations Amendment Regulation (No. 1), 2012, No. 25, Explanatory Notes

EXEMPT STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

The following statutory instrument was tabled by the Clerk—

Information Privacy Act 2009, Statutory Instruments Act 1992—

[6429](#) Waiver of privacy principle obligations in the public interest No. 2 (2012)

[6430](#) Waiver of privacy principle obligations in the public interest No. 2 (2012), Explanatory Notes

REPORT TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[6431](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Acting Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Strategic Cropping Land Bill 2011

Amendment made to Bill

Clause 299 (Amendment of sch 26 (Dictionary))

At page 170, line 7, ‘*footprint*—

Omit, insert

‘*footprint*.’

* The clause, page and line number references relate to the Bill, as amended.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Western Queensland, Floods



Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.48 am):
Communities in the south-west of our state have faced another summer of heartache as the Warrego, Maranoa and Balonne rivers have swelled. Mitchell, Roma, Charleville, St George and surrounding communities and properties have again faced record flooding. At Mitchell the Maranoa peaked at a record 9.84 metres, damaging 288 properties, 243 of which are people's homes. At Roma the Bungil Creek broke its banks, damaging more than 520 properties, 474 of which were residences—I understand that one of those was the residence of the member for Warrego. While at Charleville Bradleys Gully peaked at 2.2 metres, the levy held and damage was limited to just 19 properties, sparing the town the inundation that it had seen in the past.

At St George, on advice that the waters would reach a record peak of at least 14 metres and possibly 15, the local disaster management group ordered a mandatory evacuation of the entire town, the largest evacuation of any town in Queensland's history. Around 3,000 residents were evacuated and accommodated with either family or friends or in evacuation centres in Dalby or Brisbane. Once again, our tireless SES, our emergency workers, the staff of our local councils and our Red Cross volunteers among others swung into action. St George was spared as the river peaked at 14 metres and the temporary levy constructed by council held, with approximately 565 properties—mostly outside the levy—being damaged. As the water receded St George residents were finally able to return home on Friday. Recovery efforts are now well underway in Roma, Mitchell and St George, with recovery centres established at all three towns to provide a range of financial and non-financial assistance to affected residents.

As many members know, for some of these communities these are the second or third floods they have experienced in as many years and it will require a special kind of strength and a lot of support from the rest of us to help these communities bounce back. Yesterday I was very pleased to announce a

\$10 million boost, in addition to the four-year \$44 million Natural Disaster Resilience Program, for communities in south-west Queensland to research and build essential flood mitigation projects. The funding will be allocated from a one-off \$18 million payment from the federal government as payment for Queensland executing and implementing the national partnership agreement on coal seam gas and large coalmining development. It is only fitting that this money should be used to make communities in the south-west of our state more resilient because it is here in the Surat Basin and surrounding region where the coal seam gas industry is coming to life.

This new funding can help these communities have the confidence and security they need to benefit from the coming prosperity by investigating and putting in place projects where appropriate, such as house raising or relocation schemes, levy systems and new gauging and monitoring systems. I am sure I speak for all members on all sides of the House when I say that we send the people of south-west Queensland every good wish as they go about the heartbreaking business of rebuilding their lives and their communities.

Cyclone Shelters



Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Reconstruction) (9.51 am): Last week the members for Townsville and Thuringowa were present to turn the first sod on the new cyclone shelter being built at Heatley Secondary College in Townsville. They were not alone. The member for Keppel, Paul Hoolihan, kicked off construction on the new cyclone shelter at Yeppoon State High School. Work is also underway on the new shelters at Tully State School and Ingham State High School, and this week construction will start on the Proserpine and Bowen shelters.

Last year I announced a \$60 million program to build 10 shelters jointly funded by the Queensland government and the United Arab Emirates which made a very generous donation in the wake of our disasters. As this flurry of activity shows, we are getting on with the job of delivering. All 10 shelters will be constructed to category 5 standards, capable of withstanding winds of up to 300 kilometres an hour. They will be used all year round by locals for community activities and undercover sports, such as basketball and netball. Construction on the Port Douglas shelter is expected to commence in a number of weeks and the contract for the Weipa shelter has just been awarded to AJ Homes Pty Ltd. Of the remaining two, Cairns Regional Council will manage the construction of the Cairns shelter and the Mackay shelter will be developed as part of the new state high school for that part of Mackay. Weather permitting, all 10 cyclone shelters will be completed and ready for use by the end of this year.

These cyclones shelters will boost the local construction industry, providing about 400 jobs across each of the areas. They will help safeguard people's lives and will make Queensland more resilient during the cyclone season. We hope that these new facilities will never need to be used as cyclone shelters, but if the need does come they will be ready.

Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Review



Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (9.54 am): Four weeks ago the government released the Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Review. I table a copy of that document.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government, State Budget 2011-12, Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review [\[6432\]](#).

The report shows an economy powering up, growing ahead of the nation and a budget motoring back into surplus a year earlier than scheduled—in 2014-15. It shows our economy is expected to grow at more than four per cent—at 4¼ per cent in 2011-12—well ahead of the nation which is forecast to track along back at 3¼ per cent. The only other member of the plus-four club is Western Australia. In the coming financial year we will move ahead of Western Australia, with Queensland's economic growth forecast rate of five per cent to be the fastest in the nation.


We continue to generate jobs, with employment growth ahead of the nation. The latest jobs data has us close to meeting our commitment to deliver a net new 100,000 jobs this term. In fact, we generated more jobs than every other state in December. Queensland was No. 1 for jobs growth. That trend is solid. The latest statistics show that we generated more jobs than any other state over the last 12 months. The data shows Queensland is the jobs-generating capital of Australia, creating 16,400 of the net 25,900 jobs created across the nation over the last year. We said we stood for jobs and we are delivering.

Our housing sector, a key jobs driver, has been under pressure. That is why we introduced the \$10,000 Building Boost and it is why, in response to the industry, we are extending it. Later today I will introduce a bill to extend the boost by three months and the opposition will have the opportunity to make good on its word and vote for the bill. The boost is working. The latest building approvals show that Queensland is bucking the trend. Trend dwelling approvals dropped across the nation in December, while Queensland had growth in approvals and led the nation.

The official data tells only one story: we are out in front. That is reflected in business confidence measures. The latest NAB report last week showed us once again leading the nation. The Chamber of Commerce yesterday showed our taxation burden below that of the rest of the nation and, indeed, falling over the last decade. Our competitiveness is set out in black and white.

The big risk, of course, is Mr Newman's \$5 billion debt splurge to pay for his unfunded, reckless election promises. Under Mr Newman we will not see a budget back in surplus; we will see an economy heading backwards as Queenslanders pay for his irresponsibility. The real story, the one backed up by the numbers, is of an economy that is powering ahead, an economy talked down by those opposite, that is rising above their din. Our economy is growing faster than the nation. We are No. 1 for jobs growth. We are No. 1 for building approvals. We are No. 1 for business confidence. The budget is heading back into the black and the economy is powering up. That is our plan—a plan in action and a plan that is delivering: delivering jobs and delivering growth—just like we said we would.

Child Sex Offences, Sentences; Community Management Schemes

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (9.57 am): There is no more abhorrent crime than a sexual offence against a child. Such grotesque acts are abuses of trust that have lifelong physical and psychological impacts on innocent victims. The state government has already implemented a strong regime to provide courts with the means to dish out appropriate sentences and consequences to sexual offenders and I have shown no hesitation in appealing sentences against child sex offenders. This includes increasing the maximum sentence for certain child sexual offences to 20 years; amending the Penalties and Sentences Act to make it a requirement for child sex offenders to serve actual time in jail unless there are exceptional circumstances; and introducing the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act to allow the state government to seek orders from the court for dangerous offenders to stay behind bars indefinitely.

This is an area of law that can never have enough attention. It is absolutely essential that it is constantly reviewed. That is why in July 2011 I asked the Sentencing Advisory Council to review sentences for people convicted of child sexual offences. The council's final report was submitted on 31 January and I table a copy of the report for the benefit of the House which outlines the committee's five recommendations.

Tabled paper: Sentencing Advisory Council, Sentencing of Child Sexual Offences in Queensland, final report, January 2012 [6433].

These include: amending the Penalties and Sentences Act to make it crystal clear that courts must give primary regard to the safety, protection and dignity of the child when sentencing offenders; limiting the use of good character evidence in sentencing when the court is convinced this actually assisted the offender to commit the criminal act; and requiring judges to explain in an open court why exceptional circumstances apply if an offender is not sentenced to immediate imprisonment.


The government implemented the recommendations of the Sentencing Advisory Council report tabled in this House in October last year into standard non-parole periods. The bill is before the House at the moment. I understand that Bravehearts support these latest recommendations. The government will now consider them carefully and report our intentions in due course.

Another important area of possible legal reform is community management schemes and strata title properties. This can be a particularly important subject in parts of Queensland with large numbers of people either living in or investing in residential or holiday units, such as the Gold Coast where there are 300 corporations licensed to provide residential letting management services. Given this is an issue that affects many Queenslanders, with 40,000 community management schemes in existence across the state, today the government is releasing a discussion paper into management rights in community title schemes to capture community thoughts on the matter. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Discussion paper for consultation titled 'Management Rights in Community Titles Schemes' [6434].

In order to refine the issues and ensure that all relevant matters are covered, my department undertook consultation with key stakeholders in the course of forming the discussion paper. On the one hand, many unit owners are of the view that long-term contracts for services may be substandard, over priced or inappropriate for many schemes. On the other hand, there are stakeholders who agree that management rights arrangements in Queensland are working well and that lot owners in schemes under management rights contracts are better off than those in self-managed schemes. The discussion paper can be found at getinvolved.qld.gov.au and submissions close on 8 May.

Gladstone, Environment


 **Hon. VE DARLING** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.59 am): The Bligh Labor government is committed to a sustainable economy for Gladstone that does not compromise the environment. That is why we asked a panel of independent scientists and experts across a number of fields to look at the issue of fish health in Gladstone. The report found no evidence of a link between human health and fish in Gladstone Harbour. It also found that to date water quality results were not

unusual and that good progress has been made with our extensive testing and sampling regime. Further, the report showed no evidence that water quality was affecting fish health or that dredging was causing environmental harm. The panel made several recommendations to further improve our knowledge about Gladstone Harbour and this government has accepted all of those recommendations. In fact, we were already implementing the majority of them.

You will not find many bodies of water that are more closely monitored than Gladstone. This is some of the most tested water in Australia and Gladstone industry is also on a very short leash. We have imposed strict conditions for the precinct to protect the environment. We have established an integrated aquatic investigation program for Gladstone Harbour to further build on the detailed work already undertaken by this government and the independent Gladstone Fish Health Scientific Advisory Panel. This program will search for possible causes of the fish health issues and further expand our overall knowledge of the aquatic ecosystem at Gladstone. The program will collaborate across government agencies, industry and the community. It will seek advice from the chair of the scientific advisory panel, Dr Ian Poiner, and other members. Details of the program will be available on DERM's website today. The program will further build on our extensive environmental monitoring programs for Gladstone Harbour.

On the other hand, the LNP has missed the boat. Mr Newman needs to catch up. We have already had an independent investigation into fish health. We have been taking the advice of scientists and experts since day one. Make no mistake: the Bligh Labor government will ensure that the Gladstone region can continue its role as a key economic base with a sustainable and healthy environment.


Education

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.01 am): Educated and skilled workers are the backbone of a modern, vibrant economy, which is what we have here in Queensland. Queenslanders with better skills and more knowledge help increase productivity, creating a stronger economy and a better future for our state. That is why Labor has placed such an emphasis on education and training over the past decade. It was Labor that introduced the groundbreaking learning-or-earning laws in the early 2000s. It was Labor that raised the school leaving rate, sending a strong message that we place a high value on education. And it is Labor that is lifting the number of students completing Year 12.

Last year, more than 47,200 students completed Year 12, with 26,810 receiving a tertiary entrance statement. Just last month, the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre made first-round offers of places in tertiary institutions to 2011 school leavers. Preliminary data indicates that the number of students applying to QTAC has increased by about 1,067 students, due to the growing proportion of Queensland students completing Year 12. These students are the doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers of the future. They have been prepared for tertiary study by the high-quality instruction they received through Queensland's education system.

Education itself contributes substantially to the economy. The Department of Education and Training employs more than 70,000 staff, including teachers, teacher aides, cleaners and grounds people, and has a weekly wages bill of about \$160 million. Education services are a major earner for the Queensland economy, generating export income of \$2.473 billion in 2010-11. The Bligh government has also outlined a bold new future for education in this state with the proposal to establish the Queensland Education Trust. The trust will give Queensland students an advantage over children in other states and create a legacy that will enhance our education system for decades to come.


Aviation Industry

 **Hon. JH JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business) (10.04 am): Getting a new airline into Queensland can take months and even years to pull off, and that is with a lot of hard work along the way. However, Queensland's new blueprint partnership in aviation is more than just a lucky strike; it has brought together all levels of government and industry in a new way of doing business. What we have to show for it is a new international carrier that is getting ready to fly into the Gold Coast and a plan to inject millions of dollars into our economy. I am talking about Scoot, the low-cost offshoot of Singapore Airlines. While Scoot may be an airline for the budget-conscious flyer, the partnership is a big winner for Queensland with a massive \$65 million injection per year into the Gold Coast and another massive vote of confidence in this state and local jobs.

Singapore is a key market for us, with some 22,000 Singaporeans spending more than 110,000 nights on the Gold Coast alone last year. With Scoot bringing in five flights a week with 2,000 seats, the Gold Coast business community is about to ride a new tourism wave to prosperity. And there is more: Scoot has already indicated it will include China in its first-year destinations, giving Chinese visitors a one-stop hop onto the Gold Coast, which will provide another massive market for our tourism, hospitality and small business sectors. Asia represents the greatest growth potential for us and, while there is a lot of competition for the yen, it is smart solutions like our blueprint partnership with Scoot that place us at the top of the leader board again and again.

Particular thanks must go to Gold Coast Tourism chair, Paul Donovan, and CEO, Martin Winter, for pursuing this opportunity with passion. Scoot gives a great confidence boost to Queensland tourism, but it is just one story of our aviation success. Along with the services provided by Scoot, we have four weekly China Southern Airlines direct flights, flying Beijing, Guangzhou, Brisbane; three weekly Etihad Airways flights from Abu Dhabi; daily Emirates flights from Dubai; and five AirAsia X flights from Kuala Lumpur to the Gold Coast. Jetstar has also increased capacity into Cairns from Japan, bringing in an extra 5,600 seats; Korean Air brings another 560 seats; and of course Qantas's weekly flights from Dallas have been increased from four to six. We are also attracting more domestic flights, including through Jetstar, QantasLink, Virgin Australia and Air Australia. All of this activity again shows that Queensland is on the march and the economy is set to go gang busters.

Western Queensland, Floods


 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies) (10.06 am): Over the past couple of weeks we have seen flooding in South-West Queensland occurring at levels above historical records, resulting in significant damage to many small businesses and agricultural enterprises. Reports are that the majority of producers along the Maranoa and Warrego systems have been affected. There have been substantial infrastructure losses for cotton growers and cotton yields in the St George area are expected to be reduced by up to 20 per cent. That is particularly significant as St George accounts for about one-fifth of the national cotton crop. Along river systems thousands of kilometres of fencing has been destroyed, including 1,250 kilometres of the wild dog barrier fence. There have been some stock losses, but at this stage they appear to be less than expected. This is the third flood event that some people in the region have experienced in 22 months and many producers on the ground are very flood weary. That is why we are doing everything we can to assist producers with recovery and rebuilding.

Last week the Prime Minister approved the Premier's request for category C assistance grants of up to \$25,000 for those communities. Assistance has been activated for the regional council areas of Balonne, Barcardine, Blackall-Tambo, Maranoa, Murweh and Paroo. This targeted assistance will go a long way in helping small businesses, primary producers and not-for-profit organisations repair essential infrastructure so that they can get their businesses back up and running as soon as possible.

Category B assistance of low-interest loans of up to \$250,000 is also available to eligible primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations in the same local government areas. Freight subsidies of up to \$5,000 for primary producers are also available. I urge people in these areas to contact QRAA to access the assistance either on 1800623946 or via their website www.qraa.qld.gov.au.

Information sessions are also being held in Mitchell, Roma and Charleville this week. Because this is the third flood event in less than two years we are also concerned about the psychological impacts of this event, due to the general weariness people are feeling. We have mental health specialists and farm financial counsellors on the ground to help. Anyone who would like to access these services should call 132523. The government is delivering a comprehensive and ongoing response to these floods and we will continue to monitor the situation and provide the assistance needed as we move through the recovery period.

Medical Research


 **Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (10.10 am): The Bligh government is investing in innovation, finding new ways to deliver the best possible health care to Queenslanders. We are committed to attracting and retaining skilled health professionals dedicated to putting Queensland at the cutting edge of medical research and technology.

Queensland medical research has already delivered world firsts including the cervical cancer vaccine. These potentially life-changing discoveries would not have been possible without this government's ongoing commitment to investing in medical research. That is why I am pleased to announce today eight new fellowships worth \$3.9 million which will allow some of our most talented researchers to make new discoveries leading to better patient care. The health research fellows and clinical academic fellows will investigate the likes of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, head and neck cancer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, the immunobiology of lymphoma, medical radiation, lung cancer, nursing and midwifery, and maternal child health over five years. The key to improving health outcomes for all Queenslanders is investing heavily in health and medical research, and translating that research into better patient care.

The Bligh government is committed to delivering on our vision and our plan for Queensland: a state with a knowledge based economy, a place where innovation and imagination are valued and supported and the place to be for people on the cutting edge of health and medical research. Contrast that to the LNP. They have made it clear that their priorities lie elsewhere. Research and innovation do not feature in their view of the economy. Under the LNP, the 36 researchers who have received these grants since 2008 would have been swept aside, and that is typical. There is no plan from the LNP on

health. Their only policy involves stripping \$400 million from the Sunshine Coast hospital and health budget. They do not have a plan for health in Queensland. They do not even have a plan B for who will be leader if Campbell Newman loses in Ashgrove. How can they be trusted to form government if they do not even have a plan B?

Roads, Infrastructure

 **Hon. CA WALLACE** (Thuringowa—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure) (10.13 am): Only the Bligh government has a plan to fix the Samford Road and Wardell Street intersection at Enoggera. We have already committed \$90 million to upgrade this notorious spot and I am pleased to inform the House this morning that we are now another step closer to the residents of Brisbane's north-west seeing a solution. The hardworking members for Ashgrove, Everton and Ferny Grove have advocated strongly on behalf of their constituents to ensure we get the plans right, and today the preferred planning layout has been released. The plan will see the average delay for traffic cut by up to 70 per cent in peak times. It means commuters will get to work faster, which can only be a good thing for Queensland's prospering economy.

Since July last year, the Department of Transport and Main Roads has been out in the community talking to locals about a draft concept plan. They have taken on board the feedback they have received and have made a number of changes to the original plan. One of the biggest concerns that residents had was the issue of rat-running through their local streets. To deal with this issue we will be putting in median strips to stop dangerous manoeuvres at Malcolm Street, Ardentallen Road and Cairo Street. Motorists have also asked for a cut in congestion and less waiting time. So we will put in additional and longer turning lanes on Samford Road.


This is a real win for local residents. I want to thank those local members who lobbied strongly. However, today there is a fly in the ointment. We hear that the quasi leader of the LNP, Mr 'Plan B', wants to spend \$60 million of state funds for the defence access.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will round off his statement.

Mr WALLACE: That is a shame. That is ripping off Queensland motorists.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders


 **Hon. JC SPENCE** (Sunnybank—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.14 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That standing order 136(5) be suspended for the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to allow the commencement of the second reading debate despite seven days not having elapsed since the tabling of the portfolio committee report on this bill.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Private Health Insurance Rebate

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (10.15 am): I give notice that I shall move—

That this House condemns federal Labor's plans to reduce the private health insurance rebate hot on the heels of the job-destroying carbon tax, increasing the cost of living for cash strapped Queensland families and increasing the burden on Queensland public hospitals.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The House will come to order. You have made your point.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Mr SPEAKER: Visiting us in the House this morning will be Trinity College, Gladstone in the electorate of Gladstone, Buddina State School in the electorate of Kawana and Brisbane Christian College.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.16 am): My first question without notice is to the Premier. For the last 10 days the *Courier-Mail* has published four questions which need to be answered about the Floods Commission of Inquiry. I refer the Premier to the first question which is, 'How did the commission miss pointers to key evidence that forced the resumption of the inquiry', and I ask: can the Premier explain how her \$15 million hand-picked commission of inquiry has degenerated into such a farce?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. This is the man who the Liberal National Party would see as the Premier of Queensland in the event that the LNP secured enough seats to form a government but not the seat of Ashgrove.

Mr Seeneey interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. The Premier has been asked a question. She is attempting to answer the question. I understand the Leader of the Opposition is under attack and, therefore, I allowed that. We are not going to have too much unruly behaviour today. I will just give you a gentle warning on that. The moment I am on my feet I want you to keep quiet, otherwise I will toss you out.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. My question was about the Floods Commission of Inquiry. I do not believe it is appropriate for any member in this House who asks a question about anything to have to sit quietly and listen to a personal attack immediately at the start of the answer. The Premier made no attempt to answer the question. She did not even address the issue of the commission of inquiry but sought to attack me. I and every member on this side of the House will respond to that whenever it happens.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my right will cease interjecting. I did say that I understood that you had been attacked and, therefore, I sympathised with that but not when the others sought to join in with that. I understood that. The honourable the Premier has the call.

Ms BLIGH: I think I am perfectly entitled to make comment about the nature of the question and the person who is asking it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I made my position quite clear on it and I would ask the Premier to address the answer.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to talk about the work of the commission of inquiry. This is a very important commission. The work that it has been charged with is very, very important to the future of our state. It is not only important for all of those people who were affected by last year's disasters but it is also important to the future safety and security of the capital city of our state and the city of Ipswich and the regions around those two cities.

Why did my government set up the commission of inquiry? We set it up for one reason, and that is to get to the truth of these matters. I gave them one instruction and one instruction only: to leave no stone unturned. So what happened? When further matters were drawn to their attention what did the commission do? They reopened the hearings and heard more evidence on the matter—exactly as you would expect a commission of inquiry determined to get to the heart of the matter to do.

We can only presume from the nature of the question from someone who may or may not want to be Premier of Queensland that the Queensland National Party have learned nothing from history. They have form when it comes to undermining commissions of inquiry.

Mr Lucas: Connolly-Ryan.

Ms BLIGH: Of course the Connolly-Ryan inquiry stands as one of their most embarrassing moments. Mr Speaker, make no mistake: this is an attempt by the Liberal National Party to undermine a commission of inquiry with one point.

Opposition members interjected.

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

Ms BLIGH: If the honourable member believes that this is not an attempt to undermine the inquiry, he will have the courage to walk outside this chamber and say it.

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

Mr SEENEY: My second question without notice is also to the Premier. I refer to questions 2 and 3 of the four questions posed for the last 10 days by the *Courier-Mail*, and still unanswered, which relate to the standing down of Deputy Commissioner Cummins and his nonreplacement on the commission. I ask: can the Premier confirm that Deputy Commissioner Cummins was her personal choice for the role? Can she explain why he was stood down? And how can the inquiry proceed without a dam expert and not be regarded as a total farce?

Ms BLIGH: I refer the honourable member to the statement that Justice Holmes made from the bench on the Saturday when this matter came into the public arena. Every single fact in relation to that matter has been laid out and made very, very clear by the commission. One of the things that the commission made clear is that the commission is formed by Justice Holmes and Justice Holmes alone. And how will Justice Holmes reach her conclusions? As a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, she will take evidence under oath, she will examine the submissions and cross-examine witnesses. That is how a properly constituted commission of inquiry conducts its work.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let us remember that when the Liberal and National parties were last in government they spent almost 90 per cent of their time obsessed with nobbling the CJC, and what they did was establish a commission of inquiry—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Ms BLIGH: What they did—and let us not forget our history here—was establish a commission of inquiry so poorly constructed, so biased, that it was struck out by the Supreme Court.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier is going to come back to answering the question that was asked.

Ms BLIGH: What I can say is this: we on this side of the House want the truth about the operation of the dam. That is why we set up a properly constituted commission of inquiry with all the powers of a commission—all the powers under the act—to examine witnesses, to cross-examine witnesses and to take expert evidence.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. I directed that the Premier come back to answering the question. The Premier is doing that. There is no attack on the opposition. I ask the House therefore to treat the Premier's call—she has the call—with courtesy.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. One expert witness that the commission did not need to call was the member for Callide, who of course had one solution to the operation of the dam and that was to fill it up more. He wanted more water in the dam! He did not want any flood mitigation; he wanted more water in the dam. Did you put in a submission to the commission of inquiry? Did you put in a submission about how you would have run the dam? I do not think so. You do not have the courage of your convictions.

Bligh Labor Government

Ms JONES: Can the Premier outline the government's plan for Queensland's bright future and is she aware of any alternative plans?

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the member for Ashgrove for her question. She is someone who is relentlessly optimistic about the future of Queensland.

Our government has had a clear plan to keep Queensland's economy strong. It has been our plan to create jobs, to build infrastructure, to deliver better services and to protect our environment. That is delivering for our state. As the front page of our daily newspaper tells us this morning, Queensland is ready to take off. Our economy is the nation's No. 1 good-news story.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: They do not like to hear it. What we have heard for three years is those opposite talking Queensland down.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Let's stop the clock and we will wait for the humour to subside. I call the honourable the Premier.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We know that those opposite have only ever talked Queensland and Queenslanders down. For three years they have gone hunting for bad news. It is pretty hard to find now, because what we have is the latest NAB Quarterly Business Survey. What does it say?

It says that Queensland's business confidence is at 12 points, the highest in the nation. Who is our nearest competitor? South Australia, on two points. What did the Deloitte Access Economics Investment Monitor tell us? It tells us that Queensland leads the nation, with \$96 billion worth of projects underway. What is the current forecast of private investment? Thirty-five per cent. In relation to home loan approvals, we are now the fastest state in Australia for growth in home loan approvals. Why? Because we had a plan with our Building Boost and we delivered the plan and it is working.

What we know is that those opposite have no plan for the economy but, worse still, they have no plan for their own leadership. As the gap closes in Ashgrove, as Kate Jones gets out every day and talks to people, there is one question—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Ms BLIGH: There is one question that will dog the Liberal National Party until they answer it: who will be the Premier of Queensland if Campbell Newman loses Ashgrove and they win enough seats to form a government? There are only two options: either they have a secret plan B and they will not tell Queenslanders, or they have no plan B. If members think it sounds far-fetched that a political party has no plan for its leadership, they should remember that this is the political party that wanted to pick its leader out of a hat. 'Toss-up' Tim thought they should flip a coin on the leadership. This is the political party that has put in place the most bizarre leadership arrangement in Australia, and now it is coming home to roost.

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

Mr NICHOLLS: Happy Valentine's Day to the Premier as well. My question is to the Premier. The Premier committed to ensuring that her Floods Commission of Inquiry would leave no stone unturned, yet her good friend and the state's most senior public servant at the time of the flood, Ken Smith, was not called to give evidence until the hearings of the commission were recently reconvened, despite his integral involvement. Given that Ken Smith was involved at the highest levels during the flood crisis, did the Premier ever think it was odd, and that stones had in fact been left unturned, that Mr Smith had never been called to give evidence?

Ms BLIGH: Let me make this absolutely clear: our government wants nothing from this commission of inquiry other than the truth, but in seeking that truth this government will not be seeking to inappropriately intervene. We will not be giving a running commentary. We will not be seeking to undermine the commissioner—a sitting Supreme Court judge—as she goes about her work, nor will we be seeking to erode public confidence in a commission whose work should not be underestimated in its importance.

What we know, as I said, is that the commission will not be calling the member for Callide when it is looking for expert advice on how to run a dam as a flood mitigator, because we know that the member for Callide put out press statements calling on the government in the lead-up to that terrible weather to leave more water in the dam.

Mr Seeney: You can't tell the difference between a drought and a wet season. That is the difference—the level of your incompetence.

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

Ms BLIGH: We also know that the commission of inquiry heard evidence, and it is publicly available, that the member for Callide is not the only member of the Liberal National Party who wanted water held back in the dam when the question is: should it have been released earlier? The documents submitted to the inquiry and available in the public arena show that the dam operators released less water than they thought was necessary for five hours at the express request and direction of the Brisbane City Council.

Mr Nicholls: Direction?

Ms BLIGH: The Liberal National Party here—

Mr Nicholls: At the direction?

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Oh, they are touchy.

Mr Seeney: Who is the minister?

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

Ms BLIGH: As I have said, our government will respect the work of the inquiry.

Mr Nicholls: You moved on from that one.

Mr Seeney: You dropped that one quickly.

Ms BLIGH: I am happy to talk about how the Brisbane City Council wanted less water. You want another bit of that? For five hours—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Resume your seat. It is impossible to hear. The Leader of the Opposition has worn out my patience. That is the last warning under standing order 253(1). I will ask you to leave the chamber if I have to call you to order again.

Ms BLIGH: As I said, the Liberal National Party intervened on this issue on two occasions—the member for Callide calling for more water to be held in the dam in the lead-up to the wettest summer that we knew we were going to have and the LNP-led Brisbane City Council calling for the dam to operate at a lower level than the dam engineers thought was prudent for a whole five hours at that critical time.

What we know is that our government has a plan to make Queensland stronger as the result of our disasters. What we do not know is the leadership plans of those opposite. There are only two options: you have a secret plan B or you have no plan B. Either of them is a betrayal of the people of Queensland. What we saw on Friday was Australia's only opposition leader say that he never wanted to be Premier but his deputy has not ruled it out. There is a plan—a plan Clayfield.

(Time expired)

Education Reform

Mr WATT: My question is directed to the Premier. Given Queensland is on the cusp of prosperity unlike anything we have ever seen before, can the Premier outline the government's big ideas for revolutionising education to give Queensland children the best chance to capitalise on it? Can she also advise the House of any other plans in this regard?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. As the father of two young children, the member for Everton knows well the importance of investing in our children and the importance of giving them the best possible education. He is a great champion for the schools and kindergartens in his electorate.

This government has a very proud record on education. Education has been one of my driving passions for the entire time that I have had the good fortune to be the member for South Brisbane, and it has been one of the driving passions of my Premiership. Queensland now is home to a prep year. We have given a full year of schooling to every Queensland child and it is rolled out across the state in the state, Catholic and independent sectors. We are now in the process, with a pilot underway, of moving year 7 into our high schools to give our children the best chance of getting the best out of the national curriculum. We lowered class sizes so they are now amongst the lowest in Australia, and we are in the process of delivering universal access to kindergarten programs over the next couple of years.

As we look forward to the next boom in Queensland, we need to harness it and that takes big ideas. That is why the Queensland Education Trust, that will take a percentage of our royalties from the new gas industry and put it into a dedicated education trust fund, will give our children a competitive edge in a global economy that no other child in Australia has. No other state is thinking like this. We know those opposite do not care about education. We have seen Queenslanders respond to this idea, with more than 2½ thousand responses from people on the website to date, and forums being held across the regions and here in Brisbane. The forums are being well attended and people are excited about this idea.

What we also know is that, if you want to deliver a big idea, you need strong, stable leadership, not the kind of leadership that does not quite know who the leader is. What we know is that, if Campbell Newman does not win the seat of Ashgrove and the LNP gets enough seats to win government, they do not have—

Mr Stevens: Don't you worry about that!

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach, who said, 'Don't you worry about that!' Well, guess what? Queenslanders are worried. Of the nine frontbenchers, six of them have been a deputy or a leader and the other three want to be. It is simple: you have a plan B which you are keeping from Queenslanders, or you have no plan B and that equals chaos. It is simple: if you do not know who your leader is, you cannot govern Queensland.

Queensland Health, Financial Accountability

Mr McARDLE: My question is to the Minister for Health. I table extracts of Queensland Health's annual reports from 2008-09 to 2010-11 that show payments totalling over \$4 million to a business named Healthy Initiatives and Choices, and I ask: what steps did the government take over the three years to ensure that services paid for were provided?

Tabled paper: Extracts from Queensland Health Annual Reports [6435].

Mr LUCAS: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. I understand that the matter the honourable member has raised relates to matters that are currently before a court in relation to charges against an individual. As such, I would urge you to exercise caution in relation to that.

Mr SPEAKER: I will deal with it this way. My difficulty is that the chair as a matter of course does not receive documents of matters that are before the courts. So I am not in a position to be able to say whether the point of order taken by the Attorney is correct. I am going to ask the honourable member for Caloundra to give me an assurance that the matter he has asked is not a matter that is before the courts and therefore would constitute sub judice.

Mr McARDLE: Mr Speaker, thank you. The company I referred to is an entity that is part of a procedure before the court. However—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I just hear the point of order.

Mr McARDLE: However, the question goes to the administration within Queensland Health as to what steps it took as a part of its normal processes to ensure that companies under an allocated grant used it appropriately. It does not touch the issues before the court. The issue in relation to how the moneys were actually used is a matter for another jurisdiction. It does not touch this House and this question enlivens the issue of the administration procedures inside Queensland Health and goes no further than that. It does not touch upon guilt or innocence.

Mr SPEAKER: I call the Attorney-General.

Mr LUCAS: Mr Speaker, I am surprised a lawyer would make that submission to you. Clearly, the extent—in his own words—to which the funds were used appropriately or inappropriately is clearly a matter of a criminal prosecution. If it was argued they were used appropriately, it would not be before the court.

Mr McARDLE: I rise on a point of order. The question dealt very clearly with the fact: what steps did the government take over the three years to ensure the services paid for were provided? It is an administrative matter inside Queensland Health. It does not touch upon the appropriateness or otherwise; just the audit processes within Queensland Health itself.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: It is an entirely difficult issue that you have placed before me. I have to be guided by the fact that they are probably matters that are before a criminal proceeding. Therefore, I will not allow the question.

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

Mr SPEAKER: I will hear the point of order.

Mr McARDLE: This is a matter that does not touch upon guilt or innocence. It touches upon the fact of an internal procedure inside Queensland Health to assure the money it allocated was properly accounted for and properly dealt with. Whether or not these moneys or any other moneys were dealt with inappropriately by way of a breach of the criminal law is a matter for the courts, and this does not deal with that issue. It deals with an internal mechanism inside Queensland Health and the administrative procedures associated with it.

Mr SPEAKER: If we go back to the standing order on sub judice, you will see that the terms of the matter of sub judice are quite wide. I am going to rule the question out of order. It is up to the honourable gentleman then to dissent from my ruling, but that will be my ruling today. I am placed in an impossible position. The Attorney has given advice. The ruling on sub judice is quite wide. The question is, therefore, out of order. I call the honourable member for Chatsworth.

Budget, Projected Surplus

Mr KILBURN: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer. Could the Deputy Premier please outline when the Bligh government will return the Queensland budget to surplus? Is he aware of any alternative plans?

Mr FRASER: I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question and for his support for the job-generating policies of this government. We do have a plan to drive the budget back into surplus—a plan detailed in the midyear review to drive it back into surplus a year ahead of schedule in 2014-15. That was a document that makes the choices to make sure that we have an efficient Public Service and to make sure that resource companies enjoying the benefits of the boom are also paying their way. What we see is an economy that is on track, an economy that is powering up and, despite global conditions, an economy that is moving out to the front of the pack in the nation. What we see on the other side is no plan. Those opposite do not even have a plan for who their leader is, because, just as he is not here today, Campbell Newman is increasingly looking like he will not be here after the election because it is true: the more Campbell Newman campaigns in Ashgrove, the lower his vote goes. Each and every day he is out there and the more people he meets, the lower his vote goes. The more people he talks to, the lower his vote goes. The more people he sees, the more they see through him and the lower his vote goes. On the other side then there is no plan for leadership post the election.

Perhaps we have to work it out for ourselves. Who might be the leader? Last Friday lunchtime we saw the Leader of the Opposition marking out a bit of territory standing next to Campbell Newman keeping hope alive. The alternative plan here goes to the core of the proposition of what the opposition is offering, because then he got back to the real LNP headquarters where the real boss Mr McIver was and he had to put out a statement saying that it was not going to be him—the old dog brought back to heel. Yesterday we saw 'Plan Clayfield' come out. The shadow Treasurer was asked whether he could rule out a tilt at the leadership, and of course he could not, because he is bursting at the seams. He is dying to be the Premier of Queensland and he leached into the back pocket, where he has the leadership baton along with the leadership hat, and he tossed the leadership hat right into the ring, as he has done before.

So who else could it be? Perhaps the member for Currumbin might throw her hat in the ring. After all, she may as well have a crack! She is either going to have that opportunity or she can face being the parliamentary secretary for the ladies tennis club! But there are two other prospects who I reckon we should look at. One is the member for Maroochydore, who has form. She has a 13-vote head start and, according to reports, she is putting the member for Gympie on her dance card for the LNP leadership dance-off. But finally my betting is on the Borg—the member for Southern Downs—because he has never been here just to make up the numbers. You can bet that the old Yelarbon barn dancer is out there doing the numbers and having a look. On this side we offer strong, united leadership for Queensland's future and on the other side of the chamber they have no plan for leadership. If they cannot lead themselves, how can they possibly lead Queensland?

Public Service, Financial Accountability

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Reconstruction. I refer to the Auditor-General's report in May last year tabled in the parliament which said—

There appears to have been a loss of focus across the public sector on maintaining basic financial controls with the number of agencies failing to maintain these controls increasing. This trend has the potential to expose the public sector as a whole to significant risk.

In light of recent media relating to health department funds, how can the Premier have any confidence in the Treasurer as the responsible minister for the Financial Accountability Act after he ignored warnings from the Auditor-General of the potential for public sector fraud?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. As of course is the case so often with the questions from this member and others of his team, it contains a number of false assumptions. Firstly, I should point out that the Auditor-General's report that he speaks of did not examine the department of health. Secondly, his assertion that no action was taken on that Auditor-General's report is a false one. In fact—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable member, you have asked the question. Allow the Premier to answer the question. There is no insult to you that I could hear. It was a straightforward question. The Premier is answering the question.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. So it is a false assumption that no action was taken on that report. In fact, a number of actions were taken across a range of agencies, particularly those that had been highlighted in that particular Auditor-General's report, and those actions are either fully completed or still in the process of being rolled out, depending on the nature of the recommendations. I can assure the House and assure the member that these are matters of course that can be the subject of further inquiry by the public accounts committee of the House. I would expect that if the relevant committee is interested the Auditor-General will be only too happy to report.

What we have seen over the last four to five days is the ongoing spectacle in relation to the leadership, or lack thereof, of the Liberal National Party. Let us be very clear about how this works. The Liberal National Party needs to hold all of its own seats and then it needs to win—

Mr BLEIJIE: I rise to a point of order. My question was does the Premier have confidence in her Treasurer, not about anything else—confidence in her Treasurer.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: And I take it that the Premier is getting back to answering that question.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. What we have in Queensland is one of Australia's best treasurers and, Mr Speaker, I would back him against the member for Glass House any time.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms BLIGH: Sorry, whoever he is. There is relevance deprivation over there.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I allow the Premier to go on, once the question is asked, that is fine. Once the interjection is given, then all bets are off, that is, the Premier has taken the interjection that you have given out. Premier, I will leave you to wind up your answer.

Ms BLIGH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think the real question here is who will gain the confidence of the Liberal National Party to become the Premier if they form enough seats to hold government and they have no leader, because Campbell Newman does not win Ashgrove. Of course, we have seen the spectacle on Friday of possibly the only opposition leader ever in Australian history putting out a written statement saying he never wanted to be Premier. He is taking \$60,000 a year to be the opposition leader and he is putting out statements saying he never wants to be Premier.

'Do Not Knock' Register

Mr LAWLOR: My question is to the Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. Can the Attorney-General inform the House of any progress in regard to the 'do not knock' register and any recent examples of when this may have been useful for Queenslanders?

Mr LUCAS: Since 2007 we have had the Do Not Call Register, which has protected members of the community from unsolicited telephone calls. At the ministerial council on 9 December I raised the consumer view of a 'do not knock' register, and that proposal has been strongly supported by the Queensland Consumers Association. The ACCC is taking the lead on progressing that matter. I think it is very important to many Queenslanders.

The one group of Queenslanders to whom such a register would be most important is the residents of Ashgrove. Last week we saw the results of the ReachTEL poll. As soon as Campbell Newman was panicked, he did a Michael Caltabiano and pulled in all the resources from everywhere else and sent out his shadow cabinet. I am told reliably that, rather than ReachTEL having to ring the next lot of people for its next survey, ReachTEL is already being told, 'Don't send them around. We won't vote for them.'

Let us have a look at the doorknocking that the poor people of Ashgrove would have to put up with. There would be the member for Clayfield at the door—'No, sorry, sir. Ballymore is three kilometres further into the city.' We would have the member for Caloundra—'No, sorry, we don't want aluminium cladding or our roof painted.' The member for Callide—'Hey, darl, a bloke just came campaigning for Campbell Newman and said we shouldn't vote for him.' The member for Kawana—'The paperboy is here, darl. Do we have any money for him?' Or the member for Maroochydore—'No, sorry. We're Catholics here.' The member for Indooroopilly—'Hey, there's a guy with a fake tan at the door. Do we need the pool cleaned?' Or the member for Currumbin—'Hey, the doctor's wife up the road is complaining about the kids.'

One thing about those on the other side is for sure: when they are out there, they agree on nothing. They would have to be the greatest debacle of a shadow frontbench. Every house they doorknock in Ashgrove raises more questions about the leadership of the LNP. Imagine having a leader so spooked that he has to have a mass doorknocking campaign in an electorate he is running in! We know this about ReachTEL: due to the nature of its sampling, it overestimates the conservative vote. That says that Kate Jones, an outstanding local member, is the one whom people want in their community. No amount of sending out the members opposite frightening the kids, scaring the dogs and making the birds fly away will change that. They are unelectable. For 20 years they have not been able to govern themselves. They are a joke, they are a rabble—and, by God, it is good to have another three days.

Corrective Services; Middle Park State School

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Why was the Middle Park State School not immediately alerted about the escape of dangerous sex predator Andrew Ellis given that meetings with school officials in April 2011 gave the expectation that such an alert would happen? I table a letter from Corrective Services to the school.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 May 2011, from J Lynas and R McSwain, Queensland Corrective Services, to Middle Park P&C Committee relating to contingency accommodation at the Wacol Prison Reserve [\[6436\]](#).

Mr ROBERTS: This is coming from a party that used to let sex offenders walk free at the end of their sentence with no supervision.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the question was pretty well straightforward. I would ask the honourable minister to direct himself to the question.

Mr ROBERTS: The allegation is that the offender who was spoken about removed his GPS-monitoring strap in the early hours of the morning with intention. Queensland Corrective Services—and indeed the Queensland Police Service—takes these issues very seriously. They immediately deployed people to the site to verify the tamper alarm, which was received in the central monitoring unit. From that point on, it is up to police and/or Corrective Services to make determinations about what public

notifications are given in the public arena. It is not for a politician, not for the member opposite or any other person other than police to make those judgements based on their best estimation of how to apprehend these offenders.

While I have been the minister there have been numerous instances in which people have been at large for a whole range of reasons. On occasions, police or Queensland Corrective Services will immediately put out an alert. On other occasions, for reasons which are in my view entirely justifiable, they will put out alerts at the time they think it is appropriate. In this instance a judgement was made that those notices would be put out not at the time the offender allegedly absconded.

The Queensland government has a very proud history in terms of the regime we put in place to monitor and supervise sex offenders in this state. Under the National Party—

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. My question was very clear. There was a meeting in April last year, followed by a letter from Corrective Services outlining that this school had every right to expect that they would be warned if such an incident happened. The minister has failed to answer that question or failed to address it.

Mr SPEAKER: I will rule on the point of order. I have listened pretty carefully to the minister. I thought the minister was giving a pretty reasoned discussion about the question that was asked, so I will hear the minister.

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just to repeat, it is a matter for police and Corrective Services to make determinations about what public notifications are given when offenders abscond or escape from custody. It is not a matter for a politician to make those determinations. I know from briefings I have had in relation to this matter and other matters that the police and Corrective Services take a whole range of matters into consideration before they make those public announcements. The primary concern is to ensure that the resources available to the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Corrective Services are focused on apprehending the offender. Sometimes putting issues out into the public arena can upset the plans which are in place to apprehend them. So those judgements need to be made by police and Corrective Services. I will keep repeating that.

The party on the other side of the House used to let sex offenders walk free at the end of their sentence—no supervision, no monitoring. In 2003 the Labor government put in place very comprehensive legislation that enabled the most dangerous sex offenders to be kept in jail after the completion of their sentence and, for those that the court determined to be released, to be put under supervision orders. That is what this government has done, and I stand by that regime. It is in stark contrast to the regime put in place by those opposite when they were in government, which let sex offenders walk free at the end of their sentence.

Education Reform

Ms FARMER: My question is to the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. Could the minister update the House on the government's plans for education reform as well as inform the House on any alternative plans that exist?

Mr DICK: In the past decade the Labor government has been absolutely restless in its desire to improve educational outcomes for Queensland—things like our earning or learning laws requiring every Queenslander to have a pathway into employment, into vocational education and training or higher education; introducing the extra year of education that we never had in Queensland, the prep year, lifting the starting age for schooling in Queensland. The plans go on, such as joining year 7 into high school from 2015, with the first schools being rolled out this year.

We have made giant steps towards the delivery of universal access to kindergarten so that every child in Queensland gets the opportunity to start a pathway to learning as early as possible in life. And, of course, our latest plan—a plan for the future, not for three years, but the next three decades—our Queensland Education Trust, locking up and locking in 50 per cent of LNG royalties for education purposes, building the pathway for all Queenslanders, investing in productivity, investing in the economy, but, most importantly, taking a finite resource in the earth and investing in the most important and infinite resource—the people of Queensland.

Let us have a look at some other plans that have been proposed for Queensland, including the plans of the LNP. If we just recap the last three years, what have we seen? Tasers for teachers, the absolutely chaotic plan to roll out year 7 into high school over five years—a recipe for disaster in schools—and, of course, the doozy, the most disastrous policy you could possibly have, independent public schools, a throwback to the leading schools of the Borbidge government. Of course, that was the Premier we never had, Rob Borbidge, the government we never had if you listen to those members opposite and the policy that delivered the greatest industrial disputation in Queensland schools in the 140 years of the Queensland Teachers Union. That is where those opposite want to take us.

what is their plan for leadership? Well, we do not know because Campbell Newman will not be upfront. Plan B, the member for Callide. Yeah, but no, but yeah, but maybe. Plan C, the member for Clayfield. He wants to have a go. He has spent his whole career trying to be the leader. Plan D, what

about the member for Surfers Paradise? The crown was snatched from his head. He wants to have a go again. Plan E, the member for Maroochydore. She is popular in the party room. Plan F, the member for Southern Downs. He got an F three times from the people of Queensland when he wanted to be the Premier, but he might have a go again. And my favourite, plan G, 'go for Gregory'. We know the old warhorse wants to saddle up and ride again. He wants to be on the front bench. Why don't we give the member for Gregory a go?

Campbell Newman has no plan for leadership, no plan for education and no plan for Queensland. That is not the future. That is a recipe for disaster; it is a risk for our state. He is the no-plan man. Campbell Newman is the no-plan man. He does not represent the future of our state. He is a great risk. You cannot risk someone who has no plans and no ideas for our state.

Bligh Labor Government, Ministerial Accountability

Mr GIBSON: My question is to the Premier. Given that no Bligh government minister has been sacked over the \$220 million Health payroll debacle, the alleged embezzlement of \$16 million within Queensland Health, the \$450 million Traveston Dam travesty, the \$2 billion Tugun desalination disaster or the loss of the AAA credit rating, I ask: what does it take for a minister to be sacked from this Labor government?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the member for the question. I am very happy to talk about the success that we have had in reforming the Queensland Health system.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The question was broad ranging and therefore the answer is going to be broad ranging. It will be heard with courtesy.

Ms BLIGH: What we have seen in the last five years is a doubling of the Queensland Health budget, an extraordinary increase in the number of doctors, nurses and health workers and a rebuilding program that is delivering new hospitals in the south-east and in major regional centres. What does all that mean? It means that in Queensland we now have the shortest elective surgery median wait times in the country. We have taken our emergency wait times from the worst in the country to right up there with the best. I thank our doctors, our nurses and our health workers for the extraordinary level of patient care that they are delivering to Queenslanders wherever they live. We are a government determined to bring better services closer to home to Queenslanders right across the state.

What we have seen on the other side of politics is an extraordinary ability to sack leaders. We have seen a revolving door of leadership. There are few things less stable than the leadership of the Liberal National Party. What we have seen is Borbidge-Sheldon, Watson-Horan, Quinn-Springborg, Quinn-Flegg, Seeney-Flegg, Springborg-Flegg, Springborg-McArdle, Langbroek-Springborg, Seeney-Nicholls, Newman-Seeney. Every one of them a champion. Dynamic duo after dynamic duo. On my calculation we have a leadership change on the other side roughly every 12 months. And, of course, we are coming up for another one when Campbell Newman fails in his bid to win Ashgrove.

Bruce Highway, Upgrade

Ms BOYLE: My question is to the Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure. Will the minister please update the House on the Bligh government's strategy to upgrade the Bruce Highway and outline any alternative plans?

Mr WALLACE: I thank the member for Cairns for her question. She is a passionate advocate for the Bruce Highway, being at the top of it. As we know, the Bruce Highway is the backbone of our great state, used by tens of thousands of truckies, workers, tourists and commuters every day. Over the last few years we have made massive strides on the upgrade of the Bruce Highway; \$400 million per year is now being spent on the Bruce under federal Labor compared to about \$100 million under the LNP. Every Queenslanders who travels the Bruce knows this federally funded road is still not up to scratch. That is why the Bligh government did something about it. We know those on the other side do not care about the Bruce Highway, but this government is passionate about it. Our plan sets out 340 kilometres of duplication, 50 overtaking lanes, new bridges and intersection upgrades. We are talking to the federal government to get the funds that are needed to fix up the Bruce Highway. But when one looks at the other side, they are all talk and no substance.

Campbell Newman has admitted that he has not driven the Bruce Highway for a quarter of a century, but I almost fell out of my chair last week when I listened to 4CA in Cairns when Mr Newman was talking about the Bruce. Last Thursday Campbell Newman was talking to my mate John Mackenzie and what did he say to John? He said, 'We do not have proper passing lanes, for example, north of Cairns heading towards Bowen.' North of Cairns heading towards Bowen? That is Campbell Newman's view of Queensland. I do not know what map Campbell Newman is looking at. Perhaps this is the one the LNP have hanging in their party room. Of course he has got Brisbane at the top. Campbell Newman does not care about regional Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: I want you to put the prop down.

Mr WALLACE: He does not even know where Bowen is. It is not north of Cairns, it is about 550 kilometres south of Cairns. One would think that the bloke who aspires to be Premier would have a basic knowledge of the geography of Queensland. But he does not. I call on the member for Burdekin, the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Mirani to stand up to this character and demand an apology. Tell him that he does not know what is happening in regional Queensland. What an insult! This is so typical of the LNP. It has got Queensland upside down and woe behold the people of regional Queensland if Campbell Newman gets in because he does not know what exists outside Brisbane. I can tell him that the people of regional Queensland will fight him every step of the way.

Mining Industry, Jobs

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining.

Mr Wallace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Main Roads will cease interjecting. The member for Mirani has the call.

Dr Flegg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moggill will cease interjecting. The member for Mirani has the call.

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining. Plans revealed today refer to jumbo loads of foreign workers coming to work in Queensland—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. This is the third time.

Mr MALONE: Plans revealed today refer to jumbo loads of foreign workers coming to work in Queensland. With mainland Australia's highest unemployment rate, why are Queensland workers not getting those jobs under this tired Labor government?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am surprised to get this question from the member for Mirani because I was expecting some others that he flagged in the regional media. I will look for those later in the week.

The front page of the major daily newspaper in Brisbane highlights the significant contribution that the resource sector will make to employment in this state into the future. That is why the Queensland government is committed to working with industry to ensure that Queenslanders are a fundamental part of that growth and those job opportunities. That is why we are working on providing greater information to people right across the length and breadth of Queensland through jobs expos that are focused on the mining and gas industries in this state. Just this year, some 24,000 Queenslanders came through the expos, where they had a chance to talk to people in the industry and learn more about what is available to them and how they can get the right skills and qualifications to work towards the opportunities that will be delivered as we see the industry expand and continue to develop.

Mr Dempsey interjected.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the member for Bundaberg about people not having jobs now. He does not know that some of those mines are not yet opened or developed. There will be a construction process involved in the opening of mines that will continue well into the future, as they go through the appropriate regulatory processes. We need to ensure that we have Queenslanders skilled and ready to take up those jobs. That is why we are rolling out Resources 101, providing the basis for Queenslanders to get the training and opportunities in the industry.

It is really interesting to hear questions about where the workers for the resources sector will come from for those major projects, because we have seen the LNP flip-flopping on things like FIFO. Clive Palmer and the LNP have been in bed for 50 years, according to Professor Palmer, who says that he expects to have some influence with his membership. He makes that very clear. Clearly his million-dollar bankrolling of the party at this time will also help. Palmer's influence in the LNP is very clear. Palmer says he does not agree with FIFO and Newman is jumping up and down to rule out 100 per cent fly-in fly-out. Palmer decides that FIFO has benefits and all of a sudden they become a bit wishy-washy. With the LNP it is less about fly-in fly-out and more about won't-rule-in, won't-rule-out on their plan B for leadership. Maybe Professor Palmer is plan B. Maybe he can be the Premier.

Ms Bligh: He can be Premier from outside.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: That is right; the Premier from outside. I am sure he would fly in in his jet to make sure that he had a role in it.

Renewable Energy

Mrs KIERNAN: My question is to the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities, to whom I wish a happy birthday. Can the minister please update the House on the Bligh government's commitment to the growing renewable energy industry in Queensland, which is creating jobs and boosting the economy, and is the minister aware of any other jobs that might be available in the coming months?

Mr ROBERTSON: I thank the member for Mount Isa for her question. One could never find a stronger or more passionate advocate for renewable opportunities than the member for Mount Isa. Last week in Brisbane I addressed the Queensland clean energy leaders forum where I released to the industry the Queensland Renewable Energy Plan 2012, a comprehensive review of the Bligh government's original renewable energy plan launched in 2009.

QREP places Queensland front and centre of Australia's clean energy future to become the major competitor for renewable energy investment projects, projects and industry growth here in Australia and to be the primary beneficiary of the federal government's plan. This plan positions the state to leverage up to \$8.9 billion in renewable energy investment and to deliver 9,000 gigawatt hours of renewable energy generation by 2020. It will help deliver on our original QREP goals to create up to 3,500 new green jobs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 40 million tonnes. Queensland's renewable energy industry has already attracted around \$2.7 billion in total public and private investment and supports more than 1,800 jobs.

Of course, this raises the question about whether there are alternative plans for renewable energy investment in this state. From the LNP we have not heard one word about policies to promote renewable energy in this state. Of course, there are also other questions. This has been a day of questions. The LNP has talked about the four questions that the *Courier-Mail* posed for the commission of inquiry. I suggest there are question No. 5, question No. 6 and question No. 7.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left! The member for Kawana, this is your last warning under 253(1).

Mr ROBERTSON: Mr Speaker, the time that has been allotted has not been stopped.

Mr SPEAKER: Stop the clock.

Mr ROBERTSON: Question No. 5 is: did Campbell Newman know that the Brisbane City Council was advocating for reduced outflows from Wivenhoe Dam on 10 January? Question No. 6 is: if he did not know, why did he not know given that his own press secretary was receiving the situation reps and participated in phone calls that went to the very heart of the BCC's advocacy to reduce outflows from Wivenhoe Dam?

Mr NICHOLLS: I rise to a point of order. Perhaps the minister would explain what he did for 17 minutes not asking any questions whatsoever during the entire teleconference that he is referring to.

Mr SPEAKER: That is a frivolous point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: From a frivolous member.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ROBERTSON: I have appeared before the commission of inquiry on two occasions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will wind up.

Mr ROBERTSON: Who has not appeared? Campbell Newman! It is about time he fronted up to tell us what he knew.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat. I will rule on the point of order. It is a frivolous point of order. It did not need the minister to add to it. The minister will now round up his answer.

Mr ROBERTSON: Question No. 7 is: why did Campbell Newman allow the Brisbane City Council to strongly advocate to the flood engineers to reduce the outflows for the dam? This is the man who said he would reduce the dam levels—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat.

Mr ROBERTSON: and there he is—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat!

Mr ROBERTSON: in evidence to the inquiry, reducing the outflow—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The minister will resume his seat! I have asked three times. I ask the minister to withdraw from the House for 10 minutes.

Whereupon the honourable member for Stretton withdrew from the chamber at 11.17 am.

CSG Industry

Mr McLINDON: My question without notice is to the Premier. How much money did the state government receive from the Chinese owned coal seam gas company Arrow Energy, which hired Queensland police officers to arrest farmers at a lock-the-gate protest in Kerry? At the request of the organisation I table the organisation's lock-the-gate sign.

Mr SPEAKER: Put the prop down.

Mr McLINDON: I ask: is it in fact appropriate for foreign owned companies to hire Queensland police to arrest Australian citizens on Australian soil?

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, you have one minute.

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for the question. In terms of details of costs, et cetera, obviously that would have to be directed to the Minister for Police. I suggest the member does so on a question on notice. It is not unusual for the Queensland Police Service to make its officers available for a range of events to ensure public safety and public security. Where that happens it is appropriate that it be paid for not by the taxpayer but by those who are responsible for the event or for the incident.


I am very pleased to take a question from the member in relation to coal seam gas in the Beaudesert area. Mr Newman says that he will not allow CSG that is 'inappropriate'. However, of course, he will not tell us what 'inappropriate' means. I understand that this week the Beaudesert LNP branch moved a motion calling on Mr Newman to say what 'inappropriate' meant. When they tried to get the headquarters to look at that, it overruled it and said it would have to submit it to a meeting in April. They simply do not want to know. Again it is time for Mr Newman to come clean on what he means by 'inappropriate', to come clean on what he will do for Stradbroke, to come clean on his employment targets and to come clean on the alternative leader.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The time for question time has ended.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Bligh Labor Government

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.20 am): This morning in the parliament we have seen the same old, tired government and the same old record. With the Labor government in Queensland, the music changes but the song remains the same. We see the same denials, the same scandals, the same waste of money, the same excuses and the same promises that will be broken again in the same way. Nothing has changed in the Bligh Labor government over the Christmas break except that we now have two new failures, two new scandals, to go onto the long list of Labor scandals and Labor failures.

It is an interesting exercise to try to pick the top 20 failures of this government. No. 1 would have to be the \$85 billion worth of debt that is costing Queenslanders \$573,000 in interest every hour. Did you pay the interest during question time, Andrew? That is the question: have you paid our interest today? Every Queensland man, woman and child will be paying the interest bill that will be his legacy for generations to come.

No. 2 would have to be the loss of Queensland's AAA credit rating. Queensland is the only mainland state to lose its AAA credit rating. It is not just about the loss of pride; it costs us millions and millions of dollars in extra interest every week of every year that the interest bill is paid. The loss of the AAA credit rating is something that not even the failed Treasurers in New South Wales or in the rust belt state of Victoria could achieve. But Australia's worst Treasurer—our Treasurer, the member for Mount Coot-tha—has achieved that. He has lost that AAA crediting rating and it is costing every Queenslanders more in interest every day.

No. 3 on the long list of the Labor government's failures would have to be the failure that surrounds the health department. There are 220,000 people on the waiting list for the waiting list; \$220 million was wasted on the Health payroll debacle that left so many hardworking doctors and nurses without pay; an alleged \$16 million fraud was committed, with money marching out the door that nobody knew about and that nobody took any responsibility for; and there is an \$8 million blow-out on the new Children's Hospital in the Premier's own electorate. Health would have to be No. 3 on the long list of this government's failures. If any reinforcement of that were needed, it would be the scandal that came to light over the Christmas period involving \$16 million of public money that was allegedly embezzled by a fake Tahitian prince. What an absurdity! It illustrates the level of administration to which this government has sunk.

No. 4 on the long list of this government's failures would have to be the spiralling cost of living that has been inflicted upon the people of Queensland by this government's complete incompetence—their complete incompetence when it comes to managing the water and electricity supplies of South-East Queensland and Queensland generally and the way that incompetence has impacted upon the people of Queensland when they go to pay for those essential services every month. I have said in this parliament before and I say it again to the people of Queensland who are contemplating going to the polls on 24 March: take your water bills with you to the ballot box. They are the best how-to-vote cards that the people of Queensland will ever have. Take your water bills. Stick them on the fridge and then take them with you.

Opposition members: And power bills!

Mr SEENEY: Yes, take the electricity bill as well. If you need reinforcement, take the electricity bill with you when you go to the polling booth and put it down beside the ballot paper. Put the electricity bill on one side and the water bill on the other side and do what is the obvious thing that this government deserves. The cost of living that the people of Queensland are struggling with has been inflated by the incompetent decisions that have been made by this government.

After that, the choice is wide for list of the top 20. My favourite is the debacle in the area of transport in Queensland and the disgrace that the Bruce Highway has become after 20 years of Labor government in Queensland. The RACQ has found that three in every five deaths on the Queensland National Highway occur on the Bruce Highway. You only have to drive the Bruce Highway, as thousands of people have to do every day, to know the extent to which that is a disaster. It is a disgrace. The Bruce Highway is a disgrace, and the succession of ministers who have been responsible for that disgrace should hang their heads in shame. In every community along the east coast of Queensland the Bruce Highway is an issue that community leaders raise every chance they get. People are dying needlessly on that road because of this government's incompetence.

The rest of the transport portfolio is no less a debacle. There are issues such as the Toowoomba range crossing. Members opposite should stand at the top of the range in Toowoomba and try to tell somebody that this government has achieved anything over the last 20 years. They should talk to the people in Toowoomba who have to endure the endless stream of heavy transport traversing all of those traffic lights day after day and justify this government's claim of having succeeded in building infrastructure. It is impossible.

Then, of course, there is the Cross River Rail debacle—the pipedream that this government has put out there with no funding and no real plan to address the immediate issues at hand. There is a whole range of other issues, such as the red tape that is strangling Queensland business. The red tape that is a burden on Queensland businesses every day would have to rate amongst the top 20 failures of this Labor government.

I believe that the child safety issue, an issue that has had some prominence in Queensland politics, is still worthy of rating among the top 20 failures of this government. There have been some 7,541 investigations into abuse over more than three months yet to be completed. A record number of 1,200 carers walked away from the system in 2010-11. They are indications of failure in a department that has had an enormous amount of funds provided, but there are no better outcomes for the people who depend on the services.

The law and order issue would also have to rate among Labor's 20 most significant failures. Seventy per cent of Queensland is short of police on the beat. Last year the number of police dropped in 11 police districts. In the last four years around 1,000 experienced police have left the service. Of course, the members who represent the Gold Coast know the extent to which crime has exploded in their areas to the point where it is impacting on the reputation of their area, the state and the tourism industry that they depend on.


These are the things that are a direct result of the failure of this government—the failure in public administration the likes of which Queensland has never seen before. Then, of course, there are the things for which we will be paying for generations: the water grid, the desalination plant and the wastewater plants that stand idle. The Traveston Dam debacle cost some \$600 million, a cost which is written into the water bills that Queenslanders will pay for generations, and led to a great extent of unused land still standing idle in the Mary Valley. The communities have not recovered from having their heart ripped out by that great failure of public policy that was this government's response to a water crisis that they themselves created through their lack of vision, their lack of planning and their lack of commitment to infrastructure.

Anybody in regional Queensland will insist on one failure—one scandal, one debacle—being in the top 20; that is, the debacle that surrounded the amalgamation of their local councils. That ripped the heart out of so many regional communities when Peter Beattie, for base political reasons, set out to attack local government. Andrew Fraser was the architect. Andrew Fraser was the hit man.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SEENEY: The member for Mount Coot-tha was the hit man. The member for Mount Coot-tha was sent out there to do a job on local governments across Queensland, and those regional communities will pay the price for that for generations to come because their heart and soul, the very fabric of their communities, have been torn away. That is the record of this Labor government. That is the record that the people of Queensland will remember on 24 March and they will vote this Labor government into the political oblivion that it deserves.

Toowoomba North Electorate

 **Mr SHINE** (Toowoomba North—ALP) (11.30 am): I am delighted to inform the House of some measures that the state government has taken in Toowoomba in recent weeks which have been received well and understandably so. First of all, the Queensland government is stepping up its bid to make the second range crossing a reality with a new design which cuts the cost of the proposed measure by half a billion dollars. This revised plan would save 23 minutes travel time for trucks and 18 minutes for cars. It is a huge saving, and we need the Australian government to commit to the funding of the project.

Toowoomba residents, especially those living in James, Tor, Taylor and Bridge streets, are having to put up with increasing noise levels 24 hours per day and are justifiably concerned about safety. Federal governments have in the past rejected the project, including a business case supporting a four-lane model from Helidon to Charlton, which at today's prices would cost about \$1.7 billion. The draft proposal now being put out for discussion remains within the corridor owned by the Queensland government with the cost estimated between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion.

The new design includes a 700-metre long, three-lane tunnel at the top of the range; dual two-lane carriageways—that is, four lanes—between Helidon and the top of the range; a two-lane link between the Warrego Highway at Charlton and the Gore Highway; and a two-lane carriageway with passing lane from Charlton to the western end of the tunnel. The next step for the proposal is to work with the freight industry and the Toowoomba Regional Council and the public to seek their feedback. I understand concerns that this proposal limits the width of the tunnel, but what I am primarily concerned to see is the federal government commit to the second range crossing project. If by dangling a carrot of reducing the cost by \$0.5 billion this is achieved, then what we will see is trucks out of Toowoomba. I have visited every house in my electorate along the path of the Warrego. What residents want is for the trucks to go. This proposal, or something similar, will achieve it.


I also inform the House of the opening last week of the regional tennis hub at the University of Southern Queensland. This is a \$3.6 million project. The new centre at the University of Southern Queensland, which received \$2.24 million in Bligh government funding, will breathe new life into tennis across the region. The centre has been built to International Tennis Federation standards and is suitable for regional, state, national and international competitions.

The centre boasts nine new courts, three fully refurbished courts, competition standard lighting, a new clubhouse and related facilities. This is just in time for this weekend's first tournament. This centre is a real boost for tennis, a great resource to develop juniors and a positive project to help balance the battering the Toowoomba region has taken from Mother Nature. The Toowoomba Tennis Association's courts suffered extensive damage in January last year. This centre is a combined effort of the Bligh government, Tennis Queensland, the University of Southern Queensland, Tennis Australia, the Toowoomba Regional Council and the Toowoomba Tennis Association. It is a great asset for our community.

Last week the Minister for Health, Mr Wilson, visited Toowoomba to announce the Baillie Henderson Hospital's main recreation swimming pool will reopen later this year. I am very pleased that work to repair the roof will start in the coming weeks and the pool is expected to be operational again by June. The government has provided the funding required to complete the repairs after an extensive assessment by local structural engineers. The reopening of the pool was an example of the Bligh government building a healthier Queensland by delivering more services sooner and closer to home. This project has been very much welcomed by the Clifford Park Special School; the Toowoomba West Special School; the MS Society; the aqua therapy group; Lifeline; TRUST, which is the stroke survivors group; and the Toowoomba Hospital physio unit. I commend the minister for listening to our lobbying in that regard.

Finally, Toowoomba residents have scored a wealth of sporting and recreation opportunities with the completion of the \$400,000 multipurpose sports fields at the Toowoomba Christian College which I had the pleasure of opening yesterday. A feature of this project is its availability to the wider community—Highfields residents and other schools, state and non-state. Great credit must go to the initiative shown by the school leadership team, including Principal Richard Brown, Mark Freeman and Pastor Ian Shelton. I also pay tribute to departmental officers who have worked so hard on this project, as they always do in Toowoomba, and the leadership of Garry Humphries and in particular Neal Ames as well.

Ashgrove Electorate

 **Ms JONES** (Ashgrove—ALP) (11.35 am): When first elected I said I was extremely honoured to be the first woman to represent the people of Ashgrove in the Queensland parliament. Nothing has diminished that honour since then, and I sincerely hope that I have the opportunity to continue representing our community in the future.

While Ashgrove is my home, I have never taken the view that Ashgrove is somehow my seat. It has always been my view that during each term I must work hard to earn and keep the trust of local voters and that margins from previous elections mean little. In each election I have fought I have fought hard to gain the support of local voters. Others may think that they can just waltz in from outside and demand support; I believe you must earn it.

As I have said before and as I have always believed, politics is about people. It is their hopes, dreams and concerns that are uppermost in my mind. That knowledge only comes through time and experience on the ground in the electorate talking directly to people. I am not afraid to say that every day I learn more about the Ashgrove electorate and the people in it. One of the great things about this job is that it is always an endless learning curve about people's stories. In the past six years the thousands of local functions, constituent conversations, meetings with community groups and school visits I have undertaken have each taught me something more, something new, which helps me to do this job better.

In that time much has also been achieved in the Ashgrove electorate. We saw the great clean-up effort after The Gap storms in November 2008, when our whole community came together to help each other out. We worked to stop the western bypass that threatened our lifestyle. We secured national park status for the former Brisbane Forest Park so that The Gap can never be built out. A new \$2 million ambulance station has been built in Ashgrove. The new Mitchelton Ambulance Station also serves part of the Ashgrove electorate. We have seen significant investment for a new park-and-ride facility for commuters which is now underway at the Enoggera Reservoir bus terminus at The Gap; upgrades to Enoggera and Newmarket railway stations; additional full-time teachers and teacher aides in our local schools; a range of building and maintenance works at our local schools, including new science labs at Mitchelton State High School and The Gap State High School; new kindergartens established at The Gap and in Ashgrove at Oakleigh; and a \$1 million upgrade to The Gap Police Station—the station that had been closed by the Liberal National Party when they were last in office in my community. They are just a handful of projects that I have been very proud to help deliver to make our community an even better place to live.

One of the biggest achievements—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: I am not surprised that they are interjecting at this point because one of my biggest achievements is the upgrade of the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection—one on which my opponent and the Liberal National Party have had almost five different positions and have failed to be honest with the people of Enoggera and the community that has desperately wanted this upgrade for some time. This project is already paying dividends.


Opposition members interjected.

Ms JONES: I take the interjection from those opposite: they do not support the upgrade of the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection. The member for Aspley said it was ridiculous. This project is already paying dividends, with the recent opening of the extended left turning lane from Wardell Street into Samford Road. We should never contemplate the suggestion by the member for Aspley or my opponent that we freeze these works, go back to the drawing board and make people wait in traffic for longer.

In the coming campaign I will again be telling locals of my record and what I will do to deliver better services for our community. In building on the record investment we have in local schools, I am committed to delivering a brand-new sports hall at The Gap State High School. I am going to tackle traffic congestion like we have demonstrated in the past by completing the upgrade to Samford Road-Wardell Street and securing further investment in public transport, building on our record such as duplicating the train line to Ferny Grove which is already underway and nearing completion. I am very proud to serve the community I grew up in. This will be my toughest fight, but I will work day in and day out to make sure we have strong representation.

(Time expired)

Bligh Labor Government

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.40 am): As we come to the end of this long three-year term, I want to take the opportunity to reflect on some of the more spectacular failures of this long-term Labor government. I know the member for Callide, the Leader of the Opposition, has already highlighted 20 of them. I may repeat a couple of them, particularly in relation to the economic area. This morning, on the first day of the last sitting week, we had the government

come in here and in a very lacklustre way try to defend its record. However, any casual observer looking across at the government benches this morning would have detected a complete lack of enthusiasm. This is a government that has run out of spark. It is a government that has run out of ideas. It is a government that is afraid to stand on its record. It is a government that has only one tactic, and that is the tactic of denigration, smear and sleaze.

That is what we saw this morning—a complete lack of enthusiasm from this long-term Labor government. The poor old education minister did not even get a ‘hear, hear’ for its signature policy, the education trust—money they do not have for kids who are not born yet. We are not sure how it is going to be paid and they certainly do not want to put it in the budget so they have to account for it. The education minister spent three minutes talking about education and he said that their signature project was the education trust, and he sat down to stunned silence. There was not a word, not a ‘hear, hear’, not a cheer, not a thing.

Then we saw the poor old tourism minister standing up talking about the works that she believes have been wonderful and well done, and we did not hear a word from any of the Gold Coast members to say, ‘Well done, thank you for delivering that.’ It is a sign of desperation and a conclusive sign that after 20 years Labor is a broken record. The song is always the same, and the people of Queensland are sick and tired of this broken record of Labor.

Even the Treasurer could hardly raise a cheer this morning, and not surprisingly when we consider his record. When we look at Labor’s record, what was one of its core economic promises before the last election? In the lead-up to the election in March last year, what was one of the most important things for Labor and members? It was to keep the AAA credit rating. What did the member for Ashgrove say about that when she was first admitted to this place?

Ms Jones: Did you read my maiden speech?

Mr NICHOLLS: In her maiden speech she states—


... through our prudent economic management we continue to grow Australia’s strongest economy, that we maintain our AAA credit rating and retain our reputation as the low-tax state.

Another broken promise echoed by the member for Ashgrove: that we maintain our AAA credit rating. That AAA credit rating is lost and it has no prospect of return under this long-term Labor government.

Today the Treasurer tried to talk up the economy. He tried to talk up what they have been doing. He talked about the midyear update and he talked about the surplus—the phoney, fake surplus that he has managed to construct out of the budget papers. What he failed to say is that it is entirely dependent on the money that comes in and goes out for natural disaster recovery arrangements. What he failed to say is that his own midyear budget update says that, when you strip out the natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements funding, there is an \$8.2 billion deficit over the forward forecast. That is not including any money from the failed Mines to Minds experiment that is going over with all the ardour of a lead balloon.

We have a false budget—a budget built on the usual deceit, smoke and mirrors for which this government is absolutely famous. We have a Treasurer who did not tell the Queensland people what he was going to do in terms of asset sales before the last election; a Treasurer who did not tell the people of Queensland that he was going to strip away the fuel subsidy before the last election; and a Treasurer who before the last election said ‘no new taxes and charges’ and proceeded to introduce a waste levy charge adding to the cost of business, devaluing businesses in the bush and in the city. More and more businesses are seeing their investment being degraded. It is time to get rid of this tired 20-year Labor government. It is time to change the record. It is time to get Queensland back on track.

Chatsworth Electorate

 **Mr KILBURN** (Chatsworth—ALP) (11.45 am): I would like to talk about a number of positive things that are happening in my electorate of Chatsworth. I have said constantly in this place since becoming a member that I had a number of priorities. Those priorities were public transport, safety and building community linkages in my electorate.

I am happy to announce that, after a long period of talking to TransLink officials and the minister, a new 242 bus route will start from the Gumdale-Wakerley area to Carindale Shopping Centre on 27 February. This is a great win for the local residents who have been asking for a bus route from the very quickly growing Gumdale-Wakerley area to Carindale. A lot of young families have moved into that area, and the connection to Carindale will allow them to connect into the fantastic bus services that depart from Carindale to the city, to universities, to the PA Hospital and to other areas that people from Gumdale-Wakerley want to travel to.

The new bus route will commence, as I have said, on 27 February and will commence as an hourly service starting from 6.15 am to 6.30 pm Monday to Friday and 7.15 am to 5.30 pm Saturday. I have already spoken to TransLink about what I consider to be a need to increase frequency. They have told me that they will be closely monitoring the route—

Mr Crandon: You must be in a marginal Labor seat!

Mr KILBURN: No, I am just a good local member who has been working hard for a long period of time to achieve results.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr KILBURN: I will take the interjection. I will tell you what I certainly was not doing. Last Sunday I was in my electorate raising money. I was not in the electorate of Ashgrove doorknocking.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr KILBURN: Raising money for a local kindergarten. I was doing a fundraising barbecue.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Coomera, I would ask you to keep the noise down. It is very difficult for me to hear. I do not mind interjections and the member took the interjection, but I cannot hear anything after that.

Mr KILBURN: As I said, last weekend I was raising money for local kindergartens in my electorate while LNP members were in the member for Ashgrove's electorate doorknocking for the fake leader of the LNP. It is an interesting contradiction.


It is a great outcome for local residents, and TransLink have said they will closely monitor it. I hope that we will see a quick increase in the frequency of that bus route. We have also made some improvements to the 243 bus route from Gumdale-Wakerley to the city. That bus route has been changed onto the busway to allow a more efficient route so that people have a better trip to the city. We have also put on extra 222 buses to allow people to catch buses earlier in the morning to get to the city. The 250 bus route that goes through the Sleeman Sports Complex has been made express from Carindale so that people not only from my electorate but from nearby electorates get a quicker trip into the city. There are some public information days coming up at the Eastside Village in Gumdale on Sunday, 19 February from 10 am to 12 pm and on Wednesday, 22 February from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm so people can talk to TransLink officials about the new bus route.

I am also very pleased that on 27 January Minister Roberts visited my electorate to open the new Carina Police Station. This is a great improvement to the Police Service in my electorate. Not only that, it also services the areas of Greenslopes and Bulimba, as it is close to the boundaries of the three electorates. It was great for the minister to visit so that he could see the new police station in full operation, and the police are very happy with the new facility. It is a win-win for the local community because the old police station at Camp Hill has been used by the police as a specialist building housing members of the traffic branch, the dog branch and the forensic science branch. This has improved services for all people in the eastern Brisbane suburbs.

I am also very pleased that next week I will be opening the Carina Men's Shed—something that I fought very hard for in my local community—and I will be able to hand over the \$300 that I raised at a fundraising barbecue last week at the Stanley Road shops. It is a great shed and its membership is growing. It is very organised and is a great addition to the local community, given that it will build community links because the men at the Men's Shed are working together with many other sporting groups such as those at the Clem Jones Centre and other community groups. That is a win-win situation for all of the community.

I was also very pleased that in the second week of school I was able to open the new \$1.8 million C&K kindergarten at Gumdale which was built over the last year. Some 88 local children started their first year of kindy in the brand-new facility at Gumdale. I was very pleased to represent the minister at that opening and to talk to local parents, who were very happy to see this government's investment in early childhood—something that is making life a lot better for parents of young children in the Gumdale-Wakerley area.

Health System

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (11.50 am): Today the Premier made the comment that this House should not forget history, and she is right. The history of health in this state, however, should never be forgotten. It has been an abomination under this government and the Beattie government for 20 of the last 22 or 23 years that this state has been ruled by Labor.

Let us go back to the very sad consequences of what occurred in Bundaberg not all that long ago and what lessons have been learned from that. Let us consider Gordon Nuttall, who was a health minister who misled an estimates committee and had to be rescued by this government but who is now serving time in jail. Let us consider the issue of the Health payroll system. It cost this state \$67 million to implement a new payroll system that was not checked and that was in no way audited before it went live in March of last year. That situation is now costing \$220 million to correct.

The greatest tragedy in relation to the payroll debacle is the impact it has had on nurses, doctors and Queensland Health employees right across the state. The emotional trauma—the tragedy—of not being able to make payments on mortgages or leases, put food on the table, meet school fees and meet

day-to-day living expenses will live in the minds of these men and women for many years to come. The financial burden imposed upon the people of this state is bad enough, but the emotional and psychological trauma impacting the many people who worked for Queensland Health over a long period of time will linger forever.

We then also have the process for recovery of overpayments that began some time in the middle of last year with a letter written by Queensland Health seeking recovery of funds in a process that was mean, that did nothing to indicate sorrow or regret, that was cold and calculating. I have spoken to many nurses in relation to the payroll debacle and they have said to me that when that letter hit their letterboxes it brought it all back to them. It brought back the fact that they would go to bed on a Tuesday night before a Wednesday payday wondering if they would get any pay at all, let alone some pay. The reiteration of that emotional turmoil is still reverberating today right across the health system in this state.

Let us move on to the issue of ramping and access block to hospitals. I turn first to ramping. On 26 September 2011 some 23 ambulances were ramped outside the PA Hospital. I table a copy of a photo that appeared in the *Courier-Mail*.


Tabled paper: Photograph of ambulances [6437].

Paramedics were waiting outside the back door of the ED at the PA unable to get out and deal with 000 emergency calls to save the lives of other Queenslanders. We have the issue of access block that has continued to grow right across this state, and both of those factors impose serious constraints and can have serious consequences on the lives of Queenslanders who use our public health system. This government's approach was to build bigger EDs. That was purportedly the answer to the problem that has plagued this government and the public health system for many years. Building bigger EDs, as we have said on many occasions, does nothing more than create larger areas to plant people—to have people waiting on trolleys or chairs for placement within the public health system.

Then there is the issue of the waiting list for the waiting list. The last published data by Queensland Health reveals that there are some 200,000 people on the waiting list for the waiting list. Queensland Health and the minister trumpet elective surgery waiting lists, but the elective surgery waiting lists in isolation do not give an accurate picture of the waiting lists in this state. It is the waiting lists for the waiting lists that also need to be revealed. I also suspect that there is another waiting list, given that last year we saw from the Gold Coast Hospital referrals from GPs being returned to those doctors saying, 'Tell your patient we can't help them. We can't put them on a waiting list.' So there is another waiting list. There is another waiting list that this government is not prepared to publish, and that is the list on the never-never!

(Time expired)

Everton Electorate, Traffic Congestion

 **Mr WATT** (Everton—ALP) (11.55 am): As a father I know that every minute spent sitting in traffic is time not spent with my family. The fact that congestion affects the lives of thousands of families in the Everton electorate is the reason cutting congestion has been my top priority since I was elected three years ago. By working hard with the community I represent, we have made great progress on improving roads and transport in our area, and there is even more to come.

Some of the road improvements that my community and I have fought for and that have been delivered or are scheduled include: stage 1 of the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection upgrade at Enoggera; extension of the Albany Creek Road-Keong Road turning lane; improvements to the intersections of Samford Road and Pickering Street and Samford Road and Prospect Road at Gaythorne; resurfacing of sections of Samford Road in Mitchelton and South Pine Road in Everton Park; noise barriers and road resurfacing on Old Northern Road in Albany Creek; and resurfacing of sections of Eatons Crossing Road at Eatons Hill.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr WATT: Improving our roads is an important way to cut congestion. Improving our public transport is another. I am pleased that over the last three years we have begun extending the duplication of the Ferny Grove train line from Mitchelton to Ferny Grove. When it is completed this year, that will mean more regular train services.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr WATT: In addition I have helped secure new bus services to Albany Creek, and a new Mitchelton-Everton Park-airport bus service will commence soon, when the Northern Busway is completed.

The road and transport improvements I have fought for over the last three years are already making a difference to commuters' journeys to and from work, but I recognise that there is more to do. That is why I enter the coming election with a five-point plan to build on these achievements and cut congestion in Everton. The first element of this plan is delivering more regular train services on the Ferny Grove line. As I said previously, this will be possible when the rail track is duplicated between

Mitchelton and Ferny Grove this year. The second element is fighting for more bus services in Albany Creek and Eatons Hill. This is something I have been lobbying for, and I recently established a petition calling on TransLink to do this. The third element is upgrading the intersection of South Pine Road, Albany Creek Road and Flamingo Drive. Starting in March, we will extend turning lanes to give people a safer, quicker trip home. The fourth element is fixing the intersection of Stafford Road and South Pine Road at Everton Park. Main Roads has released plans to fix this intersection, and delivering it will be my top priority if I am re-elected. The fifth element is finishing the upgrade of the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection. We have already finished stage 1, and just today the government has released the final plan for the remainder of this upgrade.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WATT: I believe that I have a strong record of fighting for my constituents to improve roads and transport in the north-west.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Member for Everton, take your seat. Member for Coomera, I have asked you already. This is the last time. Please keep your comments to yourself unless you have an interjection of substance. Otherwise, the member for Everton has the call.

Mr WATT: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I note from the interjections from the member for Coomera and the member for Aspley that the LNP opposes each of the five points of my plan to fix congestion in my area.


As I said, I believe I have a strong record of fighting for my constituents to improve roads and transport in the north west and I have a firm plan to build on those achievements if I am re-elected. In contrast, my LNP opponent and his leader do not want to cut congestion for my constituents. Just one month ago, Campbell Newman astounded locals by promising to stop work on the Samford Road-Wardell Street intersection if he is elected. Everyone I talk to asks, 'Why on earth would he do this?' It is clear. It is to buy off the votes of a small number of residents of the Ashgrove electorate who oppose this project. In his quest to become Premier, Campbell Newman is selling out the thousands of people in my electorate and those of the members for Ashgrove and Ferny Grove who sit in traffic at this intersection every day—all to buy the votes of a handful of Ashgrove residents.

What has my LNP opponent, Tim Mander, said about this outrage? Absolutely nothing! When Campbell Newman sold out my constituents to satisfy his own ambition, Tim Mander stayed silent. It has now been four weeks since Campbell Newman said that he would stop this upgrade and the whole time Tim Mander has been a good little boy and has stayed quiet. He has been silent on this matter, he has been silent on what he would do about other bottlenecks and public transport. He has been silent on the biggest issue in our area. We know that Tim Mander will not stand up to Campbell Newman. He will not stand up for the people of Everton.

Tim Mander has a history of making bad calls. In his previous life as a rugby league referee he made many of them. In the second State of Origin match of 2009, he denied Queensland's Willie Tonga a certain try. In the third State of Origin match of that series he awarded the first ever eight-point try in State of Origin history—to NSW! But this bad call takes the cake. By staying silent when Campbell Newman sold out my constituents Tim Mander has shown that he will not fight for Everton. Unlike my LNP opponent, I pledge to continue the fight against congestion and to fight for the people of Everton.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Before calling the member for Nicklin, member for Coomera, you were that close.

Nambour Hospital, Car Parking

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (12.01 pm): I use this opportunity to bring members and other interested people up to date on the latest proposal to improve car parking opportunities for people wishing to visit or work at the Nambour Hospital. Since the Sunshine Coast Regional Council recently commenced a trial park-and-ride service using part of the Nambour Showgrounds as a car park for council staff, a new opportunity for relieving car parking pressures at the hospital has occurred whereby we may be able to establish a park-and-ride service at the showgrounds for Queensland Health workers. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Health, Mr Wilson, who is in the chamber at the moment and the CEO of Nambour Hospital for taking my proposals seriously.

I have also spoken on a number of occasions with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council mayor, Mr Abbot, and I also want to publicly thank him for his support for this proposal, which I believe can immediately relieve significant car parking pressures at the hospital. With goodwill between the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and the state government, this car parking option can happen immediately and be a good win for everyone.

I understand that some council officers have concerns about the proposal. They are of the view that the council is simply a trustee of the land and cannot make a decision and the state government has to make that decision. I now allay the council officers' concerns and thank the Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts for responding so quickly to my question about these council officers' concerns. I note that the minister is also in the chamber and I thank her for intervening so quickly and

sending a response. For the purpose of the record I would like to read into *Hansard* the minister's response. It is addressed to John Knaggs, the Chief Executive Officer of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, and it is headed, 'Re: Temporary Parking—Nambour Showgrounds'. The letter states—

I refer to representations made to the Queensland government regarding the proposed use of parts of the Nambour Showgrounds Reserve ... for temporary staff parking for both the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Queensland Health ... employees.

As I am sure you are aware the reserve is land held in trust and that the Sunshine Coast Council are the trustee.

I am aware of the predicament that both the council and—

Queensland Health—

are facing in the short term with employee parking.

I can advise that the Department of Environment and Resource Management would offer no objection to the use of the reserve for parking on a temporary basis.

I do recognise that the final decision on allowing parking at the site rests with the council as trustee. But I would strongly encourage your organisation to not just allow council employees to access the site, but that these arrangements are extended to Queensland Health employees as well.

Should you have any questions or require additional information please do not hesitate to contact Mr Randall Hart, Regional Services Director, South-East Region.

I thank the minister for responding so quickly. I also thank the Minister for Health for picking up and running with this issue because the council, the state government and Independent members in partnership can now respond today to this problem.

Some council officers also raised some other concerns about the possible use of the showgrounds. I understand that one of those concerns was in relation to access to the showgrounds being so close to Nambour State School and also the approval of the department of main roads being required. I put on the record again that my proposal is that the access to the showgrounds is via Bli Bli Road. That access does not have any impact whatsoever on parents or children attending Nambour State School and it does not require the involvement of the department of main roads.

I want to thank all the ministers for their involvement to date in this proposal. I want to reiterate that the proposal is for hospital workers to not have to pay a parking fee, to not have to pay a shuttle bus fee, that Queensland Health will pick up the tab and that the facility will operate only Monday to Friday during daylight hours, because the experience at the hospital is that on the weekends and later in the afternoon and early evening there is ample opportunity for car parking at the hospital and in close proximity to it.

I also want to put on the record that it is not intended to operate this park-and-ride service on days when the showgrounds would be totally used—for example, on the show days or on the Sunshine Coast Antique Car Club swap day—because, quite frankly, all of the land is taken up. But for most of the time during the year this all-weather parking site is vacant. I believe that this proposal will make sure that the land is used to the best purposes for both the council and the taxpayers.

I also want to thank the Queensland Nurses Union for allowing me to attend its recent meeting and to put the proposal for it. I believe this is a genuine, realistic solution to a problem. I thank the ministers and the government from their support.

Bulimba Electorate, Education Reform, LNP Candidate



Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (12.06 pm): I will be very proud this Friday to open the brand-spanking new kindergarten in Seven Hills. This \$1.6 million achievement is a boon for my local community—a double-unit kindy that will help make sure my local kids have access to the best possible grounding for their school years. It comes on top of the opportunity which has been granted, for the same reason, to eight of our excellent long-day-care centres in the Bulimba electorate to run accredited kindy programs. Of course, it is part of the bigger picture, which is the Bligh Labor government's plan to create thousands more kindy places across our state so that all Queensland kids have the chance to have the best possible start in life.

In this last week of this parliament I look back over this term of the Bligh Labor government with the confidence that our education initiatives, like the one I have just described, have made a long-lasting contribution to our children's future. On the back of the significant reforms that have already been made with the introduction of the prep year, our nation-leading earn or learn reforms and moving year 7 to high school, we are investing in groundbreaking programs to encourage reading and therefore literacy and we are laying the foundations for future generations with the Mines to Minds initiative, which will see up to \$1.8 billion in LNG royalties being allocated on top of the \$7.2 billion budget that has already been given to education to help give our kids the myriad opportunities to which they are entitled.

In the Bulimba electorate people care about education. Whether they have kids or grandchildren, or whether they do not, they know that if you do the right thing in education then you are making sure that our future is taken care of. The people of the Bulimba electorate are happy that we have put in place such significant policy reforms as the ones that I have mentioned. The people of the Bulimba

electorate are happy that in the last term in my local area we have spent over \$12 million in new or upgraded facilities for our schools, that we have our new Seven Hills kindy and that we have the school safety initiatives that we have put in place.

I will tell members some things that the people of the Bulimba electorate are not happy with at all. Like many MPs who like to listen, I doorknock the residents of my electorate. I always have. It is one of the best ways you can keep your finger on the pulse and know that you are really representing people's concerns. I do not mean the Campbell Newman type of doorknocking, where you panic and bring out your entire political team in one afternoon because you realise Kate Jones might just beat you after all. That is not listening. That is just going after votes. I certainly do not mean the sort of doorknocking my LNP opponent does. Last week I was bemused to receive from someone a copy of a Facebook post from this man about doorknocking. He boasted that he had covered 1,000 homes in Cannon Hill in one afternoon—and on a very rainy afternoon, too. 'How amazing', I thought. This must be speed doorknocking. By the time you have walked between houses, by the time you have knocked on the door and waited for people to come, by the time you have had a listen, if you wanted to tell the LNP something in Bulimba you would have to really spit it out.

Then all the Cannon Hill locals started ringing me to say they had got a flyer in their letterbox from the LNP candidate saying how sorry he was that he had missed them, he likes to listen. But, in fact, they had been home all day and they had not had a knock at the door. So I thought, 'Oh well, that explains it.' What he really meant to say was that he was letterbox dropping—not really intending to listen—just to say that he was, just to show off to his LNP friends.

But what you hear when you do really listen, what you hear when you are genuinely interested in what local residents have to say, is about their hopes and dreams, about their sorrows. You hear what they want for their kids, what they hope to achieve or what they have achieved in their lives. Their views have fed into the initiatives I have been so proud to have achieved for our local area, like the education initiatives, the 88,000 new bus seats a week, the 32,000 new train seats a week, the station upgrade at Morningside and new infrastructure to combat traffic congestion. Increasingly I am hearing how worried residents are about the local services that make their community a livable place. Quality of life, pride in community and a strong sense of community are huge things in our area.

What they are starting to see is the legacy of Campbell Newman's appalling mismanagement in council—his overspending on things like the Clem7 tunnel, the bike hire scheme that no-one uses, the debacle that is King George Square—which has now meant that there is no money left to maintain the footpaths, the road surfaces, their local parks and other amenities that help contribute to the quality of their lives. They are seeing that Campbell Newman skipped out of council early so he would not be blamed for the mess he had left it in, the mess that is affecting their pride in their local community, and they are worried. They are worried that the promises he is starting to make to Queenslanders are not funded and maybe he is going to get Queensland into a mess—not just Brisbane—if he is Premier. I will always be a member who listens and who acts. This Bligh government will always be a government that listens and that acts. I look forward to serving as part of this government in the future knowing that I will always listen and always achieve for my local area.

Western Queensland, Floods



Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (12.11 pm): Today I want to talk about the flooding that occurred throughout the Warrego electorate, particularly Charleville, Mitchell, Roma and St George and, of course, about the landholders on those river systems, particularly the Maranoa and the Balonne rivers and, of course, those in the Warrego. I pay tribute to all the volunteers and essential service personnel who worked tirelessly to fight this natural disaster and assist many flood victims.

In every major event such as this there are lessons to be learnt. We must ensure that improvements are made to processes for future events. Charleville's Bradleys Gully was predicted to reach three metres. It only made two metres. The prediction was out by a third. When questioned, locals maintained they were confident the three metre prediction was wrong. It begs the question as to why the hospital and nursing home was evacuated at that time when locals knew flooding would not impact those facilities. I pay tribute to the minister who phoned me about this matter. I thank him for the courtesy of the call. On the information that he was provided with there was no choice but to do what was done. I accept that. Down the track when we drill into the issues we might find that the figures were not right. In future those are the sorts of things that we need to ensure are more accurate so that better information is provided.

The subsequent evacuation of the town in the night, which was necessary due to the uncertainty of the integrity of the temporary levee bank from rising floodwaters in the Warrego River, is of concern, as is the timing of that evacuation. The construction of the dual-purpose floodgates that were put in place to manage floodwaters in the gully and river were completed; however, the earthworks to those gates were not, leaving the town vulnerable—a most serious and unsatisfactory situation. A decision was made to open the temporary levee on the Warrego River. This was not needed. Then it had to be

rebuilt under wet and difficult conditions. I pay tribute to the council staff who worked long and hard to keep the floodwaters out of the town. A 1990 levee bank and Bradleys Gully diversion should have been built years ago. The residents of Charleville deserve to have faith in genuine infrastructure built to protect them and not listen to platitudes, talk and excuses. Main Roads needs to ensure that the road to Augathella near Charleville does not contribute to flooding in Charleville.

The flood in Mitchell was an unprecedented record flood that devastated the town, with approximately 400 buildings impacted and irreparable damage to the bridge over the Maranoa River and the main road link to Darwin. Residents were living like refugees for many days while authorities struggled to cope with this unprecedented disaster. A huge effort was put in by many volunteers and authorities and all worked tirelessly to assist the Mitchell community. Landholders up and down the Maranoa were hit hard with floodwaters at record levels entering many homes and wrecking infrastructure such as fences, dams and roads. The railway line through the town contributed to the level of flooding on the north side of town and the building of a levee bank to protect Mitchell must be investigated.

Roma has had three major floods in two years. This flood was totally preventable and urgent action must be taken to build a levee bank that will prevent future flooding in Roma. If Dirranbandi and St George can build levee banks to protect their towns in a few days it can also be done in Roma. This and previous flooding has cost Roma \$100 million. A \$7 million levee bank is a good investment.

The emergency flood alert to phone and text did not work. This must be rectified. I pay tribute to all volunteers and authorities who worked tirelessly during this record flood. More work must be done to make the natural disaster manual more relevant to smaller communities. I found the process very bureaucratic and in many cases it hindered the clean up. St George was evacuated when it was predicted the flooding would reach 15 metres. It reached 13.98 metres and the temporary levee held. However, approximately 45 homes were impacted. The Bureau of Meteorology predictions were not accurate during the flood and more work must be done to ensure more accuracy in the future. Businesses in St George were hard hit during this flood and evacuation. Despite the fact they were spared flooding, assistance is required. A category C natural disaster assistance package should include assistance for businesses affected by flooding. Insurance companies and residents should buy local for a local recovery.

This flood event was difficult because of the large areas that were affected by flooding. The Maranoa bridge is a big issue. Kym Murphy from Main Roads worked hard to ensure that the roads were opened when they could be. Cameron Castle from the Department of Transport did a great job as well. I probably should not be naming any person because there were so many people who worked hard during that difficult time. Mitchell does not have the economy that Roma has and will need assistance in the future to make sure it comes through this flood with flying colours.

Cairns Region Economic Future 2012-15



Mr WETTENHALL (Barron River—ALP) (12.15 pm): Understanding the importance of the dignity of work has been at the core of Labor governments over the decades and the Bligh government has been no different. We made protecting and supporting jobs the central task during this term of government and we have delivered. Our ambitious target of creating 100,000 jobs over the term is on track to be delivered against the odds and much to the chagrin of those who said it could not be done. On this side we make considered promises to the people of Queensland and we stick to them. That is in stark contrast to the leader of the LNP who has already backed away from his commitment to create jobs.

This central task of Labor has nowhere been more important or more difficult to achieve than in Far North Queensland where a combination of the global financial crisis, the high Aussie dollar and natural disasters has struck at the very heart of our most important industries, but especially tourism. Our government has confronted these challenges head-on with specific measures to support jobs in Far North Queensland. In 2009 we released the first Cairns plan. This plan contained \$116 million of new and accelerated investments that delivered increased trade with Papua New Guinea, strengthened Cairns port as a fishing hub, supported significant expansion of primary products into new markets, saw an extra 566,000 airline seats come into Cairns, supported employment growth to reach 135,500 people in work and saw unemployment trending down.

Recently we have released a new economic blueprint for the region, the Cairns Region Economic Future 2010-15, launched by the Premier in Cairns on January 16. I table the plan and the highlights for 2012.

Tabled paper: Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation document titled 'Cairns Region Economic Future 2012-15' [[6438](#)].

Tabled paper: Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation document titled 'Cairns Region Economic Future 2012-15: What we will do: 2012 highlights' [[6439](#)].

This document is a clear statement of the specific measures government will implement to support the Cairns regional economy over the next three years. Our plan has been developed in close consultation with key stakeholders like Advance Cairns and Regional Development Australia and is closely aligned with the regional aspirations and priorities identified by those organisations. It contains over \$2.2 million of new initiatives that are being implemented in 2012, including many that are already underway.

The LNP does not have an economic plan for Far North Queensland and its leader, Campbell Newman, has only one vision—that is, winning a seat in parliament, which is an ambition that is looking less likely as every day passes. Neither Mr Newman nor his party, his shadow ministers or his candidates have a vision for the Far North, and that is why far northerners are deeply uncertain about them. Not only does the LNP think it is going to walk it in at the next state election; that is what its local candidates are telling people. They are treating voters with contempt. For example, none of the local LNP candidates attended a recent public forum in Cairns. In stark contrast, all three Labor candidates were there.

Many stark contrasts have already emerged in the run-up to this election. Only Labor has an economic plan for the Far North. So far Mr Newman's only statement on the economy has been a reckless and irresponsible commitment to dredge Trinity Inlet without knowing the environmental impact, the cost or even whether there would be an economic benefit to the region. Only Labor has given an unequivocal commitment to build the \$154 million Cairns entertainment centre, with Mr Newman saying it is not a priority and his local candidates trying to hedge their bets.

Only Labor will protect Cape York's wild rivers from inappropriate development and protect our national parks. Mr Newman has pledged to rip up our wild rivers laws, disembowel the Department of Environment and Resource Management and 'open up' national parks. That is just code for going back to the bad old days of unrestricted commercial exploitation of our precious wild places. Only Labor understands how important it is to protect the Great Barrier Reef from pollution and build its resilience to the effects of climate change. The LNP opposed our laws to prevent land based pollution from wrecking the reef.

Only Labor understands that Cairns needs more hospital beds and expanded health services sooner rather than later. We bit the bullet with our massive redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital. The LNP opposed Labor's redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital. The most recent unemployment figures for the Far North are continuing the trend since the first Cairns plan, and we have seen a further fall to 6½ per cent. Only Labor will continue to support jobs, continue to support our foundation and emerging industries and continue to protect our environment upon which, ultimately, not only jobs but also life itself depends.

(Time expired)

BUILDING BOOST GRANT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to Finance and Administration Committee



Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (12.21 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Building Boost Grant Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Building Boost Grant Amendment Bill [6440].

Tabled paper: Building Boost Grant Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [6441].

The Building Boost Grant Amendment Bill 2012 implements the 2011-12 Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review announcement that the eligibility period for the Queensland Building Boost will be extended by three months to 30 April 2012. This announcement followed industry support and significant momentum in applications as the scheme approached its original end date.

The Queensland economy continues to grow strongly, with business investment expected to increase by around 35 per cent this year. To stimulate the Queensland housing market by assisting housing affordability, increasing the supply of housing and supporting employment in the housing construction industry, the 2011-12 state budget announced the availability of a Queensland Building Boost of \$10,000 for the purchase or construction of a new home in Queensland valued at less than \$600,000 including land.

The grant is open to both homebuyers and investors. If the new home being purchased is a first home and the purchaser meets all of the other eligibility criteria, they may be entitled to the \$10,000 boost, the first home owner grant of \$7,000 and the first home transfer duty concession. Investors may also qualify for benefits under the National Rental Affordability Scheme in addition to the boost. First home buyers have never had more incentive to buy into the market.

As originally implemented and given effect by the Building Boost Grant Act 2011, the Queensland Building Boost was available for eligible transactions undertaken between 1 August 2011 and 31 January 2012, both dates inclusive. Under the extended arrangements, a contract to buy or build a new home must now be entered into on or after 1 August 2011 and by 30 April 2012. For an owner-builder, the laying of the foundations must start in that period.

The dates for starting and completing construction under an off-the-plan project are also extended by three months, so that construction must start by 30 April 2013 and be completed by 30 April 2015. This will apply for all eligible home purchase contracts, irrespective of whether the contract is made on, before or after 1 February 2012.

In addition, the time for lodging a notice of intention to apply for the Queensland Building Boost will be extended so that notices must be given by 1 September 2012, irrespective of whether the eligible transaction was entered into on, before or after 1 February 2012. This provides commensurate extra time to claim for all applicants in line with the three-month extension overall.

The time frames for starting and completing construction under a home-building contract or an owner-builder arrangement will remain unchanged, although obviously, of course, they will now be determined by reference to the extended start date for the transactions. That is, for a home-building contract the laying of the foundations must still start within 26 weeks after the day the contract is made and the home must be ready for occupation as a place of residence within 18 months of the laying of the foundations starting. For an owner-builder arrangement, the home must be ready for occupation as a place of residence within 18 months of the laying of the foundations starting. All other conditions and requirements for the grant remain unchanged.

As was the case when the scheme first commenced, the Commissioner of State Revenue has, since 1 February 2012, been administering the Queensland Building Boost for the extended period under an administrative arrangement. When passed, this bill will apply from that date to give statutory effect to the administrative arrangement, providing the legislative authority for the payment of the extended grant and ensuring the scheme can be properly administered in relation to rights and obligations arising prior to royal assent.

The Bligh government introduced the Building Boost after calls from the housing industry and subsequently industry came out in support of the \$140 million stimulus package. Likewise, the Housing Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia, the UDIA and the Master Builders Association all called for an extension to the boost. A jointly signed letter from the HIA, the Property Council of Australia, the Master Builders Association and the UDIA, received by the government, stated—
Certainly the Queensland Building Boost has played an important part in generating this increased level of activity across the industry.

This bill authorises the extension called for by industry and deserves the support of all members. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade) (12.26 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 Ryan): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 October 2011 (see p. 3016).

Second Reading



Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (12.26 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I table the government's response to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee's report No. 8 into the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011.

Tabled paper: Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee, Report No. 8—South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011—Government response [6442].

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): Order! Before I call the member for Buderim, I acknowledge in the gallery the principal and students of Bundamba State Secondary College in the electorate of Bundamba.

Mr DICKSON (Buderim—LNP) (12.27 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate on the South-East Queensland restructuring bill and note that, in the main, the LNP does not oppose this bill. However, I will speak about a number of concerns that we do have in relation to the bill itself.

This bill, like similar bills before it, is a monument. As I have said before, it is a monument to an ill-conceived system of water supply created with no consideration for members of the community and it has this arrogant state Labor government's fingerprints all over it. Over the past year or so I have lost count of how many times I have heard government members, including the Premier and the minister, say in this House, 'Distributor-retailers are owned by local councils. It has nothing to do with us; we are only the government.'

As per the explanatory notes, the first policy objective of the bill is to enable the withdrawal of council water businesses from the South-East Queensland distributor-retailer and re-establish the water businesses within direct council operation. In this first instance, we are talking about the decision by the Gold Coast City Council to withdraw from its distributor-retailer, Allconnex. The two remaining participant councils of Allconnex, Logan City Council and Redland City Council, undertook a business assessment. As a result, they have concluded that even a streamlined Allconnex is not a viable commercial alternative and they, too, have decided to withdraw from Allconnex.

From the outset let me say that the timing of this bill is terrible. This bill was referred to the committee on 11 October last year and the committee was not required to report back until 5 April this year. During that time line there will be a state election and there was to be a council election until the Premier decided to move it. Two questions arise from the timing of this bill returning from the committee stage: how are the councils supposed to prepare a budget that takes into account this bill; and if there are any significant changes to the make-up of the elected officials on the council as a result of the election, what would happen if the new council decides they do not want to leave Allconnex?

The system of water supply in South-East Queensland is an entire shambles. Truly, the circumstances leading up to the introduction of this bill, which is a monument to Labor's so-called water reform policy, are nothing short of a scandal. The current situation regarding water supply across South-East Queensland is dire. People are struggling to pay their water bills and other utility bills. In that regard I feel the need to once again enlighten those opposite with a little history lesson. It is important that the people of South-East Queensland know exactly how we got into this situation and who is responsible. The situation to which I refer saw councils stripped of their existing water assets and the right to conduct their water businesses and replaced with the current situation which has given us a number of retail and bulk water entities such as Seqwater. This is the very same Labor government that created Seqwater that is currently on the front page of the newspaper.

On the subject of bulk water, which is mentioned in the bill and the accompanying explanatory notes, I note the following statement from the Queensland Competition Authority price monitoring draft report released last month. It states—

This is the second year of price monitoring of the retail and distribution water and wastewater activities in South East Queensland (SEQ) by the Authority.

... legislative changes imposed a ... (CPI) price cap on the retail and distribution component of certain water and wastewater prices for 2011-12 and 2012-13.

This clarifies that participating councils are responsible for pricing. The report goes on to state—

These legislative changes also require councils to publish a price mitigation plan that demonstrates how they intend to mitigate the price impacts on customers in the six years following the end of the CPI cap on 30 June 2013. By 1 July 2013, councils must publish a final price path for this period.

With respect to Queensland Urban Utilities, which encompasses Brisbane, Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Scenic Rim and Somerset local council areas, I also note the following from the QCA price monitoring draft report—

Also indicated is the share of average prices accounted for by bulk water charges. It is assumed that, based on the Government's policy, the bulk water prices charged by the SEQ Water Grid Manager ... are passed through to customers in full.

The report continues—

The Ministerial Direction requires the Authority to recognise the Government's policy that the prices charged by the SEQ WGM for bulk water storage, treatment and delivery are to be passed through to customers in full.

I refer to part A of that same Queensland Competition Authority report. It states—

Changes in the prices of distribution and retail water and wastewater services for households and small businesses differ across SEQ but do not exceed the CPI cap of 3.6%.

However, the report states clearly—

The total prices paid by customers have increased by more than this when the increase in bulk water prices is taken to account.

So there you have it; despite the government's claim that water bills are capped to CPI, poor old 'Joe Average' is paying more than the CPI for water because of Labor's policy in the guise of bulk water pricing. Part A of the Queensland Competition Authority report goes on—

Residential bills (which include water and wastewater, and the bulk water component) increased across all SEQ council areas, with increases ranging from \$14 to \$94 per household, except in Scenic Rim and Lockyer Valley ...

The Queensland Competition Authority has found that bulk water charges represent around half, or 48.1 per cent, of the average water price estimated by the authority for Queensland Urban Utilities while being slightly lower for Allconnex, 45.2 per cent, and Unitywater, 38 per cent. The final quote I wish to make from the Queensland Competition Authority draft report is this—

The bulk water charge is set by the State Government to recoup some of the costs of the State-owned bulk water providers.

It does not get much clearer. This government spent \$7 billion of borrowed money building a water grid because they believed it was never going to rain again. Now we are having a commission of inquiry into a flood and this Labor government is using bulk water prices to pay for their irresponsible spending.

Unitywater chair, Jim Soorley, said that there was 'all manner of crisis spending that consumers would now have to pay for'. Those comments were aimed directly at this Labor government. Panic crisis spending is what occurred. In terms of infrastructure, the government embarked on the following: the southern regional pipeline to the Gold Coast and the northern pipeline interconnector to the Sunshine Coast, several expensive western corridor membrane recycling plants which have never provided drinking water, the western corridor pipeline, the beleaguered Gold Coast desalination plant, the property purchased at Traveston, the Traveston pipeline, the Ewen Maddock water treatment plant, the introduction of fluoride into water, the Wyaralong Dam and the Wyaralong Dam water treatment plant. Only a few of these very expensive projects produced new drinking water supplies. No doubt some of this spending was worthwhile but no doubt some of it is questionable at best and a blatant waste of money at worst.

On 24 May 2007, then Premier Peter Beattie and his deputy, current Premier Anna Bligh, held a joint media conference. The catchcry for the cameras was 'New era in water in South-East Queensland'. The media statement commenced—

A streamlined 21st century water management system for South East Queensland water was unveiled by Premier Peter Beattie and Deputy Premier Anna Bligh in State Parliament this morning.

It went on—

... the State will assume control and operate the larger water assets that hold, manufacture ... and distribute bulk water across the South East Queensland.

Yes, the Premier always intended to assume control, in other words, seize and take over water assets which council ratepayers had already paid for and already owned. The ministerial statement continues—

Councils will still have an important role to play at the retail and distribution end—jointly owning a single distribution entity that will be responsible for the domestic pipe network and pumping stations, and three retail companies.

We know one of those three retail companies as Allconnex. I will give honourable members some history to this bill. On 7 April last year the Premier stood just across this chamber and announced that—

Today ... the blame game on water in South-East Queensland ends.

The Premier told us that the Labor government had decided to repeal sections of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Reconstructing) Act that required the distribution and retail entities to be established. The Premier said that this would mean councils that wish to return to their previous structure would be able to do so and those that wish to retain their current entities could also do so. On the very same day the minister also stood just across the chamber and said—

... the Bligh government will force local governments to reduce water price increases next year and allow councils to retire from or disband the current distributor-retailer water businesses.

The minister continued—

Under these changes, councils will no longer be required to participate in a joint distributor-retailer entity and they can return to operating their water and sewerage utilities within their own councils.

The minister went on—

Individual councils will be able to decide if they wish to remain owners under the new DR arrangements or to withdraw. If they withdraw, they will have their assets, rights and liabilities returned to them along with direct responsibility for these water and waste water services.

That was what the minister said on 7 April last year. On 26 July last year, three months later, the minister was reported as having labelled the Gold Coast City Council 'difficult to deal with' and the Allconnex divorce decision as 'crazy stuff'. The article continued—

Mr Robertson said he was concerned that yesterday's 8-7 decision by the Council to divorce from Allconnex was not in the best interest of the Gold Coast's ratepayers.

The minister appeared on ABC Radio that same day and said—

This is crazy stuff. Frankly someone's got to stand up for the ratepayers for the Gold Coast, council isn't.

So there you have it. On 7 April the minister advocated in this very House that councils would be given the opportunity to opt out of the distributor-retailer arrangements as they were at that time. Yet three months later he is on radio criticising the Gold Coast City Council for doing just that.

I will be very interested to hear what the minister's position is on this today. It does seem that he has had some difficulty making up his mind. According to the explanatory notes, a report was prepared by the Queensland Water Commission for the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee to provide information on the development of this bill. Apparently it is a summary of the activities including consultation undertaken by the commission in developing this bill.

The current system has three regulators: DERM, the Queensland Water Commission and the Queensland water grid manager. I am curious as to why the Water Commission was at the forefront in the preparation of this report. I suspect the Water Commission was given this task because they had nothing else to do. They are one of three regulators. One regulator could do the job, and the other two are on notice! But what does the Queensland Water Commission do these days, Minister?

I do remember that back in November 2010 the board executives at Allconnex wanted a pay rise. They had only been in the job five minutes and, despite having achieved nothing but to separate water consumers from their pay packets, they thought they deserved a pay rise. That is quite amazing. When introducing this bill on 11 October last year, the minister stated—

Two key actions were announced to address community concerns about high water prices and councils' lack of accountability in the operation of their council owned distributor-retailers.

The minister states that there is a public perception of a 'lack of accountability' by councils. Well within the bill, part 2 allows for five or more board members. However, each council can only have a maximum of one board member. There is a maximum of three council members on any board. So in the event that there are four or more councils owning a water entity, this legislation would prevent one of those councils from having a say. Therefore, it would be a shareholder without a say.

Brisbane City Council is by far the greatest majority shareholder in Queensland Urban Utilities. Yet it has only one board member and only one vote in a board of at least six members.

Mr ROBERTSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Whilst I appreciate that the opposition is supporting this legislation, I nevertheless do need to bring to your attention that the contribution by the honourable member opposite is straying way outside the provisions of this bill. This bill relates to the dissolution of Allconnex. He is, in my view, straying into areas outside of the dissolution provisions of this bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms van Litsenburg): Order! There is no point of order. Will the member stay on the bill.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Just on that point, very clearly on page 11 of the explanatory notes it speaks volumes about board members. It states—

Board membership may include councillors from its participating local governments, with each participating local government able to appoint one of its councillors to be a board member. However this is subject to not more than 3 board members in total being councillor-members (i.e. councillors from its participating local governments).

I just thought I would make that point very clear. So the minister is wrong.

As I stated earlier, the Brisbane City Council is by far the greatest majority shareholder in Queensland Urban Utilities. Yet it has only one board member and only one vote on a board of at least six members. Adding to this unfair equity, according to this bill, the board chair with a casting vote must be an independent board member. This bill is blatantly unfair to the Brisbane City Council and the ratepayers of Brisbane as majority shareholders. It is like having a family owned business where the Premier and the minister have dictated that no member of the family can be the board chair. That is just madness in anybody's language.

To highlight further inequity within this bill, the independent board members who are allowed to hold other employment are eligible to be paid by the distributor-retailer. However, the council board members are not allowed to be paid. Councillors are hardworking and busy people, and when councillors sit on external boards the reading of board papers is mostly done on weekends and outside normal working hours. These councillors should be fairly paid for their efforts just the same as an independent board member.

Something else within this bill which needs to be highlighted is clause 13 in part 2. This allows the water retailer boards to sit and make key decisions requiring that their quorum must have at least one independent board member. However, the bill does not require a quorum to have a council member present—another inequity.

In the case of Queensland Urban Utilities, the boards can sit and make financial decisions impacting the ratepayers of Brisbane and yet a Brisbane City Council board member is not required to be present to debate any inequities. This bill is very unfair to the ratepayers of Brisbane. Sorry, Minister, but the public are awake to you. The minister talks about a 'lack of accountability' by councils, but everything I have just spoken about shows a clear intention on the part of this bill to limit councils from having any real say whatsoever. And we all thought that that was what this bill was about!

To return to the comments regarding this bill in the chamber, on 11 October last year the member for Stretton stated—

Firstly, a price cap would be imposed on the annual distribution and retail water and waste water—sewage only, excluding trade waste and recycled water—prices for households and small businesses from 1 July 2011 until 30 June 2013. The Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Act 2011 has delivered the CPI price cap, providing much needed relief to South-East Queensland residents.

The minister has in no way addressed the issue of how councils will absorb the 20 per cent increase in bulk water prices to be inflicted on former wastewater consumers of Allconnex. I suspect that the councils taking over Allconnex will not absorb it; it will be passed along to the ratepayer through their rates notices.

The bill provides the formula for the establishment of capped charges for 2012-13. Proposed section 92DW provides that in 2012-13 retail charges may not increase more than CPI. This is calculated with reference to charges which were charged to the consumer when the operations were run by Allconnex. However, the provision clarifies that the 2011-12 base charges did not include the bulk water component, as was the case for the distributor-retailers. The minister's speech makes amazing reading. It states—

The intent of the bill is to provide for the automatic re-establishment of council water and waste water business units from 1 July 2012, with the powers and responsibilities as: commercialised business units under the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government (Beneficial Enterprises and Business Activities) Regulation 2010; and water and sewerage service providers under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

Indeed, proposed section 92AJ allows the Gold Coast, Logan and Redland councils disbanded from Allconnex to re-create their commercialised water businesses in accordance with the Local Government Act. However, this bill does not detail whether or not the unfair board governance arrangements forced on the amalgamated retailers also applies to the commercialised council water businesses. Simply, the bill does not allow the owner councils and ratepayers to have a fair say on the financial arrangements and governance of water infrastructure that they already own. This Labor government has legislated in this unfair bill that councils and ratepayers have very little control. This is totally against LNP policy, which is to hand back control of these water retail and distribution boards to councils, thereby allowing ratepayers to have their say.

The minister is trying to unmake an omelette, and it is an omelette that he made. If the Premier and the minister had not wrecked a system that was working just fine, they would not need to be legislating to re-establish anything. The bill also intends to apply extra requirements to the remaining South-East Queensland distributor-retailers so that they provide greater clarity for councils' pricing decision-making roles with respect to those same distributor-retailers.

The bill seeks to provide that the Queensland Competition Authority will have a price-monitoring and oversight role of the new council water businesses. Amendments to the distributor retail act introduced a price cap to limit the three South-East Queensland distributor-retailers' water and wastewater price increases to CPI from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2013. This has since been implemented by the Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Act. Whilst distributor-retailers will be restricted to price increases for consumers on water and wastewater to increases in CPI, under Labor they will still be paying for increases to bulk water costs at 20 per cent into the future. Again I make the point that there is no doubt that, whilst they may not be able to pass on the price increases in bulk water through water bills, councils will pass on the price increases, and I suspect they will do it through household rates notices.

As we know, the other proposal was that South-East Queensland councils be given the once-only opportunity to opt out of their distributor-retailers and re-establish council owned water and wastewater businesses. In circumstances where any council decided to withdraw from the distributor-retailer, the time line for the transaction to be completed was to be by 30 June 2012. I just hope that all of the costs the Gold Coast City Council must bear do not result in another hit for the ratepayers.

Whilst we are talking about costs, the notes accompanying this bill advise that, in order to accommodate the inevitable complaints from water consumers arising from Labor's disastrous water policies, the then Energy Ombudsman was provided with \$533,330 for its establishment costs to expand its responsibilities from just energy disputes to include water and wastewater disputes. These new changes in water businesses will mean that the Energy and Water Ombudsman's databases, work flows and customer information, including fact sheets, will need to be altered. So that that can occur, additional funding of approximately \$140,000 will be needed. The merry-go-round the government has this Energy and Water Ombudsman on will ultimately cost the taxpayer more than \$673,000 in expansion costs in order to sort out complaints arising from this government's flawed policy on water, and that is just one entity.

But the certain costs associated will see any withdrawn council having to foot the bill for the Energy and Water Ombudsman. Within the bill, proposed section 111 provides that the withdrawn councils become scheme participants for the 2011-12 financial year. From that time they are liable for payment of user-pays fees to the Energy and Water Ombudsman. These user-pays fees will be forecast by the Energy and Water Ombudsman based on the cost from the previous quarter.

To further highlight what a shambles this government's policy on water supply and distribution has been in South-East Queensland, this bill—and I am quoting directly from the explanatory notes—'requires Allconnex and the withdrawn councils to enter into a "retransfer scheme" to transfer Allconnex's assets and liabilities to the councils to allow them to perform water and wastewater functions'. But wait, there is more. This replicates in reverse the transfer scheme, transfer notices and transfer directions which were relied upon to transfer assets, liabilities, instruments and employees from the South-East Queensland councils to the distributor-retailer in 2010. This is absolutely priceless. They are doing things in reverse now—typical of this Labor government.

Any transfer framework needs to be detailed. I note that the Water Commission report to the committee states—

A key policy driver of the Bill is to ensure that employees of Allconnex are given suitable employment protections during this new period of reform. This protection will be achieved through the development of a separate workforce framework. The policy objective is to supersede the existing workforce framework with a new workforce framework to be made under the architecture provided for under the Bill.

The minister needs to tell us the time frames. When the current South-East Queensland water system was created, the transfer framework agreed upon—

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

Mr DICKSON: When the current South-East Queensland water system was created, the transfer framework agreed upon as part of the transitional process had some very interesting inclusions. That framework provided that, in circumstances where former council employees were required to travel greater than five kilometres from their previous workplace location to a new workplace location, travel expenses were to be paid to the employee in accordance with the rate set by the ATO. In some circumstances, the rate can be as high as 75c per kilometre. The framework further provided that, where an employee was required to travel greater than five kilometres from their previous work location to a new work location, the travel would occur during the employee's usual ordinary working hours. Who else in the community gets to travel to and from work in their work hours? That framework as negotiated was to expire three years from when the employee transferred to the new water entities or three years from the date nominated in the notification to employees who would remain with the council or on 30 June 2013 for any new employees employed by a new water entity on or after 1 July 2010.

Another question for the minister is: what will be the particular inclusions surrounding employment conditions in any new transfer framework? Around and around and around we go, just so we can get back to where we used to be in South-East Queensland less than two years ago—councils taking care of their own water supplies and distribution!

Allconnex is to be eventually dissolved, once the transfer in reverse and any other residual functions are complete. Within this bill, proposed section 92ER states that Allconnex will cease to exist on dissolution day. Additionally, Allconnex's CEO goes out of office as its chief executive, all of Allconnex's board members go out of office and any contracts relating to the appointments end. We certainly support that clause of the bill in its entirety.

It is difficult to imagine a government policy scheme that has been the source of so much financial grief for consumers as this Labor government's so-called South-East Queensland water reform. It never looked like being any sort of a success. My electorate was the first in South-East Queensland to receive water bills arising from the scheme, and the day the bills started arriving so did the calls, letters, emails and personal visits to my office. The electorate was not then and is still not now in any way satisfied with what has occurred. I cannot believe this government could have misread Queenslanders to such a degree.

As I have said, the opposition does not oppose this bill. Passage of the bill needs to provide certainty to councils that withdraw their water businesses from their South-East Queensland distributor-retailers. The LNP four-point plan for water supply in South-East Queensland includes handing back joint control over water retailing to councils. What the people of South-East Queensland deserve is proper planning for Queensland's future water needs which, in turn, will create a sustainable water supply catering for future population increases to meet the needs of householders and industry and agriculture. If elected to government, we will amalgamate the four bulk water entities into one entity to reduce the cost of supplying water; we will hand back control of water distribution and retailing to councils, which previously did a far better job managing water resources than the Bligh government; we will write off non-performing water grid assets to reduce sharp price rises; and we will adopt a 40-year price path to repay the Bligh government's \$7 billion grid debt over the economic life of the asset, which will also reduce the cost of water. Let us just hope that this bill is the start of returning water supply and distribution to those who know how to manage it.

When Queenslanders do get their water bills, I ask them to take them along when they go to vote on 24 March this year. This will remind each and every Queenslanders that this Labor government and each one of the Labor members in this House voted for higher water prices. This bill talks about bulk water. People should ask their local Labor MP or any Labor MP—from Ashgrove to Waterford—why they voted for higher costs of living. The cost of bulk water has gone through the roof. The debt from the

water grid is \$7 billion plus. The question the people of Queensland keep asking is, 'Who is responsible?' The answer is: the Labor Party and every Labor MP who voted in favour of this. It is time for accountability. 24 March 2012 will be judgement day.

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—LNP) (2.36 pm): What we are doing here today with this bill is reversing what we did just two years ago at a huge cost to firstly create this entity and now to dissolve it. It is another example of a wasteful Labor debacle when it comes to administering the assets owned in the public sector in Queensland. Allconnex was established on 1 July 2010—just 18 months ago. If one looks at its website under 'Publications', one of the first documents that one sees is its five-year forward plan. Some 18 months after its creation, we are now seeing it essentially devolved back to the structure we had previously. This will occur as of 1 July 2012. Along with the shared services initiative and the Health payroll, this is another example of pathetic administration in relation to the valuable assets that Queenslanders pay for through their rates, their water bills, their state taxes, their GST and so forth. It is a debacle.

On 13 November 2007 I gave a speech in this place alerting members to the risks of the reorganisation of the structure of water delivery during the drought at that time and the potential impact that that ill-timed, ill-thought-out and underprepared decision could have on Queenslanders. I quoted at great length in that speech from a report the government had prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers in relation to the risks Queensland faced by that reorganisation of our administrative processes for water. Those risks that I spoke about on that occasion included things such as disruption of the operation of water assets, the risks to human capital of the constant changes and pressures of these enormous reorganisation tasks that staff were confronted with, the risks to customer service and customer management and the management of customer accounts, and the particular risk that the new arrangements may not be as efficient or as effective as what existed previously. In relation to that PricewaterhouseCoopers report I said—

Page 144 details at length the risk that parts of this setup may be unacceptable to the public and further changes may be dictated by that.

It is not all that much later that we are standing here making those further changes that this government was warned about just those short few years ago. In that same speech I went on to say—

The report states—

'The key risk from a human capital perspective is that of culture loss.'

I went on to say—

Certainly there is plenty of precedent where smaller organisations have merged into large conglomerates and have lost their customer focus. That is a detailed list of the risks that the government is taking in executing this massive reorganisation of water assets in the state.

In that same speech I expressed at some length concerns about the unfettered powers given to the minister to appoint boards to interfere in the gearing, in the dividends required and so forth from these water structures that were created. On that occasion I attacked the government for having no detail of the cost of the reorganisation and of creating these new water structures. We never did see the cost, nor did we ever see a business case that made out what the benefits and synergies would be by raiding these council assets and creating these new businesses. There were not any synergies and the government was not even prepared to try to pretend that there was any benefit to people. It was not prepared to even lay on the table of this parliament a business case that said that Queenslanders would be better off because of that massive reorganisation.

On that occasion there was no impact statement of what effect that reorganisation would have on the cost of water. Not one speaker from the government side was even able to say whether it would make water more expensive or less expensive. What a way to run a multibillion dollar water business! There was no idea of the business implications for the cost or the delivery of water. Of course, today we are dealing with the consequences of that failed experiment.

There are some things that there is no doubt about. There is no doubt about who paid the cost for that massive restructure. It was Queenslanders—ratepayers, people who pay water bills, people who pay other state taxes. There is no doubt at all who paid. Equally, there is no doubt about who will pay again, because this is a costly exercise. It is wasting more money to fix what we wasted money on earlier—just two years ago. This legislation is just another example of the appalling level of administration of public assets and, above all, the waste that Queenslanders are constantly being forced to pay and pay again to fix.


In a speech in this House on 4 June 2009 on the Water and Another Act Amendment Bill I posed the question—

Any Queenslanders who has had a look at water policy would be entitled to ask ... what have we gained?

I said that in June 2009. Sadly for Queenslanders, that question is being answered today. We gained nothing and we are going back to what we had before. I also said on 4 June 2009—

But one thing is for sure: this reorganisation was a total farce that was done for political reasons and achieved absolutely nothing for the residents of South-East Queensland.

I would never be prepared to say, 'I told you so,' but it was evident in those debates and by the fact that the government could never tell us the business advantages—the costs, the effect that those costs were going to have on water—that this was, in fact, a politically motivated farce. Now, Queenslanders are paying the price for another bungle, with more money to unravel it and to go back to where they were in the first place.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (2.45 pm): This legislation that is being debated today is an admission by this Bligh Labor government that it was fundamentally wrong when it imposed water distribution retailers on an unsuspecting public. The minister, on behalf of this government, is reversing his 19 May 2010 South-East Queensland water legislation because the public has revolted and continues to protest about water charges that do not reflect true cost recovery, are not justified, and, critically, are not affordable. This legislation is for Allconnex to be dismantled but is effectively a template that can be extended for the remaining two urban water utilities, Unitywater and Queensland Urban Utilities, for their potential break-up.

The public is and was correct, as it usually is. Allconnex was a thought bubble conceived in the Beattie Labor era where public utilities could be prepared for auction to feed a rapacious, out-of-control, high-spending government. This legislation today, once passed, will stop part of the suffering of Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands residents. Everything that one could not want as a water distributor-retailer occurred when Labor created Allconnex. That was despite the minister stating in his second reading speech of 19 May 2010 that the legislation was supposed to 'increase both the quality and the efficiency of water and wastewater services in South-East Queensland'.

Honourable members, this legislation did the opposite. The manifest incompetence and indulgent behaviour of Allconnex compounded it. The public reaction was universally hostile. The people of the Gold Coast and the majority of Gold Coast councillors and the mayor voted to disconnect from Allconnex and absorb it back into the council. Most wish it was dead or gone already, but we live in hope.

Allconnex had a board appointed with all members from outside the region. The board chair was from Cairns. The chief executive was combative and only made the public anger more dramatic after his intermittent public statements. He is now gone. The company took over all Gold Coast water assets and those of Logan and Redlands. It effectively nearly shut down the Pimpama Wastewater Treatment Plant and cancelled the Stapylton treatment plant that was conceived to support a massive area. The company took long leases over very expensive premises at Robina and embarked on a \$5 million plus office fit-out. The extravagance did not stop there. Allconnex appointed a vast number of staff on very high remuneration and embarked on a wide media campaign.

But it was in the detail of doing the water business where Allconnex had its greatest failures. Those staff who were grandfathered across were obviously mostly ignored, and that was the tragedy. Allconnex redirected its major capital works growth to the north, where growth had stopped, and away from the mid zone, where it was still growing rapidly. In fact, eight out of 10 of all the major water projects of the major capital works projects were scheduled for the north end of Logan and two in the old Gold Coast region. Local Gold Coast projects were both ignored and stopped. In one dramatic episode, completely inexperienced Allconnex staff incorrectly drilled in the main water pipeline along Bundall Road at a pressure of 200 PSI. That pipeline supplies the water for Surfers Paradise and its surrounds and the water supply was off for a prolonged period. Safety and professional management seemed to be low on the list of priorities. There really appeared to be not only a lack of corporate knowledge but also an inability to understand how poorly Allconnex was viewed in the eyes of the public and the need to professionally run the business.

Allconnex bills, now separated from the council rates, showed major increases in the cost for wastewater services. They were 50 per cent higher than before. Retail water fees were unaffordable and often wrong. Allconnex appeared to have a policy almost of not reading water meters at all—not misreading them, but not reading them. These retail water charges, on top of this, were starting at \$1.70 with the \$1 charge from Allconnex making a \$2.70 per kilolitre bulk water charge to the consumer and due to go to \$4 per kilolitre by 2015. That is what really happened when the Trojan Horse, Allconnex, was inflicted on the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands. And, of course, the inevitable occurred.

There really was no alternative given to the council or councillors at that higher level. They were threatened with massive fines if they opposed it. The state Labor government would have you believe that it was a case of 'take it or leave it'. There was no 'leave it'. Without a massive change in attitude, operation and business modelling, Seqwater will be as big a problem. Clearly the LNP's four-point plan will address many of those deficiencies obvious to date and should correct it. The public and council knew it was a Trojan Horse model from its inception, with its massive costs, its attempt to shift blame for massive price increases for water to councils and thereby to consumers, its difficulty to shut down and its later ability to be sold at great potential profit. Gold Coast City Council was accused of profiteering when it was instructed that it must run along prudential business lines and make a business return. The GCCC, after all of this, offered a rebate 30 times over and above the state government's derisory rebate offered when the initial complaints flooded in. Redlands residents only ever wanted to drink Stradbroke

Island water and they stated that clearly, and that is what they should get in the end. Logan really needed water but they were denied the Wolffdene Dam water when it was cancelled by the Rudd and Goss governments in the past. That is what they are dearly lacking in this point in time.

The public will be furious to hear that the legislation that we are debating today still means that the council's operating units will continue to operate as water grid participants, distributor-retailers, and are still subject to the year-on-year price rise ratcheting model of Seqwater as the bulk water supplier. Fortunately the council owns and now controls all the pipes and is the retailer, but the vast increase in water fees is due to the Seqwater model. The Gold Coast City Council has totally redesigned the model and all the problems have been corrected. They are basically using engineers at one end to run it properly, properly recycling and also properly provisioning major capital works across the city. Remember, we have 11 million tourists a year and we are aiming to get to 15 million by 2014. This is a huge capital earner for the state and it must never be ignored.

Basically, Allconnex's separation will not impact on Redlands or, especially, Logan. Nothing like the minister's ballpark figure of \$200 million consequential costs will ever occur. In fact, estimates at the moment are 10 per cent of that and, as most will know, the provisions are 50 per cent of that estimate anyway. The Gold Coast has admitted that it will carry that cost. This bill is groundhog day.

Mr Lawlor: Then why are you supporting it?

Dr DOUGLAS: In fact, it takes us back to where we started, member for Southport, and it will actually benefit you in your retirement. You will be able to afford to pay for your water.

Mr Lawlor: Oh, that's good.


Dr DOUGLAS: So it will suit you. This is what a constituent said—

It seems that the state government have now legalised extortion and blackmail. We have nowhere else to go to get what is not a commodity for trading but an essential element for human life.

Families and residents constantly tell me they are at breaking point as living costs—or more accurately described as 'existing costs'—soar through the roof. The cost of Allconnex to consumers through this government's forced water price hikes is just another example of a government that does not listen to the needs of those that it represents.

There is a parting insult from the government about the nonsense about the price mitigation strategy and a quantifiable price path. Labor went for the money and it just jacked up those to pay for its excesses and its greed. Labor saw the public as a cash cow. It literally could not afford to pay the charges. Basically, Seqwater remains a big problem for the future. The government really needs to confront the issue that it has not put a fast con trick on the public. Allconnex was a debacle, entirely created, driven and ultimately executed by a failed Labor executive bureaucratic duopoly. Both are equally responsible and it is no doubt one of the reasons for the contempt the public has for both the minister and his staff.

This is a tragedy. I wonder what the future of Unitywater and Queensland Urban Utilities really is. The longer they continue, the more difficult they become to dismantle. Has the government created two impossible-to-slay, expensive future monsters? The proposal in this bill adding independent board members and a discussion about salaries for services looks trite and superficial. The bill is rightly a terminal one by a government in terminal decline. It is an admission of failure on many levels but mainly convincing the public about its intention. It is part of the reason that the enduring narrative of this government's part in history will be one of a government that manufactured crisis after crisis which it could not fix and even burial would not hide the stench. Allconnex will be a study on how not to form and run a quango.

 **Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.54 pm): I rise to support the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. The Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee that I chair presented a report which was unanimously supported by committee members. I thank those members for their dedication to consideration of this bill. In fact, opposition MPs did not even submit a dissenting report or a statement of reservation. That is a first. I always thought that was their only policy. When a bill is passed through this House they often go on with a lot of drivel they think is important and then they support the bill. Often they pick out some inane detail that they think is important but seldom is.

I thank those in the library for their concise and detailed briefs presented on bills before parliament. I take this opportunity to thank Mary Seefried, the Parliamentary Librarian, and wish her all the very best in her retirement. I also thank my secretariat for their assistance in getting the report ready for tabling into the House yesterday. It is a busy time for everyone. The committee is still working hard on a number of other reports. I also thank those departmental officers and the Queensland Water Commission who briefed the committee and also the submitters.

The SEQ water bill was referred to my committee for examination on 11 October last year. The bill proposes amendments to the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 (Queensland) and other acts; the withdrawal of certain council water businesses from their

distributor-retailer and re-establishment of those water businesses within the councils; greater clarity for those councils remaining with their distributor-retailers in respect of their pricing and decision-making roles with the distributor-retailers; and allowing the Queensland Competition Authority to have a price-monitoring oversight role of the new council water businesses.

The committee received four written submissions: one from Allconnex and one each from its three owned councils—Redlands, Gold Coast and Logan. Councils were particularly keen and they were in constant contact with the secretariat to see this bill passed as soon as possible. The bill has been formulated in close consultation with Allconnex and its participating councils. The proposed dissolution of Allconnex reflects the three councils' resolution to re-form their councils' water businesses.

As part of the committee's report it recommended writing to Minister Robertson seeking assurances and clarification on a number of points raised. These primarily related to clause 23 of the bill. The minister replied to the eight specific points raised and reassured the committee of the government's commitment to progressing the bill. I would like to acknowledge the government's response to the committee's report tabled by the minister this morning in his second reading speech. The minister noted that the committee has sought particular assurances on three legislative amendments and these will be drafted and incorporated in the bill. I thank the minister for his prompt and detailed response.

Minister Robertson confirmed that he will be moving amendments to provide for the retrospective application of sections 92BS and 92CM. The committee's report noted concerns raised by Allconnex in its submission about whether the exchange or disclosure of information required to implement the transfer prior to the passage of the bill would have the same protection as information exchanged after the bill is passed. I know that councils and Allconnex will welcome this amendment to protect their interests. Similarly, the minister has responded to a concern that the committee raised about the protections afforded Allconnex for actions and decisions made in connection with the retransfer prior to the bill's passage through the House. Again—and I thank the minister—the minister has assured the committee that the bill will be amended to address this concern.

I address the matter of essential water assets, liabilities, instruments and employees transferring back from Allconnex to the withdrawn councils of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redland City. As I said, in April 2011 the Premier and Minister for Reconstruction provided SEQ councils with a once-only opportunity to decide to opt out of their distributor-retailer and re-establish council owned and operated water and wastewater businesses. The participating councils of Allconnex Water—the Gold Coast, Logan City and Redland City councils—have decided to take back their water businesses. That was their decision. They took up the government's offer. It was never forced upon them. They asked for and were granted the change.

The Queensland government has consistently stated that Queensland taxpayer funds would not be committed to fund the disestablishment of Allconnex and the re-establishment of council water businesses. Accordingly, the bill provides a fair and transparent process for ensuring that Logan and Redland City councils are not financially penalised as a result of the Gold Coast City Council decision to withdraw from Allconnex. Equally, the bill requires Allconnex, Logan and Redland City councils to take all reasonable steps to mitigate the amount of the Gold Coast City Council's liability.

The bill contains three principles to deal with the allocation of assets. These are: firstly, assets attached to land returned to the council where the land is located; secondly, assets returned to the council that had prior control of them, unless all of the councils agree otherwise; and, thirdly, the distribution of assets and liabilities created by Allconnex, excluding land or those attached to land, are to be decided upon by the councils under their agreed transfer schemes. The transfer scheme process involves the councils and Allconnex certifying that the transfer of assets under the transfer scheme, or an agreement for the use of assets and so on, will allow each council to perform its necessary water and wastewater functions.

There are also transition provisions to enable the council water businesses to operate effectively from 1 July 2012. The intent of the bill is to provide for the automatic re-establishment of council water and wastewater business units from 1 July 2012. Those council business units will continue to operate as SEQ water grid participants with some provisions that currently apply to distributor-retailers continuing to be applied—for example, obligations relating to the CPI price cap, effective regional planning, minimum information to be provided on customer bills and customer protection measures such as access to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland.

This bill is a very good example to highlight the benefits of the parliament's new portfolio committee system and the important and useful work committees such as the EAREC do to help the House deliver excellent legislation for the people of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (3.02 pm): I rise to join the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011, which is the eighth piece of legislation arising from the Labor government's ill-fated water reform since

2006. Both the Beattie and Bligh governments will be remembered for their shameful decisions that resulted in the seizure of South-East Queensland water assets from councils in 2006 and that will continue to cost taxpayers for decades to come.

The bill was introduced on 11 October 2011 by the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities, the honourable member for Stretton, and referred to the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee to report by 5 April 2012. As honourable members have heard from the shadow minister, the honourable member for Buderim, the LNP will not be opposing the bill. However, we do have considerable concerns about its ramifications. Further, it will not address the root causes of the Bligh Labor-made water shambles. Whilst we believe the LNP's four-point water plan is better, the South-East Queensland Councils of Mayors has requested the bill be passed and the LNP will support it to give certainty to the affected councils. Obviously this reporting date has been brought forward due to pressures arising from the impending state election and the time frame for the cessation of Allconnex by 1 July 2012.

Allconnex was established under the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 and commenced water and wastewater services to the residents of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redland City councils on 1 July 2010. It lasted just one year before a decision was made by the Gold Coast City Council to split from the water distributor-retailer, Allconnex. Residents in my electorate on the Gold Coast cried foul when the first round of Allconnex water bills appeared in letterboxes throughout January 2011. Some households saw an increase of 20 per cent in their water bills and many complained of outrageous price increases that did not reflect their conservative water use. Others sent pictures of water meters that were fully grown over or filled with mounds of dirt and could not possibly have been read for months, if not years. Dedicated volunteer groups were left wondering how they could pay their bills and not face closure. Pensioners were hit particularly hard, facing water bill increases that they simply could not afford. Gold Coast residents were effective water warriors through the lengthy water restrictions and should be congratulated for their support of water-saving measures, not punished with soaring water costs and now high dismantling fees because this Bligh government mucked up yet again.

This Labor legislation has already caused untold heartache and angst in the short time since its inception. Following months of community outrage, rowdy public protests and heated debate on the Gold Coast, the protest group Disconex was formed. The shock announcement by the government in April 2011 gave councils the option to withdraw from their distributor-retailer. However, a labyrinth of technical, legal and political complications arose as pressure mounted on the Gold Coast City Council to disband from the troublesome Allconnex set-up, culminating in the legislation before the House today.

As I said earlier, this is the eighth piece of legislation on water reform since 2006. The honourable member for Buderim raised the issue of the potential of new councillors being elected at the April polls who may not support the views carried by a superslim majority of current Gold Coast councillors. The final vote by Gold Coast councillors was eight to seven. When you take into consideration the fact that several who all voted for the split from Allconnex are contesting the mayoralty and will have to vacate their positions, the situation for us on the Gold Coast is further exacerbated.

This bill will allow the dismantling of the distributor-retailer, Allconnex, servicing the Gold Coast, Logan and the Redlands, and the re-establishment of each participating council's water business. Furthermore, the bill will apply certain requirements of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 to those specific council water businesses. It will apply additional requirements to the continuing South-East Queensland distributor-retailers to provide greater clarity for councils' pricing and decision-making role with respect to their distributor-retailers and provide that the Queensland Competition Authority will have a price-monitoring oversight role of the new council water businesses.

Labor has form when it comes to water reform and it is not pretty. Then Premier Beattie and his Treasurer, Bligh, highjacked the Gold City council's planning for a 55-megalitre desalination plant at Tugun to build the government's monstrous 125-megalitre plant in the same two-year time frame. Residents in Tugun and Currumbin bore the brunt of this rushed decision and were forced to tolerate the noise, dust and disruption associated with the construction, seeing cracks appear in their homes and driveways after their streets were ripped up to install massive pipes.

Ms Croft interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: Listening to members opposite shows that obviously they could not care less about the damage and destruction that has been caused to people in my electorate. The despair suffered by those people is now even harder to bear as the giant plant, which has had more episodes than *Days of Our Lives*, sits idling in 'hot standby' mode for an indefinite period. The LNP warned those opposite of the impending crisis that their reckless legislation would cause, which was that water prices would inevitably rise to unsustainable levels, all the while hurting communities and households already suffering unacceptable hikes in the cost of living under this tired, 20-year Labor government. In a speech on water legislation back in May 2010 I said—

Unfortunately for the good people of Queensland, steep increases in water prices are inevitable under this Labor government. Gold Coast ratepayers in particular will feel the pain of high water costs over coming years.

It is a real pity that the Labor Gold Coast members are not standing up for their constituents as they are crippled by further price hikes. Provisions in this bill will see that the re-established council water businesses will still be subject to price monitoring and public reporting by the QCA.


Ms Croft interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: The member for Broadwater keeps interjecting and I would like that recorded. Irrespective of who controls the supply and billing of water to Gold Coast residents, state government controlled bulk water prices for the city have been on a steep incline since 2008 and are set to continue climbing. It would appear that members opposite in this House have no concern for whatever price that might be. Bulk water charges rose an estimated \$769 per megalitre in just three years between 2008 and 2011. Labor's Fairer Water Prices for SEQ Amendment Bill, debated in June 2011, legislated a cap on council based retail price increases to CPI until June 2013 but, sneakily, they left the state government bulk water prices out of the deal, allowing bulk water charges to continue rising to recover the cost of Labor's \$7 billion water grid. It is no wonder that residents are fed up with the state government's failure to rein in water prices.

Following the council's decision to split from Allconnex, Logan and Redland councils found it was not viable for them to remain with Allconnex considering the Gold Coast was a 62 per cent shareholder. Therefore, the government insisted that Gold Coast ratepayers bear the total dismantling costs of all three councils. Clearly, there are many who feel this is totally unfair.

Several submissions were put forward to this committee. Four written submissions were accepted from Allconnex and its three owner councils: Gold Coast, Logan and Redland city. The Queensland Water Commission provided advice to the committee on the points that were raised in those submissions. Many concerns have been raised about the provisions regarding the retransfer of Allconnex's assets, liabilities and employees back to individual council water businesses. Further, there is no dispute resolution mechanism in place to protect councils from assuming liability for assets that are not located in their geographic region and therefore do not provide any benefit to ratepayers.

In closing, I wish to place on record the absolute contempt that many people in the Currumbin electorate have for this Bligh Labor government for forcing such high water costs on them after all they have already suffered courtesy of the Tugun desalination plant. I encourage the people in the Currumbin electorate to take their water bills to the ballot box. I encourage people right across the Gold Coast and Queensland to take those water bills to the ballot box on 24 March to drive home their point because water bills are the best how-to-vote card that they could get.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.13 pm): Today I rise to make a brief contribution to the South-East Queensland Water (Redistribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. What fanfare this wondrous new entity received—the water business, the three empires. Today we see that one of those empires has quite literally crashed and burned. It is a hallmark of the failure that is this government and it has a history of failure. Here we have three partners in business: the Gold Coast City Council, Redland City Council and Logan City Council. These three partners were forced together in a cobbled partnership that was doomed to fail. However, they were not equals in this business. They were never equals. It was never going to work. We have three very distinct communities with three very different sets of needs, but they were forced together to deliver an essential of life all the while completely hamstrung and held hostage by this government to the bulk water price. No matter which way you slice it, you can only sell at a greater price than what you buy for. That is what is wrong with this government. It has a pedigree of doing it the other way around, which explains our debt and our parlous economic situation.

This community of mine in Redlands was held hostage for long enough. The Gold Coast was the catalyst—the circuit breaker—when they decided that they could no longer be a party to this entity, and good on them for that. The Logan and Redland councils had to follow suit and they were quite pleased to do so. Certainly my community of Redlands knows how to run an efficient and effective business, particularly in water and waste. It was a very critical part of the Redlands' business network and business empire that made Redlands the community that it is, but that was taken from them. They were also held accountable for other Labor failings such as the Traveston Dam and the desalination plant which were just the latest in this water debacle. My community did not support the taking of water from Redlands. It did not support Labor's strategy, contrary to the protest of those opposite, because they had seen it all before. There is a blaze of destruction across the state and it is not flood or cyclone; it is this Labor government. It is what they have done to Queensland, to community and to the spirit of Queensland.

We saw the disastrous amalgamation and we all know how that has affected all of those communities across the length and breadth of Queensland. We have seen our power bills skyrocket as a direct by-product of this Labor government's mismanagement of electricity. Redlands had planned for growth and they knew that their population could be sustained from the water supply that we had planned for. Another great Labor failure—a failure to plan—was the Wolffdene Dam. That is where things started to unravel for this government and for Labor—pandering to green votes again.

Mr Rickuss: Do you know who did that?

Mr DOWLING: Who did that? I will take the interjection.

Mr Rickuss: I can tell you who did that.

Mr DOWLING: It was Kevin Rudd.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DOWLING: It was Beattie and Wayne Swan and all of those—the old Labor luminaries. I thank the member for the interjection.

Mr Rickuss: Mr Palaszczuk was also involved.

Mr DOWLING: And Mr Palaszczuk. That is the best example of the historic failure of this government to plan for growth. We all knew it was coming. Day after day we heard about the numbers of people migrating to Queensland. But what we did not hear was the planning that was to be put in place for health care, for road infrastructure, for public transport, for education and, of course, for water. We never saw any of that. Growth requires infrastructure. It absolutely requires the infrastructure. We have had 20 years of population growth and this government has failed Queenslanders.

Labor will still be faced with skyrocketing water bills. This community will not be let off from those skyrocketing water costs because of this Labor government's bulk water pricing and pricing strategies. Redlands will, however, benefit from this dealignment, demerger, separation—call it what you will—or restructuring. Redlands will benefit because we were very good at the water business and we will regain those people. They will come back to Redlands. They will re-establish that corporate history and local knowledge that was critical and that was lost in what was thrust upon us. That corporate history will be returned to Redlands and we will start to turn our community around. I trust and hope that the Gold Coast and Logan will do the same. This scrambled egg is far from unscrambled. It is just the latest example of a failed government, a government in crisis, a government in meltdown and a government bereft of ideas and direction.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr DOWLING: The one thing that this government continues to burden Queensland with is increasing costs of living. This is another part of that burden. The costs to Redlands and Logan will be borne by the Gold Coast and that is to be applauded. I thank the Gold Coast for that.


Ms Jones: What are they?

Mr DOWLING: Agriculture, construction, minerals and resources, and tourism.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Member for Redlands, speak through the chair. The member for Ashgrove will cease interjecting.

Mr DOWLING: It was a pop quiz and I took the interjection.

Where we find ourselves today is embarrassing. It should be embarrassing to the Labor government. I know Queenslanders are embarrassed by the way this government has managed water, the way it has built this failed water plan and how it has delivered on it. It is appalling. But unfortunately Queenslanders will continue to pay for it. It will be a legacy that our communities—our children and our grandchildren—will pay for long beyond the term of this government, long into the future. We have upwards of \$80-odd billion worth of debt coming our way. That is what they will have to pay for. The water grid is part of that failure. It has been an horrendous infliction on the people of Queensland. I will be encouraging my community not only to take their water bill but to take their power bill, their rates notice, their land tax valuations and everything else that this government has imposed on them to the ballot box.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.20 pm): I rise to support the South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. Previous speakers have said very clearly that this is a bill that winds back the clock, and it does. Two years ago we saw the formation of Allconnex Water and today we see it being dismantled and a return to the previous structure or at least as close an approximation as can be achieved.

Local councils across Queensland, I believe, are a very responsible group of people. They operate locally. They have a local focus and they have in the main a good connection to their community. Two years ago we saw these councils in the south-east corner treated quite disrespectfully in the way that their water business was removed from them. We were told all sorts of stories about the pricing policy of these councils and yet, from what I have been able to ascertain in the time since, those same residents have had to face significant increases in their water charges and therefore in their cost of living.

It is also difficult for consumers to pay exorbitant water costs when they have been subjected to significant inundation. It makes it even more difficult on an emotional level, let alone a psychological level, to be able to understand and accept the high charges for some projects, like the South-East Queensland water grid, that have been appalling failures.

Mr Wendt: Failures?

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: The water grid. This bill, I think, re-establishes a small amount of respect but it is, I think, respect that has been drawn out from government for these councils. The Gold Coast City Council has shown a very strong desire to take their water business back. In the last few years we have seen a lot of disrespect for local government. In fact I heard Paul Bell being interviewed on the radio just recently when the election date was changed. Paul Bell, I think unashamedly, has been a Labor supporter. I have never had a problem understanding that in his manner and in his conversation over all the years that he has been in local government. But his words on the radio were—and this was to do with the election—that this was 'yet another broken promise to add to the wheelbarrow of broken promises from this Labor government'. I never thought I would hear Paul say that. This bill at least gives some recognition back to local government and the fine job they do in administering services for the local community.

There is an issue that I would like clarification on. In the minister's second reading speech he says—

Those councils are duly elected and charged with representing the interests of their communities.

And I believe local councils throughout Queensland would like that recognition to transfer to other issues. He goes on to say—

Therefore, the state government accepts the decisions of those three councils. Now it is time to get on with the job, to provide some certainty to the residents of those communities, which brings us to the introduction of this bill.

He goes on to say—

... more so the Gold Coast City Council, which is required to pay the consequential costs of Logan and Redland city councils to also withdraw from Allconnex.

I understand from all of that that the state government created Allconnex. The state government has accepted that these councils are aggrieved by the cost structure and other issues in relation to Allconnex and that they have mounted a sufficiently compelling case to withdraw from Allconnex, but in order to withdraw they have to pay the cost even though the establishment of Allconnex was not of their making. I think councils across Queensland are smarting on a regular basis with the ideas of state government—that is, not just this state Labor government but state governments—about how they can better manage local government provided local government carries the financial can.

The other issue is that I wish to alert the new entities—which will be the Gold Coast City Council, the Redland City Council and Logan City Council—that the bill requires that the QCA have a price monitoring oversight role of the new council water business. I remember when the QCA was established that the debate in this chamber was interesting. The ACCC had been formed and the QCA was to be formed to protect 'the interests of Queenslanders' in relation to competition in Queensland. The ACCC had made some decisions at that time which had raised some debate in the community. Certainly I had some concerns about the QCA being established and was told that without the QCA or a Queensland based competition authority all competition would be assessed by the ACCC and it would be assessed on a national basis rather than on what was good for the state of Queensland internally. The QCA was subsequently established to protect the interests of consumers in Queensland in relation to appropriate competition structures and constraints.

The QCA oversees the water pricing policy of the Gladstone Area Water Board and in many instances in more detail than other water entities. They have certainly had more reviews than other water entities. The QCA reviewed the water pricing policy of GAWB in my electorate and recommended that the water price be increased in some areas to the cost of reticulation, and the main area that copped it was Mount Larcom. They were looking at a 700 per cent increase in the water price and that was at the recommendation of the QCA. So there needs to be some responsibility on the part of the QCA to act to protect the interests of the consumer as well as to operate and regulate in the way that their terms of reference outline. Their primary purpose when they were established was to protect the rights of consumers where monopolies, particularly government monopolies, were exercising power. To those three councils that are re-establishing their water business I say: just watch what the QCA does in terms of the practical pricing of water to your consumers.

Once again I believe the decisions of this government have been detrimental to those three councils and to the residents in those council areas. I welcome the at least acknowledgement by the state government that these councils have produced and created an argument that has been compelling enough to deconstruct Allconnex for those council areas. I wish the councillors well. I wish the councils well, and I certainly hope that the consumers—the residents, the people who have to pay the bill at the end of the day—benefit from this change.

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (3.28 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. Before I do so I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee, or EAREC, of which I am very pleased to be a member, and to note that the committee supported this bill unanimously—that is, with no dissenting reports from the opposition. I congratulate Rob Hansen, our research director, and his team for yet again doing the

background work which brought this bill forward quickly. I know how keen some local governments have been to ensure that the bill was passed as soon as possible so they have some certainty to their operations.

In speaking to this bill, I would like to specifically address the success of the government's consumer price index, or CPI, cap and price monitoring and the matter of the transition of employees affected by the dissolution of Allconnex Water back to councils. The bill provides for the application of the current CPI price cap on distributor-retailer prices for households and small businesses to be imposed on the council water businesses. It also provides for a new retransfer workforce framework, with the main focus being to transition employees from Allconnex back to withdrawn councils, although the existing 2009 framework will continue for the other distributor-retailers.


On 7 April 2011, the government announced that it would provide price relief to residential and small business customers by imposing a two-year price cap on the distribution and retail component of a water and sewage bill. The CPI price cap applies to distribution and retail water and wastewater charges billed by distributor-retailers for residential and small business customers from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2013. The CPI cap has delivered savings of \$38 in the Brisbane City Council area. That means it is the Labor government that has delivered real, actual savings to the people of my electorate. The bill ensures that residential and small business customers in the local government areas of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands will continue to benefit from the CPI price cap. The Queensland Competition Authority currently has a price-monitoring role for the three distributor-retailers—Unitywater, Queensland Urban Utilities and Allconnex Water.

The Queensland Competition Authority published its report—the SEQ draft interim price monitoring report—for 2011-12 on 1 February 2012. The authority in its report noted that the three distributor-retailers have complied with the CPI cap. The council water businesses will be subject to the QCA's price-monitoring role at the end of the CPI cap—that is, from 1 July 2013. From 1 July 2013 the 10 SEQ councils will be responsible and accountable to their community for setting water and wastewater retail prices. Councils must have a price mitigation plan and implement price increases through a price path of at least five years moderating any price increases. The retransfer workforce framework will ensure that there are no forced redundancies as a result of the dissolution of Allconnex Water. It is a very clear guarantee about jobs, and it is only fair that employees have security.

The purpose of the retransfer workforce framework is to establish a supportive and transparent retransfer workforce framework to apply to employees during the reform period. The framework will ensure a set of principles and practices for councils and Allconnex Water to adhere to in the treatment of their employees during the reform period. Specifically, employees will have an avenue for dispute resolution that will be quick, efficient and sensitive to the employees' needs. In vast contrast to those on the opposition benches, you can always rely on Labor to protect the workers in a responsible way.

The price cap to constrain water and wastewater price increases to a consumer price increase per annum for residential households and small business customers currently applying to Allconnex will be applied to council water businesses. The retransfer workforce framework has been developed through a state council, Allconnex and union working group. As many would be aware, the Minister for Energy and Water Utilities endorsed the framework, which provides for three years security upon transfer of Allconnex's employees. This framework will now be approved.

The legislation was prepared following extensive consultation with all relevant government agencies—the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland, the three distributor-retailers, the participating councils and unions. The amendments for consideration in detail were also the subject of detailed consultation with the stakeholders, either by EAREC or the Queensland Water Commission. I thank all of these stakeholders for their hard work and commitment to bringing this bill forward. I also thank the minister for his hard work and commitment to reaching a practical outcome for this bill, and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms CROFT** (Broadwater—ALP) (3.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. This bill will provide for the dissolution of Allconnex Water. Following the passing of the bill, Allconnex Water is to cease providing water and wastewater services from 30 June this year. The provision of water services will then be the responsibility of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redland city councils. Councils are expected to take responsibility for determining and agreeing on the distribution of assets and resources and the allocation of consequential costs of re-establishing council water and wastewater businesses.

It was the Gold Coast City Council that moved to dissolve Allconnex after Ron Clarke, the mayor of the city, sat on the South East Queensland Council of Mayors that was chaired by the former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Campbell Newman. He signed up for the water entities to be established. I think the opposition wants to forget about the letter that has already been tabled in this House by the Treasurer and I think the minister before, but for the sake of it let us have another look at that letter. The opposition

continues to have people think that the state government forced councils to accept the creation of Allconnex. I will read some points from this letter. The letter was addressed to the Treasurer and to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy on 29 May 2009. It states—

In response to your letter ... the Council of Mayors (SEQ) acknowledge your willingness to consider a mutually agreed alternative to the model proposed by the Queensland Water Commission.

All we have heard this afternoon is the opposition bleating about how this government forced councils into the creation of Allconnex, which is simply untrue. The letter indicates that the minister and the Treasurer were very accommodating. It further states—

Councils strongly support water businesses as separate entities, commercial in focus and subject to appropriate asset and economic regulatory frameworks.

The opposition continues to tell the people of the Gold Coast that the state government forced councils into the development of Allconnex. So the Gold Coast City Council was then put under pressure. What did councils do? They made a profit out of the opportunity when they created Allconnex and they signed up for it. The letter is signed by Campbell Newman. They knew back then that the pricing for a transitional period was the responsibility of the businesses, with the Queensland Competition Authority having a pricing oversight role. They signed up for it. Today we are moving on. We are moving to dissolve Allconnex, but what we have heard today is the opposition saying that the state government forced the Gold Coast City Council to develop Allconnex, and that is simply not true.

This bill will impose an obligation on the Gold Coast City Council to compensate Logan City Council and Redland City Council for these consequential costs, and contains principles and the methodology to be followed, but the primary responsibility for implementation lies with the councils. There are also transition provisions to enable the council water businesses to operate effectively from 1 July 2012, and these include the transition of customers' outstanding charges, approvals and applications in progress such as development approvals.

The changes will also force local governments to limit water price increases over the next two years. For the community of the Gold Coast, where Allconnex was proposing a price increase in the next financial year of \$208 for a typical household, the price cap announced will mean the maximum increase to the average household from the council owned entity will be \$83—a reduction of \$125. These changes will ensure the Gold Coast City Council is directly accountable for its ratepayers' water costs. The price cap will be introduced on the council owned portion of the water and wastewater bills for households and small businesses. The council water businesses of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands, like the two distributor-retailers, will be, as I mentioned, subject to price monitoring by the Queensland Competition Authority. This ensures the same level of public scrutiny and assessment of prudence and efficiency of operations for all South-East Queensland water businesses within their council or within a council owned distributor-retailer.

The Gold Coast City Council would not have done this if we had not made the changes to ensure that this was possible. The state government will continue to produce and treat the bulk water that is delivered to water utilities. The Bligh government has always been transparent about the price of bulk water, with the publication of a 10-year price path in May 2008. The state sells bulk water to council at a loss. In fact, the state will be forgoing \$1.7 billion in revenue to minimise the impact of bulk water prices on consumers. In 2011 alone the state sold bulk water to council owned water entities at a loss of \$438 million.

The LNP has not promised the world to voters, but it has made about \$5 billion worth of uncosted promises before the election campaign has even begun. On the issue of water, Campbell Newman, who signed this letter—when he was mayor he signed the letter on behalf of those councils that signed up—up until today has been completely silent on how his members in the House would vote on this bill. I believe they have had the telephone call. They have been told now how to vote on it. We understand that they are going to support it. After their bleating in their speeches today, at the end of the day they are going to support the bill proposed by the state government.

Mr Rickuss: I thought you were opposing it though.

Ms CROFT: I am supporting the bill, but it is important that my constituents understand the history involved in this—that is, we have a man who wants to be the Premier of this state who is not telling my constituents the truth about his involvement in the development of Allconnex. He is not being honest with the people of the Gold Coast. He knew the costs that would be involved. He knew what the costs would be to the Gold Coast City Council. He always knew it. He was prepared for it. He knew the price-costing arrangements. He knew the set-up arrangements. He agreed to it. It is right here in this letter. In 2009 he agreed to it. He said—


Consistent with the development of a mutually agreed model, we would like to develop a mutually agreed implementation plan outlining the responsibilities of the State and the Councils in delivering the new arrangements within the timeframes proposed.

Those opposite want to distance themselves now from their leader's decisions and what he was responsible for as the Lord Mayor of Brisbane in terms of the work that he did in that role in terms of setting up Allconnex and committing the councils to set up those water entities. They want to pretend it

never happened. They want to pretend that this letter does not exist. It does and I am going to let all of my constituents know that the person who proposes to be the leader of this state has been misleading the constituents of my electorate in believing—


Mr Rickuss: So you're going to vote against it?

Ms CROFT: No, I am voting for it because we are responding to the Gold Coast City Council's request. It wanted this legislation. We are introducing it. We are doing what the council has asked us to do. I will ensure that the council keeps its commitment to keeping the water prices low. That is the promise it has made. That is the promise it has made to the ratepayers of the Gold Coast. I will ensure that it keeps that commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (3.44 pm): Today I rise to make a short contribution to the debate concerning the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. While I steadfastly believe that the LNP's water plan is much better, we note that the South East Queensland Council of Mayors has requested the bill be passed to give it greater clarity. On that basis the LNP will not be opposing this bill, but I have some observations to make and some serious concerns to articulate. There is no doubt whatsoever that Labor's failed water reforms have resulted in massive increases in the cost of water for taxpayers and ratepayers. This comes at a time when consumers are also facing huge hikes in electricity and vehicle registration charges, but the Bligh Labor government could not care less about reducing cost-of-living pressures. It is a big-spend, high-debt government. The ill-fated Traveston Dam and the Gold Coast desalination plant are just two brazen examples of Labor's monumental waste and incompetence. That is why the LNP has released a four-point water plan to reduce water prices and hand councils back control of water distribution and retailing.

The decision by the Gold Coast City Council, along with Logan and Redlands, to withdraw from its distributor-retailer, Allconnex, is not surprising, especially given the price hikes with the bulk water prices which are set by this state government. What is surprising is the timing of this bill. It was referred to the committee on 11 October last year and the committee was not required to report back until 5 April this year. However, a parliamentary committee last Friday tabled its report and recommended that the bill be passed—two months before its due date without any debate in this chamber. Have no doubts: this is rushed legislation and it will not fix the root causes of this shambolic situation. In 2006 the councils were systematically stripped of their existing water assets and rights to conduct their water businesses and this was replaced with the current system which has given us a number of retailer and bulk water entities such as Seqwater. This bill today represents a reversal of the government's position and is a tacit admission that it got it wrong in the first place. Councils should be empowered to conduct their own water businesses. The state Labor government says water bills are capped to the consumer price index, but consumers are paying much more than that because Labor controls the bulk water prices.

The LNP's four-point plan for water prices includes one bulk water entity to provide greater efficiencies; hand back control of water distribution and retailing to councils that previously did a far better job of managing water resources than the Bligh government ever did; write-off some of the non-performing water grid assets to reduce sharp price increases; and immediately adopt a 40-year price plan to repay the state government's \$7 billion water grid debt over the economic life of the assets, which will also reduce the price of water. As I said, the LNP will not be opposing this legislation as councils affected such as the Gold Coast require certainty.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.47 pm): I rise to speak on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. From everyone's observation, this Labor government has failed the people of Queensland in monumental proportions with our essential service of water. I go back to my time at the Gold Coast City Council advising the mayor on matters—

Mr Kilburn interjected.

Mr STEVENS: No, I was adviser to the current Gold Coast mayor. At that particular time it was mooted that the government would be taking over water. The clear direction and advice that I gave at that particular time was, 'Don't touch letting them have the bulk water supply.' The council was still to be in charge of the retailer section and actually at that particular point in time was delivering to ratepayers \$80 million from the provision of water. I said, 'Whatever you do, don't let this state government take over the bulk water supply because as a retailer—it is the same old story—'you can only charge your residents what is the bulk water supplied to you plus a mark-up on that.' That is where it all went pear-shaped. The government under Beattie and Bligh as a tandem came in and created this absolute debacle and mismanagement of the state's water supply. The Bligh government caused so much heartache and angst in communities across the state, particularly so on the Gold Coast with the advent of Allconnex. Allconnex was the company that ended up being set up that had a bonus system for its chief executives on the profits it made from the consumers of water—the residents of the Gold Coast. How ridiculous was that!

So the hurt and pain that the community went through—and is still going through—is ridiculous and not necessary, but it is a direct product of Labor failing Queenslanders on water planning and delivery. Monumental mismanagement of the state's water supply has happened over the past 20 years and the community now is experiencing the end product of this long-term mismanagement. This mismanagement is in the form of massive increases in the cost of water over the past few years and is a direct result of virtually no planning for the times when we have a drought. When we did have a drought, the government had a knee-jerk reaction that cost the state—and will cost the state in the future—an absolute fortune.

Fortunately, the objectives of this bill are to allow for the withdrawal of council water businesses from the South-East Queensland distributor and retailer and for the establishment of new water businesses under direct council operation. This move we are supporting, as it puts the supply of water back under the responsibility of that local authority that can deliver it to the ratepayers at the most efficient, cost-effective price that it possibly can. The supply of water is an essential service that Queenslanders are entitled to have, but under the Beattie-Bligh Labor government regime the cost of water for residents has increased at a phenomenal rate. The neglect of the state's water supply is an absolute failure and the people of Queensland should remember that, come 24 March, they have to vote on who can best look after the water supply for the future, who can best deliver a reasonable outcome in terms of the fair, equitable and cost-effective delivery of water. The supply of water is an absolutely essential service from which this government is bleeding the people left, right and centre. It is costing them a fortune. Owing to the decision of the Gold Coast City Council to break away from Allconnex, there is an obligation on the Gold Coast City Council to also pay the Logan City Council and the Redland City Council for the cost of that—

Mr Rickuss: How much will that cost?

Mr STEVENS: That will cost the ratepayers of the Gold Coast City Council millions of dollars over many, many years. This city started with owning its own Hinze Dam, paid for through state government taxes and local council contributions over many years, which is exactly what state governments are supposed to do.

Mr Rickuss: Very reliable.

Mr STEVENS: It provided a very reliable, good water supply. So what happened? The state government said, 'We'll take it over. Here is a lump of money to buy your asset. Now, we will charge the ratepayers of the Gold Coast again to pay off that big lump of money that we are going give the council.' So the ratepayers are paying twice. They are paying through the bulk water price. That is the fact of the matter. That is why this bankrupt government in terms of its absolute financial mismanagement is skimming money from the residents of the Gold Coast City Council.

Mr Dowling: And Redlands and Logan.

Mr STEVENS: And Redlands and Logan. The people in those areas are very lucky that the people of the Gold Coast City Council made the decision that they did so that they get their deamalgamation—if I might say that politely, having been very familiar with amalgamation. The deamalgamation of this ridiculous enterprise will be at the expense of the residents of the Gold Coast City Council, and thank you very much Labor government for allowing that to happen.

The bill will enable the establishment of separate council water businesses for the Gold Coast City Council, the Logan City Council and the Redland City Council. This bill will allow for the transfer of the liabilities, assets and employees from Allconnex to the water businesses of the Gold Coast City Council, Logan City Council and the Redland City Council. I hope that those councils take note that their ratepayers will not accept huge fat bonuses being paid to the executives of these utilities, whether they are private entities such as Allconnex or council controlled entities in the future.

The bill also requires the Gold Coast City Council to support financially the Logan City Council and the Redland City Council to re-establish their water businesses. So people on the Gold Coast should recognise that the Labor government has brought about this catastrophe of financial management of the water assets of the Gold Coast and that what the residents of the Gold Coast City Council pay in their water bills is on its head. There are three Labor members representing areas of the Gold Coast who will have to answer to the residents of the Gold Coast City Council as to why their water bills are so huge. Those residents should take their bills with them to the polling booth on 24 March. The state government's mismanagement of the South-East Queensland water supply has inflicted exorbitant costs on the ratepayers of Queensland, in particular by forcing the Gold Coast City Council to pay the costs of the Gold Coast City Council opting out of the Allconnex arrangements and the costs that the Logan City Council and the Redland City Council will incur.

The Bligh government is responsible for not only the mismanagement of the distribution of our water supply but also for the complete neglect of our water infrastructure. For instance, the South East Queensland Water Grid, which was supposed to give Queenslanders an adequate and reliable water supply at a reasonable cost, features the biggest white elephant that we have seen in assets in

Queensland—the \$1.3 billion waste of taxpayers' money called the desalination plant at Tugun. We would like to say that that can be for sale to anyone who is making an appropriate offer. This cost is on top of the massive increases in the cost of our bulk water supply, which has gone through the roof.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I think all of those Labor members who are retiring should tip in for the cost of the desalination plant at Tugun.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Calm down, please. Thank you, the member for wherever you are has the call.

Mr STEVENS: Mermaid Beach—just near the desalination plant. With this bill, the government has heard the cries of Queenslanders who are fed up with its disgraceful mismanagement of our water supply. The government is trying to fix up the mess, but it can only go into damage control. In the end it is the people of Queensland who will pay for this government's failure to manage our water supply.

I might just say quickly that all of this would not have been necessary if the Labor government in the Goss years had not done away with the Wolffdene Dam. It was the start of the problem, it is the middle of this problem and it will be the finish of the problem—unless it finishes up doing business on 24 March. All of these incompetent measures that the government has taken in relation to this water grid have been the result of failed planning and failed infrastructure—dams et cetera—put in place for the people of Queensland.

Unfortunately, this sad story for the people of the Gold Coast will continue for many years to come, because the bills will not go away. They will have to be paid. But every time they do we will be able to say, 'Proudly brought to you by the Labor Party of Queensland.'

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—LNP) (3.57 pm): That was an excellent speech that was just given by the member for Mermaid Beach. I must congratulate him on highlighting the issues that have come back to haunt us forever. Allconnex is a disaster. The cancellation of the Wolffdene Dam was the start of the disaster. We had the esteemed Hon. Henry Palaszczuk on the parliamentary committee that looked into the building of the Wolffdene Dam. The esteemed Len Ardiil was also on that parliamentary committee that looked into the building of the Wolffdene Dam. They put in the dissenting report against the building of the Wolffdene Dam and that has come back to haunt the government ever since. That report said that we will need water by the year 2000 in South-East Queensland. What happened in the year 2000? We needed water. What did we have? No Wolffdene Dam. Of course, we had this catastrophe of the whole \$9 billion water grid.

Mr Bleijie: The member for Broadwater remains silent.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. We had this whole catastrophe.

Ms Croft interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: I will take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. She remembers when the cost of water was a decent price. She remembers when good, hardworking ratepayers could afford their water.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Could we have a little more quiet while the member for Lockyer is shouting—I mean speaking.

Mr RICKUSS: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for your protection. I definitely needed it.

Mr Watt interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: That is coming from the member for Everton. I will take that interjection. Is that not arrogance! The man who cannot find keys is worried about me losing my seat. Isn't that terrible? I just cannot believe that. You just worry about looking for those keys. That is what you need to look for.

A government member interjected.

Mr RICKUSS: Justin Bowman is probably a bigger danger to you actually. As I was saying, the disasters just continue. The whole water grid is a disaster. It is \$9 billion of wasted money. It made a beautiful whiteboard description for the Premier who had a plan: 'I have a plan. I will save South-East Queensland water. We will get rid of 20 entities and we will have three. We will do this. We will do that.' What an unmitigated disaster it has turned out to be. Fortunately we have the minister, Stephen Robertson, now trying to pull them apart to try to save face. That is really what is going on here. Unfortunately, this will cost ratepayers of the Gold Coast a lot of money. I actually represent an area of Logan. They are good, hardworking people in Logan. I have had more complaints about water and Allconnex from the couple of thousand constituents of mine in Logan whom I represent than I have had from any other area. Unfortunately, they will have to pay the price of re-establishing the whole infrastructure process—the offices, the yards and the vehicles. This just goes on and on. We already

had that infrastructure in the council. It had to go out and be set up again. Now we have to bring it back into the councils again. Unfortunately, this government has created this never-ending empire-building quagmire that now has to be pulled apart. It is a disgrace.

I have heard the member for Broadwater harping on about these issues. The local government is subservient to the standover Labor government. It was virtually, 'Sign the letter or else you are in trouble. This is what we are going to do for you. Do this and it will make it work.' As the member for Mermaid Beach stated, it was the bulk water supply plus a margin. Places like the Gold Coast, that already have the reliable Hinze Dam, have to buy it again from the state government. It continues on. We had Wivenhoe that was running out of water. There were things like Teviot Brook Weir that should have been done after Wolffdene Dam was cancelled. It never happened. We now have Wyaralong Dam with water in it but no pipes to it. The pipes are sitting in a yard at Greenbank. That is probably costing Allconnex money as well.

The extra cost to ratepayers goes on and on. This \$9 billion plan was a failure. I cannot understand how this has continued for so long. Councils already had paymasters and all the infrastructure in place. That was taken off the councils, with offices, yards and vehicles then having to be set up elsewhere. It is disappointing that the ratepayers of the Gold Coast will probably be the ratepayers who have to pay for it. Who is to blame? The Gold Coast members sitting over there. They supported it. It was terrible the way the Gold Coast members for Broadbeach and Southport and the previous member for Gaven supported these disastrous plans. The non-thinking side of the House sat there and said 'Yes, sir', 'No, sir. We will support that,' even at a cost of hundreds of dollars a year to their ratepayers. Now the government is trying to unscramble the egg. It is very hard to unscramble eggs, as I am sure the minister realises.

Mr Robertson: Nothing is impossible from our side of politics.

Mr RICKUSS: You have shown us that. You have made the best mess you could with the water grid and now you are trying to undo the mess. It is just not working that well, is it? There is Traveston, the desalination plant and the recycled water plant. The minister has tried to get recycled water up to the Lockyer Valley for 10 years and has not been able to manage to get the process right. It is disappointing. I understand how it has not worked because I have seen the recycled water project sit there as a dismal failure. It is terrible that it has not worked. Unfortunately, Allconnex has been the same sort of disappointment. Logan City Council will now have to re-establish a whole new water regime. Redlands will have to re-establish a whole new water regime. I honestly do not know how this could have been allowed to go so far. I am sure the members for Broadbeach and Southport will be out there explaining to their constituents that this cost is because they had a plan. The plan was a failure, but they had a plan.

Mr Dowling: They had a dream. It turned into a nightmare.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It has turned into a nightmare. It is unfortunate that this has turned into such a nightmare because the councils were very efficient at running water. They had the processes, staff and the machinery of local government in place to do it. It all has to be remade. I think the member for Redlands is an ex-councillor.

Mr Dowling: And on the water committee.

Mr RICKUSS: I would imagine the Redlands water committee was a very efficient committee.

Mr Dowling: Very efficient.

Mr RICKUSS: Here we are having to set it all up again. I would imagine your experience and advice would be worthwhile to the current Redland shire. As I say, it is disappointing that this is actually going to cost the ratepayers of the Gold Coast a lot of money. It involves a lot of heartache and angst for the two water commissions.

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (4.05 pm): In 2004 when Queensland was entering the worst drought in over a century, local governments had control of planning, building and maintaining water infrastructure. It seems to have been forgotten that at that time the Gold Coast was running short of water and there was no way to supplement our supply from other water storage facilities. In 2006 when the Gold Coast had an abundance of water, Brisbane's supplies were dropping daily and there was no water grid to move water around the region. While local governments had been making revenue from water for years they had failed to reinvest that revenue in infrastructure. Not one major dam or new water storage facility had been constructed by local government in more than 20 years.

It became clear that we needed a plan to secure water for those who live in South-East Queensland. The government's plan was to make sure that the community would never again have to worry about running out of water. This meant building infrastructure, including the Tugun desalination plant, and a network of pipes between Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, that can move water across the region daily. At a cost of \$7 billion this massive investment secures the future of the region and the lifestyle of the citizens. The member for Mermaid Beach referred to a lump of money paid to the Gold Coast City Council. That lump of money was in excess of half a billion dollars. Half a billion


dollars was paid to the Gold Coast City Council. It was enough to retire the council's debt which I would say now is even higher than ever. It is no secret that the Tugun desalination plant is on hot standby. While in 2004 we were dangerously short of water, these past two summers have seen extreme weather events and an inundation of water. There is no doubt that weather patterns can change and when the dry returns the desalination plant and the water grid will prove their worth. We did use the desalination plant during the flood to provide Brisbane with clean water.

The South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill allows council to re-establish a water business within direct council operations. During consultation one of the issues raised was the inclusion of councillors on the board of their distributor-retailer. Councils favour councillor representation as they can bring a high level of local knowledge to the attention of other board members, but it is not a mandatory provision.

Councillors will be subject to the same duties as other independent board members. The minimum number of members of a board will be five and the board must also have at least three independent members. Councillors will not be permitted to be chairperson of the board of their distributor-retailer. This will allow a councillor to bring their council experience and community issues direct to the board. Councils would have more immediate access to and involvement in the distributor-retailer's strategic decision making and a better understanding of its day-to-day operational issues. However, if the participation agreement does not provide otherwise, the default position is that a councillor member can only be appointed and serve on the board for a four-year term.

Gold Coast residents were shocked when they received their water bills from the newly established Allconnex. While 25 per cent of the bill was for bulk water charged by the state government, 75 per cent was charged by Allconnex, a company 62 per cent owned by the Gold Coast City Council. While the state government is responsible for bulk water charges, the Gold Coast City Council is responsible for wastewater, service charges and water use charges and those are itemised on the bills. I urge residents to add up the separate components and see that the return to the Gold Coast City Council is very lucrative.

Following a strong campaign from Gold Coast residents who demanded that Allconnex be disbanded and control of water be returned to the council, we now see this South-East Queensland water bill being introduced. This legislation will formalise the decision to disband Allconnex and allow councils to take back their water businesses. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (4.11 pm): I rise to support the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I am glad to see it passing the House this week. During my first election in 2006, water reform in South-East Queensland was the hot topic. The Beattie government went to the people of South-East Queensland with a plan to provide them with water security. The plan recognised the fact that for years no-one had taken responsibility for the provision of water. It had been left to councils. It had been left to an arrangement that had more than 20 people responsible for the provision of water to South-East Queensland. Frankly, the sharing of responsibility meant no-one had taken responsibility at all.

What the Beattie government did was to honour an election commitment to take responsibility for bulk water and make sure that there was water in the pipes. At that time Queensland was facing its worst drought in a century. Now the opposition has said that we should not have done that. At the time they said we should have done it earlier, but now they are saying that the drought proofing of South-East Queensland worked so well that we should not have done it. Essentially, that is their argument. Today their argument is that we should have known that the drought would break when it did; we should have predicted that the worst drought we had suffered in 100 years would end in time for South-East Queensland to have water. That is simply not plausible and it is not a risk that I, as the local member, am prepared to take. I am not prepared to tell the people whom I represent that I am prepared to put at risk the ability of South-East Queenslanders to have a stable and secure water supply.

The lesson learned from the South-East Queensland water distribution and retail restructuring program is that shared accountability is no accountability at all. The structure that was put in place meant that Logan, the Redlands and the Gold Coast were collectively responsible for Allconnex and that meant that no-one took responsibility. This is an argument that I have had time and time again with representatives of my local council who would blame the state government for water prices but not say that the legislation that is currently in place provided councils with an ability to provide a written instruction to Allconnex, that is, the councils could come together and provide a written instruction to Allconnex on what it needed to do. Nor did they tell people that the profits of Allconnex were returned to council.


In April 2011 we announced that we would provide councils with the opportunity to return to the structure of having individual councils responsible for water, which means that councils will be clearly responsible and accountable for water pricing. There is no more buck-passing and there is no more of this blame game. That is what this legislation is about. To ensure that that transition can occur, we capped the retail price increases to the consumer price index. At the same time, the government is providing bulk water to those water entities below the cost of producing it. Most people in Logan might

be getting a water bill of \$230 or \$240. When you walk people through the charges on their water bill, it shows that about \$200 relates to fixed charges that are attributable predominantly to the council connection and retail supply. The bulk water charges that are directly accountable to the state government make up a very small proportion of that bill. Obviously there are state government water charges that make up part of the bill, particularly the wastewater charges.

We gave councils the choice. The Gold Coast City Council chose to pull out of Allconnex. The Logan City Council chose to stay. Obviously with the major shareholder, the Gold Coast City Council, moving out, the continuation of Allconnex was simply not viable. This legislation ensures that Logan ratepayers are protected from the consequences of the deamalgamation of Allconnex.

The Logan City Council and the Redland City Council have gone to great lengths to have this legislation supported and to have it supported as quickly as possible. That is because the LNP refused to give a commitment that, should it win the 2012 election, it would pass this legislation. That is it. Those councils lobbied their little hearts out, but it got to the point where the LNP stopped returning their phone calls. That is despite the fact that there are four LNP members on the Logan City Council, one of whom is a candidate for the seat of Springwood. Still they could not get a commitment from the LNP that this legislation would be supported should they win government in March. That shows that there is much more to this tale to be told.

Obviously some plans have not been explained to the people of South-East Queensland, and particularly the ratepayers of Logan, to show why a commitment to provide this protection would not be given; why there was no commitment to protect the workers of Allconnex and allow the Logan and Redland councils to provide workers with certainty of employment and conditions; why there was no commitment to the ratepayers of Logan and the ratepayers of Redlands that they would not be required to pick up the bill for the Gold Coast City Council's decision to divorce from Allconnex. There are many more questions for the LNP than there are answers from it. Despite the contributions that many LNP members have made, they will support the bill. I hope that the contributions from the LNP members will answer some of those questions. The people of Logan want to hear the answers to those questions. They want to know why the LNP will not front up and tell us whether it would guarantee the people of Logan and the Redlands that they will not have to pick up the bill for the Gold Coast's decision.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.18 pm): I, too, rise to contribute to the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Being a member of the Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee myself, I was going to start by addressing some of the committee's deliberations on this bill. However, I thought it might be best to start by counteracting some of the claims just made by the member for Waterford with regard to the LNP's position on this. Clearly he has not communicated with the councillors he is referring to because on 10 February the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Jeff Seeney, wrote to councillor Pam Parker, the Mayor of Logan City Council. I will table the letter but it might be worth reading it so that the member for Waterford can be brought up to speed. It states—

Dear Councillor Parker,

Thank you for your letter of 4 January 2012 regarding the LNP's position on the handing back of control of water to Councils, in particular in relation to Allconnex.

The LNP is aware the Gold coast has indicated they wish to leave Allconnex and is to bear the cost of the restructure under Labor's current, but yet to be legislated, de-amalgamation proposal.

The LNP believes Labor's failed SEQ water reforms have resulted in huge increases in the cost of water for ratepayers. For this reason the LNP has publicly released a Four Point Water Plan which clearly states Councils will be handed back control of water distribution and retailing. The LNP, if elected, is committed to sitting down with Councils to sort out the legacy of the Bligh Labor Government's failure and driving down the cost of water in SEQ.

It is yet another example of Labor's wrong priorities and disregard for the needs of Local Governments that the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011* has not yet been debated in State Parliament, despite having been introduced to Parliament around four months ago, thereby leaving your Council in limbo and without certainty. While the LNP recognises this Bill would not address the root causes of the Bligh Labor made water shambles, we would welcome this being debated in the coming Parliamentary sitting week. While the LNP plan is better, I note the SEQ Council of Mayors has requested this Bill be brought before the House. Should that occur, the LNP will support it to give certainty to the Councils affected.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 10 February 2012, from Mr Jeff Seeney MP, Leader of the Opposition, to Councillor Pam Parker, Mayor, Logan City Council, regarding the handing back of water to councils, in particular Allconnex [\[6443\]](#).

Mr Moorhead: You might want to give a commitment to the full election commitment.

Mr Wendt: Tell us about the four pillars.

Mr POWELL: We will get to the four pillars soon enough. As I said, I was intending addressing some of the committee's deliberations during this debate, but I will get to the four pillars.

This bill covers a number of issues. Firstly, it enables the withdrawal of a council water business, being Allconnex, from the South-East Queensland distributor-retailer and re-establishment of the water business within direct council operations. It also applies certain requirements of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 to these specific council water businesses, applies additional requirements to the continuing SEQ distributor-retailers to provide

greater clarity for councils' pricing and decision-making role with respect to their distributor-retailers, provides that the Queensland Competition Authority, or the QCA, will have a price monitoring oversight role of the new council water businesses and makes other minor consequential changes.

As a member of the committee, I think it is fair to state that when we held our public briefing on 16 November 2011 it was probably one of the best public briefings we have received to date from any department or statutory authority. In this case, the QWC, the Queensland Water Commission, came very well prepared. It came with documentation and a presentation that was very clear in describing the intent of the bill and how it achieves that intent. It also clarified a lot of questions that we were going to raise before we were able to raise them. I am happy to give commendation where it is due, and certainly the QWC officers who participated in that public briefing in November are worthy of that commendation.

There were four written submissions and subsequently an addendum. We received submissions from Allconnex and the three owner councils—Logan City Council, Gold Coast City Council and Redland City Council—and we subsequently received an addendum from Redland City Council. At the briefing QWC gave some of the background to this bill and talked, as others have in this chamber today, of the South-East Queensland water sector reforms approved by the Queensland government in August 2007. As reiterated by the member for Waterford, the 2006 election was fought on many of these reforms. As many other members from this side of the House have said, the reality that we needed these reforms and that they were needed in such a rushed fashion is testament to the inability of this Bligh Labor government to plan for the future, to plan for uncertainty. They are happy to pass the buck and put it back on councils and say that it was councils' fault that they did not plan when the reality of approval for things like dams sat squarely with the state government.

As others have said, the Wolffdene Dam decision was possibly one of the key contributors that put us in the dire situation we faced in 2006-07. We then saw a knee-jerk reaction in the scale of the water reforms and the subsequent failure of some of those water reforms. Certainly in my patch the ongoing one is clearly Traveston Dam and the impact that has had on the community itself—the Traveston community and neighbouring towns and rural areas—but also on the greater Sunshine Coast. It is still being felt in the upper Mary Valley in the area that I represent as the member for Glass House.

We have the classic situation where to the north of Brisbane we have pipes without dams because, despite Traveston being ruled out, this government has pressed ahead with putting in the northern pipeline interconnector stage 2—and there is even talk of going beyond that—at a cost of \$400 million, \$10 million per kilometre, connecting Landers Shute in the north of the electorate of Glass House through to Lake Macdonald up near Cooroy. To the south of Brisbane we now have a dam—Wyaralong—without any pipes whatsoever or a treatment plant. We have seen that even now this government is unable to deliver what they have said they will. They have been very quick at every opportunity to blame the council. What we are seeing here again is a half-baked attempt at fixing a problem that it has created.

Some of those reforms that the QWC talked about during the briefing included the stage 1 reforms that saw the establishment of three statutory authorities to own the bulk supply, bulk transport and manufactured water infrastructure and services in South-East Queensland. We also saw the establishment of the SEQ Water Grid Manager as the purchaser of bulk water services, the vendor of bulk water in South-East Queensland and the operator of the SEQ water grid. In stage 2 of the water reforms we subsequently saw the establishment of four local government owned entities to take over the functions of water distribution, wastewater treatment and the sale of water retail services from existing SEQ local governments—subsequently that was reduced to three—and the creation of a regulatory framework for the provision of distribution and retail services in the SEQ urban water sector.

It is interesting to note at this point that members opposite are quick to point out that ratepayers are now seeing on their water bill a differentiation between the bulk water price and the costs imposed by the local government through the distributor-retailer. A lot of those costs have increased and the primary reason for that is that the Queensland government has washed its hands completely of any co-contribution to wastewater treatment in many of these councils. By taking the assets off council and removing any assistance in the improvement of those assets it is no wonder that councils are struggling to address those increasing costs, particularly when the government is also setting the standard by which those wastewater treatment systems are to be measured.

Under the DR act 2009 the subsequent amendments gave effect to stage 2 and established the distributor-retailers from 1 July 2010 as well as the transfer schemes by which the water and wastewater functions, assets, employees, instruments and liabilities could be transferred to the distributor-retailers. The transfer schemes were approved by the minister and the DR act 2009 gave the council owners of each of the distributor-retailers participation rights similar to shareholder rights with the respective distributor-retailers. Participation agreements have been entered into by councils with their distributor-retailers. The trading names of the distributor-retailers and the council owners became Unitywater, Queensland Urban Utilities and Allconnex.

It was in April last year that further water reforms were announced. These included capping the price of water and wastewater services by the three SEQ distributor-retailers to CPI for residential and small business customers from 1 July that year through to 30 June 2013 and that SEQ councils would be afforded a once only opportunity to withdraw from the distributor-retailer. As others have mentioned, one council chose to exercise that option, and that was the Gold Coast City Council. Subsequent to that, it then put the other two participants in the Allconnex distributor-retailer at a disadvantage and they have also now agreed to take back their operations. This is not a fantastic outcome. This is, as others have said, an attempt to unscramble a scrambled egg.

A couple of the issues raised by the submitters need consideration during this debate. They are well covered again by the EAREC examination of the bill and the subsequent report No. 8. While I am discussing that, I would like to acknowledge the staff of the EAREC secretariat for the ongoing work that they do in assisting the committee in preparing these reports.

By far and away the most significant concern raised by all of those who provided written submissions was around the timing of the consideration of this bill. The committee was initially given a deadline, and still had a deadline, of 5 April this year. Everyone knew that there was likely to be an election before then, so it really created a level of uncertainty for the councils involved as to what their future would entail. The council submissions noted concerns about the considerable cost and impact upon employees of any delay in the consideration of this bill. We are also aware, as mentioned in the letter I read out from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Seeney, the member for Callide, that the SEQ Council of Mayors have asked that this bill be brought forward.

The QWC agreed that the committee's reporting date 'makes the approval or passing of the bill challenging' and that would have flow-on effects to the councils involved. So the committee resolved to table this report far earlier. It was done so yesterday and, through the motion that was moved this morning, we are able to debate this bill today. As mentioned again in that letter I read out from the Leader of the Opposition to the mayor of the Logan City Council, the LNP is supportive of bringing this bill forward and is supportive of this bill passing today so that it gives certainty to those councils as they move forward in their deliberations around delivering water and wastewater services to their ratepayers.

The majority of other comments made by the committee were about seeking assurances from the minister on a range of issues. They arose from concerns raised by most of the players involved, particularly most of the councils. The committee sought assurance from the minister that retransfer schemes may be amended to provide for necessary changes to assets, liabilities and employees between April 2012 and 1 July 2012. We sought assurance from the minister that the minister's ability to override the default provision in proposed section 92BI ensures that the parties are not unduly disadvantaged in the retransfer of assets and liabilities.


We sought assurance from the minister that the default provisions apply to unpaid water charges where there is no agreement between the parties as to how the unpaid charges are to be proportioned. We sought assurance from the minister that a definition of withdrawal costs for the purposes of a regulation will be developed in consultation with the parties and with assistance from QWC. We sought assurance from the minister that the QCA requirements will not impose unacceptable financial burdens on water prices and ratepayers.

We sought assurance from the minister that the bill will be amended to provide for the retrospective application of section 92BS and section 92CM. We sought assurance from the minister that the bill will be amended to provide Allconnex Water with adequate protection for actions taken or decisions made in connection with the proposed retransfer prior to the bill taking effect.

I am aware that the QWC responded to each of those issues that were raised by the committee and also that the minister has subsequently responded through the tabled document that he presented at the start of this second reading debate. They are largely technical issues. I note that, whether it be through QWC or the minister, most of those issues have been addressed, and I trust the councils find that information useful. Again, as a member of the committee, I thank the councils for raising those issues with the committee and allowing us to represent them in the report today.

The member for Ipswich West asked, 'What was that four-point plan?' I think it is worth concluding on that point. As I said on a couple of occasions, this really is a case of trying to unscramble a scrambled egg and potentially making a far bigger mess of a situation that was already quite messy. Very early on in the piece when Campbell Newman became the Leader of the LNP he put forward this four-point water plan—that is, to amalgamate the four bulk water entities into one entity to reduce the cost of supplying water; to hand back control of water distribution and retailing to councils, who previously did a far better job of managing water resources than the Bligh government; to write off non-performing water grid assets to reduce sharp price rises; and to adopt a 40-year price path to repay the Bligh government's \$7 billion water grid debt over the economic life of the assets, which will also reduce the cost of the water.

Had the government adopted that position from day 1 we would not have this opt in, opt out situation that we are dealing with today—a situation that is creating further uncertainty for the councils and creating further uncertainty for the ratepayers. There are questions over how or if this will produce cheaper water. What we can guarantee on this side of the House is that the LNP four-point water plan will deliver cheaper water for each and every ratepayer in South-East Queensland.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.34 pm): I rise to speak on the South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. This is a bill of divorce for a forced marriage no-one really wanted when you consider that there was no proper consultation with councils or consideration of their original concerns. Those concerns continued with a state government that misled people about councils' ability to influence the outcome in respect of the retail entities and the pricing that their constituents were facing. So we have seen a situation recently where the Gold Coast have sought to withdraw from their retail arrangement and the flow-on impacts that that has for those who remain.

But at the heart of this issue is the serial bungling by a Labor government, which is unable to plan and unable to deliver in a cost-effective way, that has created this mess in Queensland that has resulted in outrageously high water bills. It is directly related to the incompetence of this Labor government and this Labor Premier, who as Treasurer and infrastructure minister presided over some of the worst decisions in relation to implementing water infrastructure in this state. That flowed through into high bulk water costs and ultimately what we have seen with this government's approach to the retail of water.

The water grid is one of the greatest legacies of debt that this government could lumber Queensland with. The majority of that \$7 billion in infrastructure never had a business case—never had a business case. The government had the opportunity to do its figures. It did not bother because it thought it could palm off the costs on ordinary Queenslanders, and ordinary Queenslanders today are paying the price. They are paying through the nose with high water bills because of what this government did. We see the rusty desal plant on the Gold Coast. We see the recycled water pipeline which cost more than \$900 million than anticipated. We see a dam with no pipeline and a pipeline with no real dam at the other end. What it all adds up to is one thing: this government will not take responsibility for decisions which are directly impacting upon my constituents and upon all other constituents in South-East Queensland with high water costs when they are already hurting with the other high cost-of-living impacts caused by this government's mismanagement. The bulk water prices in Queensland are a direct result of the incompetence of Labor and this Labor Premier.

The legislation that we see before us is an attempt to create certainty in the wake of the mess of the retail situation because this Labor government simply did not listen to the local councils and to their constituents. The policy objectives that are stated in the explanatory notes are to enable the withdrawal of a council water business from its South-East Queensland distributor-retailer and re-establishment of the water business within direct council operations; to apply certain requirements of the South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 to these specific council water businesses; to apply additional requirements to the continuing SEQ distributor-retailers to provide greater clarity for councils' pricing and decision-making role with respect to their distributor-retailers; to provide that the Queensland Competition Authority will have a price monitoring/oversight role of the new council water businesses; and to make other minor consequential amendments.

As we have noted, this legislation establishes council specific water businesses for Gold Coast City Council, Logan City Council and Redland City Council; enables the transfer of the assets, liabilities and employees from Allconnex to these council water businesses by 1 July 2012; requires Gold Coast City Council to pay the consequential costs of Logan and Redland city councils to re-establish their water businesses, including portions of Allconnex costs; approves a workforce framework to transfer employees from Allconnex to councils; as well as ensures some council representation on the boards of their distributor-retailers.


There are still other legacy issues which will not be addressed by this legislation. As we have alluded to, if this government had listened to us in respect of the LNP plan, that would have gone a long way towards addressing the concerns of Queenslanders. We have a plan that is about reducing the cost impact Queenslanders are currently facing. We cannot undo the mess of failed infrastructure that this government has foisted on people, but our plan does address the fact that there are costs that cannot be borne by people in full through their water bills.

Our water plan is to amalgamate the four bulk water entities into one entity to reduce the cost of supplying water; to hand back control of water distribution and retailing to councils, who previously did a far better job of managing water resources than the Bligh Labor government—there is no debate about that amongst people who understand the water industry; to write off non-performing water grid assets to reduce sharp price rises; and to adopt a 40-year price path to repay the Bligh Labor government's \$7 billion water grid debt over the economic life of the assets which will also reduce the cost of water.

There are legacy issues from some of the other mistakes arising out of this government's poor planning, such as the potential for a desal plant at Marcoola that they originally had located smack-bang in the middle of the east-west runway which formed part of the airport upgrade. This government cannot

do anything right. Their planning is so bad that they could not even work out that the desal plant was to be smack-bang in the middle of the proposed new runway! So they shuffled it off a little bit to the side and tried to massage around the edges and say that they had done the planning, but we know that it actually does not meet the criteria. It is another example of the poor way in which this government carries out its business.

It is time for a change in Queensland that will see a cut to people's cost of living. It is time to get rid of those who made the decisions that have caused so much pain for ordinary Queenslanders. It is time for people to take their water bills to the ballot box—to never forget the legacy of debt, high cost of living and failed infrastructure delivery. Some of these projects will go down in Queensland's history as the best examples of how not to deliver infrastructure. It is a shame, as this great state used to be able to deliver infrastructure cost-effectively. But now this state government is hell-bent on saying that it wasn't them and trying to handball the blame to somebody else. But poor old ordinary Queenslanders—mums and dads—are being hit in the hip-pocket every time they pay their water bills. I endorse the plan we have put forward. We concede that this bill is not ideal but is about certainty for those who have been left with the shambolic mess that this government seems continually able to roll out.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.42 pm): I rise to contribute to debate on the South-East Queensland water restructuring bill. What a waste we have seen in so many ways—the establishment of the retail entities and the building of assets that have now been mothballed. One could argue that some of the assets should have been planned for and built, but not at any cost. The blow-out in cost for these assets is beyond belief and smacks of a government that has no concept of value for money. Concepts around money escape this government and have been escaping this government for a long time. As an example, earlier today in this House the member for Burleigh said that the return to the Gold Coast City Council is very lucrative. What the member for Burleigh does not understand and what this government does not understand is that it is a zero sum game for a council. The council does not make a profit. It is not a company. It does not go around making a quid and then distributing that dollar to its shareholders. It is an entity that is there to provide services to the community. If it did not make a profit that it could then invest into that community, the community would have to pay higher rates in order to provide the revenue required to invest in it.

So what has it meant for Queenslanders that this government has missed the point on the concepts of value for money and managing money? Firstly, Queenslanders will be paying off a debt for a very, very long time. We are talking about blow-outs in the order of \$2 billion to \$3 billion on the water grid, on the desal plant, on a Traveston Dam that will never be built—on all of those things. We are talking about billions of dollars—not millions. We are talking about thousands of millions of dollars.

Mr Hoolihan: Oh, really?

Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection. They are starting to get the point. We are talking about real money here. I remember a minister not too long ago pointing out to a media outlet that a loss of \$36 million was not in fact a loss because it was government money. They miss the point completely. It is not government money; it is money that belongs to Queenslanders. And it is a loss: it is a \$36 million loss. But the Labor government just seems to struggle with those sorts of concepts.

On top of the debt that will be paid off over an extended period of time, we have seen massive increases in the cost of water. On top of that, we have seen fuel cost increases and electricity price increases. And this comes on top of so many other increases—not just the types of increases that are foisted on people by government but also normal, day-to-day costs of living. That is just exacerbated by the nonsensical way in which this Labor government looks at managing finances and just throws money at things.

Ludicrous costs are being passed on to property owners under Allconnex. I will give an example. It was brought to my attention that people in my electorate who have invested some of their hard-earned money into such things as ship berths are now receiving a bill of \$90 for a half-year for the sharing of one tap on a wharf. These people rent out the berth or own a boat and moor their boat at their berth. They probably will not even use that tap for anything other than washing down their boat. But under this new legislation, those individuals receive a bill of \$90 for a half-year—\$180 a year—just to have access to a tap which they will share with those in the berth beside them.

What did Allconnex provide as a service for this fee? They provided one pipeline into this particular complex. Everything else was laid by and is maintained by the body corporate within the complex. There is no justification for this fee. There should have been one bill for \$90 for that facility to accept that water because, at the end of the day, the facility does pay for the water that it uses so Allconnex is getting its money back. So these particular investors are providing a combined \$40,000 a year profit to Allconnex that is dragged out of them. They are still paying their \$90 a half-year at their home, at their business premises and so on, but they are collectively paying \$40,000 a year for the benefit of having one pipe coming into the complex. That is the kind of thing that this concept that was foisted on councils brought about for people.

This government has caused so much heartache for people, and it simply does not care. This is about the way Labor manages its finances. That is what it has been all about. That is why this bunfight has gone on. A number of people have had to put so much effort into convincing this government that this is just another Labor folly because Labor seems to have this idea that it knows everything there is to know and that it does it the right way, but it ends up overspending every which way. Just a moment ago I heard the member for Maroochydore say it in a far more succinct way than I, but I have to say that it is time for a change. It is time for Queensland to get back on track. We are looking forward to the end of this. We are looking forward to a campaign and we are looking forward to bringing Queensland back into the black over time using sensible financial concepts.

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (4.50 pm): In participating in the debate on the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I want to address the success of the government's consumer price index cap and price monitoring and its continuation for the new council operated water businesses being established. This bill provides for the application of the current CPI price cap on distributor-retail prices for households and small businesses to be imposed on the council water businesses. On 7 April 2011 the government announced it would provide price relief to residential and small business customers by imposing a two-year price cap on the distribution and retail component of a water and sewerage bill. The CPI price cap applies to distribution and retail water and wastewater charges billed by distributor-retailers for residential and small business customers from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2013.

The bill ensures that residential and small business customers in the local government areas of the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands will continue to benefit from the CPI price cap. The CPI cap provides price relief by limiting distribution and retail water and wastewater price increases until the end of June 2013. The Queensland Competition Authority currently has a price-monitoring role for the three distributor-retailers—Unitywater, Queensland Urban Utilities and Allconnex Water. The QCA published its report, the *SEQ draft interim price monitoring report for 2011-12*, on 1 February of this year. The QCA in its report noted that the three distributor-retailers have complied with the CPI cap. The council water businesses will be subject to the QCA's price-monitoring role at the end of the CPI cap—that is, from 1 July 2013. From 1 July 2013 the 10 SEQ councils will be responsible and accountable to their community for setting water and wastewater retail prices. Councils must have a price mitigation plan and implement price increases through a price path of at least five years, moderating any increases.

There has been some mention by people on our side but certainly not on the other side of the letter that was sent on behalf of the council of mayors on 29 May 2009 and which was signed by Campbell Newman, the leader of the LNP. It is interesting that Mr Newman has sent that letter and now everyone on the LNP side wants to run away from it. Australia's No. 1 state needs strong and transparent leadership. Campbell Newman offers neither. Late last year he told Queenslanders that his pecuniary interests had not been changed from the time he was Lord Mayor. That was not the truth. After 32 days of public scrutiny, he was forced to declare eight additional properties, interests in five other companies and income from a consultancy, Ultrex. He claimed he would not be earning a cent as the LNP candidate for Ashgrove. That was wrong. We now know that he gets \$13,200 a month.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. Has this got anything to do with the bill whatsoever?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): I do apologise. I was distracted there for a moment.

Mr LAWLOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, it goes to the bill in the sense—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry. The member has the call.

Mr LAWLOR: It goes to the bill in the sense that I am getting back to this letter that they are all trying to run away from right now in terms of giving other examples of a lack of transparency on behalf of their leader, Mr Newman, the LNP leader. The LNP paid Mr Newman a consultancy fee through Ultrex. There are only two directors—that is, Mr Newman and his wife. The man who wants to be Premier owns and runs his own consultancy. Queenslanders do not know—

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order again, Mr Deputy Speaker. I just want to know what this has to do with the bill. If you could clarify that please.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, order! I thought the member did make a reference to the bill before the House, so I am happy to hear him further and just urge him to be relevant to the bill.

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Queenslanders do not know who else he might be working for. That raises serious questions—as this letter does in relation to this bill—which must be answered by Mr Newman. The Australian tax office has legal requirements regarding the declaration of income. The threshold question for anyone who runs a consultancy like Mr Newman is: does more than 80 per cent of the income come from one client?

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Southport, resume your seat.

Mr DICKSON: I am just looking for the relevance in this discussion that the member is having.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There has been a debate that has ensued tonight that has spoken about decisions that have been made with regard to the water grid. The member is referring to a letter by former councillor Newman regarding his position on this water bill. I would think that that would be relevant to the bill before the House and certainly relevant to the debate given some of the political statements that have been made by the member for Maroochydore and the member for Coomera. The member has the call.

Mr DICKSON: I concur, Mr Deputy Speaker, but it is outside the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no debate. That is the decision. The member for Southport has the call.

Mr LAWLOR: So Mr Newman is an employee of the LNP, so for taxation purposes he is a PAYE employee and he should be paying 37 per cent in tax and also the flood levy. But the LNP is not paying Mr Newman as an employee and the LNP's own ECQ return reveals that it is paying Ultrex Consulting. So he has a few questions to answer here, just as he has with this letter that he sent on 29 May 2009. The questions in relation to his—

Mr Dickson: Can you table it?

Mr LAWLOR: I am happy to table it. It has already been tabled, but when I am finished with it I am happy to table it. So does Mr Newman receive income from multiple clients through Ultrex? If so, who are they? Or is he in breach of the tax act? Queenslanders are entitled to know. And does he pay the flood levy?

Getting back to the letter—which has been tabled before, but I am happy to table this copy of it—amongst other things he says in the opening paragraph directed to the Treasurer at the time—

The Council of Mayors (SEQ) acknowledge your willingness to consider a mutually agreed alternative to the model proposed by the Queensland Water Commission.

It goes on—

Councils strongly support water businesses as separate legal entities, commercial in focus, and subject to appropriate asset and economic regulatory frameworks. We also support the development of a more rigorous service standard and customer protection framework to accompany the shift in accountabilities from councils to the new entities.

Entirely supportive of the model that was put up at the time. It goes on on page 2—

The model has been endorsed by nine of the ten Mayors representing 95% of residents in South East Queensland.

That is signed by Campbell Newman, then chairman of the SEQ Council of Mayors and of course at the time the Lord Mayor of Brisbane city. I am happy to table that. It was tabled, as I understand it, on 15 September 2010, but I am happy to table it again.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 29 May 2009, from Mr Campbell Newman, Chairman, Council of South East Queensland Mayors, to Hon. Andrew Fraser MP, Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Economic Development, and Hon. Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade, regarding alternative model for water businesses [\[6444\]](#).

On other issues, there have been various media and council comments on the state bulk water price. It is important that bulk water prices are put in the proper context. Bulk water charges account for around 28 per cent of the average residential water and sewerage bill. The Queensland government has already played its part in keeping bulk water prices low and water security high by ensuring that residents are no longer reliant on a single source of supply such as a local dam and uncertainty of rainfall and establishing a bulk water price path to gradually increase bulk water prices over a 10-year period; by forgoing a commercial return on its investment and drought proofing South-East Queensland; and by accepting a \$438 million financial loss for water supplied to the council owned water businesses for the 2010-11 financial year, effectively a subsidy of \$375.18 per residential and non-residential property.

It also provides a South-East Queensland pensioner with a water subsidy which, for 2011-12, has increased to \$120. Bulk water prices support the South-East Queensland water grid, which connects South-East Queensland key water sources, including climate-resilient supplies such as desalination and purified recycled water, and provides long-term water security for South-East Queensland residents. Additional water supply infrastructure will not be needed until around 2027, provided residential consumption stays below the voluntary 200 litres per person per day over the long term.

I understand that the leader of the parliamentary opposition, Mr Seeney, has in the last week or so sent letters to both the Logan and Redland councils assuring them that, if this bill was debated in the final week of the term of this government, the LNP would be supporting it. Similar noises have been made by other members here today. In fact, members such as the member for Glass House said that the bill provides certainty. What sort of certainty do those councils really have? How much reliance can we place on those comments when we see comments from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and

one of the alternative premiers? I suppose Mr Seeney is one alternative Premier and another may be Mr Nicholls. Certainly, on 7 December 2011 in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Tim Nicholls, said that if they win—

... we will be moving to implement our four-point water plan.

He said—

It will mean Allconnex will still exist.

I repeat: 'will still exist'.

Mr Ryan: On what date did he say that?

Mr LAWLOR: That was on 7 December—a matter of eight weeks ago. Mr Nicholls went on to state—

Under the LNP's four-point plan there would be one bulk water entity in the southeast but the control of water retailing would be handed back to councils, non-performing assets would be written off and a 40-year debt repayment plan would be adopted.

Even the Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council, Councillor Clarke, said in relation to the comments by Mr Nicholls—

I think they are purposely not giving us a clear definition of what they are intending to do because they are not sure themselves.

So much for the certainty that is being promised by members of the opposition. There are certainly plenty of rumours going around about what will happen after the next election in the unlikely event that the opposition takes over the treasury bench. What will it do? Does the fact that Allconnex will still exist mean that the Gold Coast City Council will still be free to get out of Allconnex? Does it mean that the Logan and Redland city councils will be compensated? What exactly does it mean?

Again, on 9 February of this year—a matter of only a week or two ago—Mr Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, is quoted as saying that the 'legislation would be scrapped and reworked if the LNP won government'. How does that provide any certainty for any employees of the Gold Coast, Redland or Logan city councils? Where is the certainty there when you are giving an undertaking to scrap and rework this legislation?

So what is the opposition's position on this issue? Do we believe the Leader of the Opposition in this parliament, Mr Seeney? Do we believe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Clayfield? What is the position anyway of the third alternative Premier, Mr Newman? What is his position on this issue, given this letter that he wrote some years ago? Considering he put up and supported the model, what is his position? We have not heard from him. Is he waiting in order to try to avoid scrutiny from the media? Is he running around North Queensland at the moment trying to avoid the scrutiny when all the journalists are down here? Really, ratepayers of the Gold Coast, the Redland and the Logan city councils are entitled to know what the position is. Is it the position of Mr Seeney? Is it the position of Tim Nicholls where he said that the legislation would be scrapped and reworked if the LNP won government? Or is there a third option—the option of Mr Newman?

Mr Dickson interjected.


Mr LAWLOR: Have you a fourth option?

Mr Dickson interjected.

Mr LAWLOR: You are trying to pass yourself off as the alternative government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr O'Brien): Order! The member for Southport will refer his comments through the chair.

Mr LAWLOR: The member for Buderim is trying to pass that side of the House off as the alternative government, yet on this important legislation—legislation that has such a critical effect on the ratepayers, the constituents of the Gold Coast, Redland and Logan city councils—they have as far as we know three positions. In fact, from what the member for Buderim is saying, maybe it is even a fourth position. So which one is it? Make a choice.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (5.05 pm): I rise to speak in support of the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I will limit my contribution to matters that are particularly important to the Redlands community and my electorate of Cleveland within that broader community. So I intend to make only a short contribution. I also acknowledge my fellow colleague in the Redlands, Peter Dowling, the member for Redlands and commend him for his contribution in representing the people of the Redlands. I certainly also commend to those from the Redlands his speech to read.

The return of the distribution and retail aspects of water to the councils is something that I and the member for Redlands have called for for some time. We are on the public record here in the parliament and also in our area calling for that to take place. In regard to some aspects of this bill I am glad to say that at least community pressure and the LNP opposition have finally made some impact on the government to the point at which it has put forward a plan that begins to provide some good direction for water policy for the future. Finally, some common sense is coming through.

Returning water management to councils was one of the four key points that Campbell Newman presented some time ago in his four-point water plan for South-East Queensland. Although I know others have mentioned that four-point plan, without being repetitive I will summarise them briefly. Point 1 is the amalgamation of the water entities. That amalgamation will certainly be of practical benefit. Point 2 is handing back water retail and distribution to the councils. Again, that is an important point in this bill for the people of Redlands. Point 3 is writing off non-performing water assets. Point 4 is adopting a longer term, or 40-year price path. That in itself will turn out to be significant. All of those points together will ultimately produce cheaper water and place downward pressure on water prices. I commend to the House and to the Redland community that four-point plan and note that, in that regard, this bill attempts to follow the lead of Campbell Newman.

This bill begins to fix Labor's water mess. Issues such as the expensive water grid have cost the people of South-East Queensland in the form of the price they are paying for their water. Issues such as the Traveston Dam and the Tugun desalination plant have added to the price that Redlanders and the good people of Cleveland are paying for water.

To understand the importance locally of water to the Redlands community and the electorate of Cleveland, which includes North Stradbroke Island, and runs from Wellington Point down to Thornlands, Redlands has always had cheap water. While water was managed by the local council, the price of the water has always been cheap. In that regard Redlanders feel firstly a little bit spoilt that we have always had that but terribly ripped off that under management of this Labor government over the last several years the price of water has skyrocketed. That was something that Redlanders made very clear at the last election. It was something they were very angry at and that anger was aimed at this government. That anger is still simmering today in the Redlands. It is my hope that the people of Cleveland and the Redlands will again let it be known to this government their anger and disappointment over the mismanagement of South-East Queensland's water, particularly that of the Redlands. They will no doubt, as educated and aware as they are, know that this measure today is as a result of the lobbying of not only the community but also the opposition to bring it back to the way that it should have been.

We have always had cheap water in the Redlands. We have planned and managed that asset very well. A series of local councils, of mayors and councillors over a long period of time, have planned for the water needs of the Redlands and managed the asset very well to keep the price cheap. They planned dams like the Leslie Harrison Dam, they also planned around the use of water from the North Stradbroke Island aquifer. All of that has been done in a self-sustainable way. Redlanders are very proud of what they have achieved with their water management over a long period of time. They have been completely disgusted over the last several years in the way that this government has mishandled water which has resulted in a jacking up of the prices they are paying.


As someone who has been in the Redlands now for 10 years as of March, I can remember those low water bills. I can remember what it was like to pay a very small price for water, then in more recent years to see how expensive my water bill has become. When we consider the infrastructure planning in the Redlands by the council, it was second to none anywhere else in the state, I would suggest—with a little bit of local bias. It was great water infrastructure planning, a great example to this failed state government of planning and delivery and doing it at a modest price. This government could learn a lot from past Redland councils about how to handle and manage water. It is a pity that it took the management off them. It has now caused it to be handed back at a much higher price.

I support the sections in this legislation that start to get water back on the right track for the Redlands. Redlands residents have welcomed already the news that the LNP is supporting this bill in these aspects. Council is looking forward to being once again able to control its own destiny. Councillors are looking forward to controlling the destiny of some aspects of their water once again and hopefully being able to bring downward pressure on the price of water. Should the LNP form government, our policies will help to drive down the price. One of the points in Campbell Newman's four-point plan that I have already outlined is being adopted in this legislation today. Government members do not like to acknowledge that again they are following the leader. They have nothing left to offer except slander and sleaze. It is my hope that at the next election the people of Queensland tell this government loud and clear about its failure.

We see in the Redlands that water has been cheap. We see that it was well planned, well managed and self-sustaining until this government interfered. It has interfered and made muck up upon muck up that the people of the Redlands are paying for. It is an absolute disgrace. People today are paying for Labor's failure to plan and deliver all over this state. At the last election the people of Cleveland let them know and I encourage them to let them know again.

This long-term Labor government's policies on water have driven up costs. People are now paying the high price of water. It also has driven up the cost of electricity and car and boat registration. Boat registration has gone up 100 per cent in four years in some categories. Anything under the management of this government blows out of control in terms of the pricing. We see it in the price of petrol. Labor's policies are expensive.

In conclusion, should the LNP form government it will deliver cheaper water prices for all of the Redlands. I ask the people of Cleveland to let this government know what they think at the next election.


 **Hon. MM KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise to support the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill formalises the withdrawal of council water businesses from Allconnex Water and the re-establishment of water businesses within direct council operations for the Gold Coast, Logan and Redlands city councils. We have heard a lot of mistruths and spin from the LNP opposite during this debate so I welcome the opportunity to put some facts back into the debate.

After much consultation, our government last year gave councils the choice to get out of Allconnex Water. We also made it absolutely clear from the outset that any council that withdrew would have to pay the costs of disestablishing Allconnex and any consequential costs on the other councils. The initial position of Logan and Redlands was to stay in Allconnex. As Gold Coast council was a 62 per cent shareholder of Allconnex, when it decided to withdraw from Allconnex it meant Logan and Redland councils were left with little choice since Allconnex was now a much smaller water business. The state then allowed Logan and Redland councils to review their positions. The government, in a letter dated 5 August 2011, advised Redland City Council and Logan City Council that should they come to the view that continuing with Allconnex, even a streamlined Allconnex, was not a viable commercial alternative, that the Gold Coast City Council should bear the direct and consequential costs incurred by both councils as a result of Gold Coast council's commercial decision to withdraw from Allconnex.

Subsequently, in full knowledge of this, Gold Coast council resolved to withdraw from Allconnex on a vote 7 for and 7 against, with the mayor, Ron Clarke, using his casting vote. With this decision the ratepayers of Gold Coast City Council have now been left with a \$100 million-plus bill. Gold Coast council confirmed its decision again on 6 September 2011 in full knowledge that their ratepayers are responsible for the costs of disestablishment and consequential costs of re-establishing council water businesses. Following the decision of council, the ratepayers of the Gold Coast are now saddled with a \$100 million plus bill. My constituents are telling me that they know there is only one place for that money to come from and that is from increased rates. The next mayor of Gold Coast council will certainly have very tough financial decisions to make.

In contributing to the bill, another issue that I would like to address is the matter of the transition of employees affected by the dissolution of Allconnex Water back to councils. The innocent parties I believe in the whole dissolution of Allconnex are the employees. Therefore, a critical component of the transition is the making of a new retransfer workforce framework to provide for the transition of employees from Allconnex to the three councils. As was the case in the transfer of council employees to Allconnex in the original water reform process, the bill provides the making of a new retransfer workforce framework to provide certain industrial relations protections for affected employees. Under the provisions of the bill, a new retransfer workforce framework will be made with the main focus being to transition employees from Allconnex back to withdrawn councils. The framework will provide Allconnex workers with the most orderly transition possible and minimise the impact on jobs and uncertainty for employees.

Importantly, the framework will also ensure that there are no forced redundancies as a result of a dissolution of Allconnex Water. Whether it is its position on the leadership or on Allconnex, there is much confusion on the LNP side. On the other hand, Labor is very clear about its position on water distribution and retailing: we are about fairness, certainty and security and that is why I support the bill.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (5.19 pm): Tonight I rise to talk about the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. Members may note that originally I was not on the speaking list, but I have been so incensed by comments from government members, particularly the members for Broadwater, Southport and Albert, who just spoke, that I had to get up and speak.

Water is a particular interest of mine as, of course, the Sunshine Coast has been subjected to the flip-flopping of the government on the issue. On the Sunshine Coast we have Unitywater, on the Gold Coast and the bay there is Allconnex and there is also Queensland Water Utilities. A little later I will come to the contribution of the member for Broadwater, but now I must ask myself how those members opposite can sleep at night. I have read past contributions from those members—

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Southport. I sleep quite well at night knowing that I am a member of a party that every day advocates for the easing of cost-of-living pressures on Queensland household budgets. I am proud to be part of a team that advocates for that. Certainly I would not want to be part of a team that flip-flops on water, and on this issue it has no integrity at all. However, what else could one expect with a minister such as theirs? The minister himself has no integrity on this issue. When a minister lacks that form of integrity, what else could one expect for water in Queensland? One could expect a systematic failure and a flip-flopping on the issue. I can tell the House why that is so.

Mr Lawlor: Explain the letter by Campbell Newman, signed by your leader.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will get to the letter and I will come to another letter, member for Southport, that you did not talk about in your contribution.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! The member will speak through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did refer to 'the member for Southport'. I take the interjection from the member for Southport and I refer to another letter that he conveniently left out of his contribution. In 2007 Don Aldous, who was a Sunshine Coast mayor at the time, described the water reforms as the great water swindle. We had a huge debate across the state on this issue. The government said that it was going to set up bulk water retail entities and the community would not have a say with respect to their running. Despite being owned by the councils, the community consultation and input was nil. In fact, I believe that council input is virtually nil on these issues.

In their contributions the members for Broadwater and Southport talked about a letter that I note the member for Southport tabled despite it being tabled in the House in September last year. Last year I also tabled a letter that I obtained under a right to information request. It was from the Premier. For the benefit and reading pleasure of the member for Southport, I will table another copy.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 January 2008, from Hon. Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland, to Councillor Campbell Newman, Chairman, Council of Mayors South East Queensland, regarding aspects of the institutional reforms underway in the South-East Queensland urban water supply industry [6445].

That letter is dated 2 January 2008 and it is from the Premier, Anna Bligh, to Campbell Newman as chair of the Council of Mayors South-East Queensland. In that letter the Premier said—

The Government has no intention to revisit the structural form of the water industry that I announced on September 2008 which provided for:

...

... water entities and sells water to retailers and the existing power stations;

- between three and ten retailers, which will be structurally separate from Councils by no later than 1 July 2010; and
- a distribution entity which provides distribution services to retailers through local pipe networks and portable storage reservoirs, which will be structurally separate from Councils by no later than 1 July 2010.

So, in 2008 the Premier said that the government had no intention to revisit the structural form of the water industry that she announced in September. That is why I talk about the government flip-flopping. Across Queensland we have had a situation where councils, through whatever bodies they had, looked after the retail distribution. Then the government forced the councils into these positions—virtually with a gun to their heads—and set up the three water entities without community consultation or input and without making them accountable to the people. There are no councillors on the boards. The boards are appointed and the community has no say over what they do. There is no accountability because the community cannot get rid of them through elections.

After the three retailers were set up, there was an outcry because people's water bills were skyrocketing, despite promises that water costs would be lowered under these great plans. Then we had the minister defending the situation. I believe it was the minister at that time who said, 'Let's end the blame game for water distribution in Queensland.' Then the Premier said, 'Let's end the blame game for water distribution in Queensland.' Then the honourable minister came in, I suspect after some pressure was applied. I would have loved to have been a fly on the cabinet room wall after the public outcry in relation to Allconnex and water bills. I would have loved to have been a fly on the cabinet room wall when the Premier demanded that her minister go back to the drawing board and rip up what they had done in terms of legislation, which is how we have reached the point that we are at today. The minister has allowed the councils to vote on whether they want to get rid of the same structures that the government set up. Talk about flip-flopping on issues! It is the height of hypocrisy for Labor members to stand in this place and tell us how great their legislation is because in fact they have led us to this point. I believe the member for Southport talked about the number of positions that have been taken on this and this is probably the fourth position. The Labor Party has form in this regard, because if anyone has had issues and taken positions, certainly it is the Labor Party.

The member for Southport talked about consultation. With the great water swindle of 2007, what consultation was held with the electors of Queensland who now fall under these three water entity distribution outlets? What consultation did they have? Absolutely none! It was rushed through, it was ill-conceived, it was illogical and it was from an incompetent minister, so what would you expect? Nothing less! Now we are at a point in time where, basically, we are semi-undoing everything that the government set out to do in the first place. What is the difference here? The difference is that the LNP has a plan to ease cost-of-living pressures in Queensland. This is a cost-of-living increase.


Ms Johnstone interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Townsville, who asked, 'What is it?' If the member for Townsville had been listening at all during the past six hours, I am sure she would have ascertained the plan.

Ms Johnstone interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will. It is an interjection that I have absolute pleasure in taking. For the benefit of the member for Townsville, I will explain what the LNP plan on water across Queensland is. Of course, we know that the government's policies for water distribution have cost approximately \$7 billion. That is Labor Party waste. We have had skyrocketing increases in water, electricity and registration costs. Nearly a year ago Campbell Newman was out with the LNP team and clearly articulated the answer to the problem of water issues, which is the four-point water action plan. The first point is to amalgamate the four bulk water entities into one entity to reduce the costs of supplying the water. Second, hand back control of water distribution and retail to councils, which previously did a better job of managing water resources than the government. At the time that point was attacked, but as I said after more flip-flopping, the minister decided to give councils the option to take back control. Third, write off non-performing water grid assets to reduce water prices and, fourth, adopt a 40-year price plan to repay the government's \$7 billion water grid debt over the economic life of the assets, which will also reduce the cost of water.

You cannot be any clearer than that. I say again, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition said this morning in this place, when Queenslanders who are covered by these three entities go to the polling booth they should lay the blame. Let us not end the blame game, as the minister wants; let us start the blame game. The blame lies at the feet of every Labor Party member who sits on that side of the House. The member for Morayfield has this at his feet. The member for Southport has this at his feet. The member for Chatsworth has this at his feet. The only way to change it and to get Queensland back on track is to vote LNP.

 **Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (5.30 pm), in reply: First of all, I thank all honourable members for their participation in this debate. This bill is a continuation of the government's commitment to ease the pressure of water prices for South-East Queenslanders and to end the blame game. The Bligh government acted when councils failed to deliver price relief for their ratepayers.

Debate, on motion of Mr Robertson, adjourned.

MOTION

Private Health Insurance Rebate

 **Mr McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House condemns federal Labor's plans to reduce the private health insurance rebate hot on the heels of the job-destroying carbon tax, increasing the cost of living for cash strapped Queensland families and increasing the burden on Queensland public hospitals.

The perilous state of Queensland's public health system is well known and well documented. Yet the changes that are being proposed to reduce the private health insurance rebate will result in many people in this state dropping their private health insurance cover or choosing cheaper cover with more procedures excluded. That will have one major impact: it will push more people to the public health system in this state. It will push more people to a health system that is already at crisis point. It will push more people to a health system that at this point is struggling to keep its head above water.

At a time in this state and indeed Australia when we have an ageing population in greater numbers than ever before and chronic disease is sweeping across Queensland, and indeed every state—cardiovascular, obesity, diabetes, renal and other issues—at a time when our public health system is going to face its biggest challenge ever, we have a federal Labor government putting in place an act that will make that task even harder. It will deny treatment, delay treatment and put at risk the safety—the medical and the physical safety—of patients and indeed their family members as well. It is impossible to believe that this Labor government in this state will not stand and condemn federal Labor for taking this step. It is now their opportunity to make it clear that what the federal Labor government is doing is wrong, is incorrect and will place an incredible burden on the state public health system. This is nothing more than a cost-shifting exercise from the Commonwealth to the state and we will have to pick up the pieces in time to come.

In addition, at a time when this state has seen massive increases due to this Labor government's inept handling of our budget and inept handling of our finances—when we have had increases in water, petrol, electricity and registration—this is one more cost that the public of Queensland will have to bear.

At the end of the day, that will flow right back to the public health system, right back to our doctors and nurses, right back to our waiting lists, right back to our EDs, right back to our paramedics—and the list goes on and on. As we age and chronic disease continues to grow across Queensland, that burden can only increase.

It is also incredible and quite ironic that we had a federal government—first of all under Kevin Rudd and now under Julia Gillard—who made it their mantra that they were going to fix the public health system in this country. What they are doing is taking a knife to it by pushing through this bill in the federal parliament. It is ironic that in 2007 prior to the federal campaign both Kevin Rudd and Nicola Roxon, in their respective capacities, made statements that they would not, under any circumstances, amend, change, or in any sense make an alteration to the health insurance rebates. I table a letter from Kevin Rudd dated November 2007 to that effect and a media statement dated September 2007 from Nicola Roxon, the shadow health minister.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 20 November 2007, from Mr Kevin Rudd, federal Labor leader and member for Griffith, to Hon. Dr Michael Armitage, Chief Executive, Australian Health Insurance Association, regarding clarification on federal Labor's policy regarding private health insurance [6446].

Tabled paper: Media statement, dated 26 September 2007, by Ms Nicola Roxon MP relating to private health insurance rebates [6447].

Here we find three, four or five years down the track they are trying on a third occasion to push this bill through the federal parliament.

What this government does not understand is that the private health insurance sector is a cornerstone and safety network for the public health system. Without it we would be in an almighty crisis in Queensland and we are heading that way under this proposal in Canberra. It is also ironic that between 1996 and 2007 the take-up rate of private health insurance under the Howard government jumped from 34 per cent to 44 per cent. We will see that fall if this bill becomes an act. It is incumbent upon this Labor government to say enough is enough, to say to Gillard and to Swan, 'We don't want this. We don't need it. We are suffering enough in this state and we want you to pull it. We don't support it.' I call upon the minister and the government tonight to declare that they are not in favour of the bill before the parliament and to indicate what steps they have taken to advise Gillard and her crew of their displeasure and dislike of the proposal before the federal parliament.

As I said earlier, private health insurance is a cornerstone of the health system in Australia. In fact, private hospitals treat 40 per cent of all patients in Australia. Between 2009 and 2010 they treated 3.5 million patients who would have gone through the public health system if not for the existence of the private health system. They undertake 64 per cent of elective surgery. Imagine if that mass of people had to swing back into the public health system. We would be swamped. We would not be able to cater or deal with the issues that would be faced.

There are 12 million Australians, or 52.9 per cent, who have private health insurance and 10.3 million people, or 45.6 per cent, who have private hospital treatment cover. In 2010 some 42.4 per cent of Queenslanders had hospital cover and 46.1 per cent had general cover. This is a critical issue as far as the public health system in this state is concerned. If this insurance rebate reduction proceeds, we will see a swamping of the public health system in Queensland. Nowhere is the reliance on the public health system more evident than by the use of visiting medical officers within our public health system. Those visiting medical officers are private doctors and private surgeons who operate within our public health system and have alleviated the elective surgery waiting lists. This is the cornerstone I am talking about. Without the private health system and the private insurance rebate we are going to find a crush coming into the public system.


In April 2007 Deloitte did an analysis that showed that within 12 months of the rebate changes 175,000 people in Australia would leave the private hospital cover scheme. Queensland's population is roughly one-fifth of the Australian population. We can therefore expect 35,000 people in this state, on average, to drop their private health insurance within 12 months. In five years the Australian figure will amount to 1.6 million who will drop their insurance cover. In Queensland in five years time 320,000 people will have dropped their private health insurance. Where are they going to go? They are going to go to the PA, to the Prince Charles, to the QEII, to the RBH, to Nambour, to Cairns, to Townsville and to all the other centres in between.

At a time when we have people waiting to get on a waiting list this is a disaster. This is a disaster waiting to happen. We now have doctors and nurses who are overworked. We now have infrastructure that cannot cope. We now have waiting lists that have grown out of all proportion. Can you imagine, Mr Speaker, the sum of 320,000 people in five years moving over into the public health system? We simply do not have the infrastructure or the capacity to cover that number of additional people.

It is also estimated that between 2012 and 2016 an additional \$3.8 billion will be incurred on a recurrent cost basis to assist the public health system cater for the growth of need by way of the public leaving the private health system. In Queensland that equates to an additional \$760 million that we are going to have to find between 2012 and 2016. This is the time for this Labor government to stand up and say to Julia Gillard: 'This is wrong. This is a mistake.' At the end of the day what you have to do is ensure that there is a safety net for people in this country to use the private facilities.

The LNP supports wholeheartedly the concept of a choice, a real choice—a choice between the public health system and the private health system. The bill before the parliament in Canberra is a disaster. It is a bill that is going to mitigate any advances we have made over the past 10, 15 and 20 years and put us right back to where we were.

(Time expired)

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.41 pm): I rise to second the motion that has been moved by the member for Caloundra and the shadow minister for health. I congratulate him on the contribution that he made in support of the motion that is now before the House for consideration. The member for Caloundra outlined the effect of the proposal that is before the federal parliament on the health system in Queensland. I want to concentrate in my contribution on the effect of that proposal on the cost of living for the people of Queensland.

When we go out into our electorates and speak to the people that we represent right across Queensland, if we are in tune with our electorates, we cannot miss the message. The message that I get in my electorate and in places right across Queensland is that people are struggling with the cost of living. They are struggling with an increasing financial burden. They are struggling with the continual challenge of making ends meet, especially people on fixed incomes, especially people who are dealing with increasing cost structures such as people with growing families where the cost of supporting those families inevitably grows.

The cost of living is a big issue for a great many Queenslanders. No member of parliament worth their salt can miss that message if they go out and talk to their electorate, because it is a consistent message and it is a consistent problem right across Queensland no matter where you go and no matter which community you represent. It is not an issue that has a silver bullet solution. It is not an issue that has one single cause. The cost-of-living increases that have been inflicted upon the people of Queensland by this Labor government over the last 20 years have stemmed from an attitudinal problem. It is a problem of attitude. It is an assumption that somehow all the little costs that the government imposes on people do not really matter. And so it is with the proposal that is the subject of the motion tonight.

This proposal is another little cost added on to the cost burden on families right across Queensland, as it was with the extra cost of water bills that was the direct result of the government's maladministration—only in that case no-one would describe that as a 'little' added cost. It was a significant added cost, as was the added cost that was imposed upon people in their electricity bills. Even though the Premier stood in this place and repeated a number of times that no Queenslanders would be worse off under the electricity reforms, the government's electricity reforms have significantly added to the cost of living of every Queenslanders. And so it goes on down the list of extra costs—a little bit added on to registration, a little bit added on to every tax and charge that the government could think of. It is slugging families when they go to buy their family home an extra \$7,000. And so it adds up to a point where the cost of living is now a burden on Queenslanders.

Queenslanders are beginning to understand that the biggest part of that additional burden is the result of this government's attitude, this government's lack of administrative capability, this government's lack of understanding. This government has failed to understand the impact of its own incompetence on the people that it represents. The fact is that the government's own incompetence has added to a cost burden on families that is now becoming impossible to bear. And so it is with the proposition that is before the federal parliament.

This is a proposition that I believe has its roots deep in Labor psychology—that somehow or other people who can afford private health insurance do not deserve a tax rebate for having paid their private health insurance, that somehow or other we can slug them and there will not be a consequence. As the member for Caloundra quite rightly pointed out, there will be a significant consequence. There will be a significant consequence to a whole range of Queenslanders who will find it harder to access public health services that will become the alternative for those people once they lose access to that tax rebate. Once they lose the incentive to look after themselves with private health insurance, there will be an extra burden on the public health system and everybody will suffer because of that.

So tonight is a chance for the Labor members in this parliament to stand up for their constituents, to heed the message that they are undoubtedly getting from their constituents just as everyone on this side of the House is getting that message. It is an opportunity for them to stand up and do something about the cost of living, to reverse that attitudinal problem that they have demonstrated over the last 20 years and to show that they care—that they care for Queenslanders and for the people they represent.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Health) (5.46 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

'notes the federal Labor government's plans to:

- Invest more than \$3 billion in extra funding into the Queensland public health system through the national health reform partnerships,

- Invest in capital to help deliver hospital upgrades in SEQ, Toowoomba, Wide Bay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Torres Strait, and western Queensland, under the national health reform partnerships; and
- Direct funding for an extra 180,000 public dental procedures into Queensland's public dental health services, but which was blocked by the LNP in the Senate.

Further, that the House notes that the LNP has opposed the national health reforms that provide for additional federal funding in Queensland and represents a reinvestment of the proceeds of the Commonwealth's plan to reduce the private health insurance rebate.'

Working together, the Gillard and Bligh Labor governments are reforming the way health services are provided in our state. The health reform partnership will smash the status quo, breaking up Queensland Health into local health networks and delivering more funding and new services right across Queensland. And the LNP has always been against it. The health reform deal negotiated by the Premier at COAG is already delivering more beds. It will deliver faster emergency care and more elective surgery sooner and closer to home for Queenslanders.

The member for Caloundra has described the deal as 'flawed'. Well, the deal delivers faster emergency care, more emergency bays and more emergency physicians at QEII Hospital in southern Brisbane. The members for Yeerongpilly and Sunnybank support it; the LNP does not. It delivers more elective surgery, upgraded equipment and shorter surgery wait times at the RBWH in northern Brisbane. The members for Brisbane Central and Ashgrove support it; the LNP does not. It delivers new subacute beds, with better rehabilitation care, in Townsville. The members for Mundingburra and Townsville support it; the LNP does not. It delivers more emergency department expansions at Redcliffe and Caboolture. The members for Redcliffe, Morayfield and Pumicestone support it; the LNP does not.

If the LNP were in government in Queensland, this historical health reform would never have happened. You do not get to cherry pick. The Gillard government has a policy of investing record new funding into Queensland's public hospitals. It has a policy of investing more money in our public dental health clinics. It has a policy of building new cancer centres in regional Queensland. It has a policy of building new emergency departments for fast emergency care. And it has a policy of subsidising private health cover for families who earn up to \$258,000 per year but allowing families who earn more than a quarter of a million a year to pay their fair share so that that money can instead be invested in better health services, not just for the poor, not just for the middle-income earners, but for everyone.


Campbell Newman unveiled the LNP's infrastructure plan for Queensland—not one new bed, not one new ward, not one new hospital expansion. Those opposite are all silent now, aren't they? They have nothing to crow about on the other side now, have they, with an empty infrastructure plan? What is the use of an infrastructure plan that does not include a single new piece of hospital infrastructure?

The only fully costed, fully funded health commitment the LNP has made is to slash \$400 million from the budget for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The LNP's infrastructure plan is about as helpful as a bankrupt tunnel and as broken as a Campbell Newman rates freeze. Just this morning the member for Caloundra stood in the House and criticised the Bligh government for delivering new emergency departments across Queensland. He does not support the PA Hospital expansion. He does not support the Townsville Hospital expansion. He does not support the ED expansion in Cairns or that at Logan or at QEII or at Prince Charles or at Ipswich or at Redlands or at Toowoomba. Is it any wonder the colleagues of the member for Caloundra keep calling for a new shadow health minister? Is it any wonder the LNP will not build new health infrastructure when they do not support the federal health reforms that helped to pay for it?

Those opposite are a policy vacuum. They have no plans for health. They admit that they have no health policies whatsoever. Nearly two years ago they called for policy ideas on emergency treatment but went for more than a year without announcing any outcomes. In the end, when Mr Newman became leader he promptly announced that their already blank slate was to be wiped clean. Mr Newman and the LNP have made an art form of avoiding plans or announcing policies. On his trip through regional Queensland last year—Mackay, Mareeba, Gladstone and other places—he failed to mention any new plan for health.

The LNP should stay out of the federal health debate given the debacle that is their position on federal health funding for dental health services. They opposed in the Senate the \$52 million that the federal government wanted to provide to Queensland for an extra 180,000 treatments for Queenslanders. Given their failure to support federal funding for health in Queensland, they have no credibility. They have no policy on public health services and no plans for Queensland. And now we know that they have no plan B for when Kate Jones wins Ashgrove. It is no wonder they cannot say what their plans are for health services; they do not know who their leader will be.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. KL STRUTHERS** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women) (5.51 pm): The LNP members opposite have been boasting about John Howard, their hero. Let us look at the truth behind what John Howard did. John Howard forced people into a private health insurance rebate scheme. John Howard forced hundreds of thousands of Australians who could not afford it to take up private health insurance. I recall this from 1996 because I ran a campaign

called 'Biteback'. The John Howard they so proudly boast about pulled \$400 million from the national public dental health scheme. When he did that, John Howard had been Prime Minister for only a few months. It was one of his first actions as Prime Minister. That is the tory way. That is what they want to do. They do not want a strong public health system and they certainly did not want a strong public dental health system. It was the Queensland Labor government that filled the gap and immediately put \$100 million into the public dental health scheme.

That is the sort of people they are: they promise the world. These people need to come clean to the people of Queensland because they are raising expectations and they will not deliver. They want a private health system and a public health system as a safety net. They want everyone to go private with their dental health. One of the worst things John Howard ever did was take \$400 million out of the national public dental health system in one go.

Those opposite have been crowing about what they are going to do in relation to the cost of living. This government has increased community services investment over the past six years by 160 per cent, while the tories under Rob Borbidge were in power for two-and-a-bit years and cut community services expenditure by 20 per cent. That is their form, yet they are promising the world. They are raising expectations. They need to come clean to the people of Queensland.

The LNP has a leader. Members would know the characters B1 and B2 from *Bananas in Pyjamas*. Well, the LNP has C1 and C2. Campbell Newman gets up there in the public arena and boasts about cutting electricity prices. And then they scramble around and pull a flyer because they know they cannot do it. They are promising the world and they are not coming clean. They have racked up \$5 billion in unfunded promises. The 'spendometer' is going up and up. They need to come clean. What are they going to cut in the area of health? What are they going to cut in the area of community services? Campbell Newman, C1, talked about a four per cent jobs target. Then within 48 hours C2 said, 'Oh no, I didn't say that. That was C1.' Those opposite need to come clean with the people of Queensland and let them know the truth.

The cat was let out of the bag yesterday morning at the chamber of commerce breakfast. What did C1 say there? He said that he would support Ted Baillieu and Barry O'Farrell and that he would take it up with the federal government and bring back a Work Choices sort of thing. The words that he used were, 'We'd support small business in their efforts in relation to unfair dismissal.' We would see Work Choices back. He said that he would work with Ted Baillieu and Barry O'Farrell. What would we have? We would have Work Choices mark 2. But I expect C2 to make a comment tomorrow. By tomorrow we will hear him back-peddalling on what he would do in relation to industrial relations.

That demonstrates the sort of people they are. They are not prepared to come clean. They are making all sorts of unfunded promises, making all sorts of claims and raising expectations. The 'spendometer' keeps going up—it is now \$5 billion plus—but they will not deliver. People need to see what a risk they are. They will not even talk about the plan they have for their leader. I reckon that Ros Bates will put up her hand to be leader. Jann Stuckey will put up her hand saying, 'Pick me! Pick me!' The girls will have a go! Those opposite are a risk to Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Hinchinbrook, I will settle everyone down. Member for Indooroopilly, you have had a pretty good go. Member for Mudgeeraba, yours is not an interjection; it is just a running commentary. I call the honourable member for Hinchinbrook.

Mr CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.56 pm): I support the motion moved by the shadow minister for health, the member for Caloundra, condemning Labor's plan to means-test the private health insurance rebate. While the means testing of the rebate is a Gillard Labor policy, it might as well be a Bligh Labor policy because, once again, we have heard nothing but silence from state Labor when federal Labor has come up with another harebrained scheme that will hurt Queenslanders. It was the same with the carbon tax and any number of other disastrous policies from Canberra Labor that Bligh Labor has embraced with enthusiasm, putting Labor mates ahead of the people of Queensland.

As the shadow minister for regional Queensland, I want to underline the serious impact this policy will have on Queenslanders living in rural, regional and remote areas of the state. This is another example of Labor's indifference towards them. Health services in regional, rural and remote Queensland leave a lot to be desired. As I have said on many occasions in this place, you do not actually have to go all the way to remote areas of this state to find that health services that small rural towns have had for many decades and that should be considered fundamental services, such as maternity, have been consistently withdrawn and centralised over the past 20 years by this long-term Labor government.

The impact on the regions of Labor's plans to means-test the private health insurance rebate will be greater in Queensland than in other states. While we know that overall Queensland currently lags behind other states in the number of people with private health insurance, historically we know that, compared to other states, a higher than average number of people living in regional Queensland have had private health insurance. An article in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 2005 published data from the ABS that showed that the proportion of people with private health insurance was lower for people


living outside capital cities. The biggest difference at that time was in Tasmania, where it was almost 14 per cent, while the smallest difference was in Queensland, where it was less than half a per cent. I table that article for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Copy of article from Medical Journal of Australia, dated 21 March 2005, titled 'Private health insurance and regional Australia' [6448].

While it is true that Queensland has the most decentralised population outside of our capital city of all the states, this also means that we have the largest number of people living outside of our capital cities seeking access to health services.

So the means testing of the private health insurance rebate will have a bigger impact on Queensland because we have more people in the regions seeking health services. The Bligh government has tried to defend its centralisation of health services in big cities by arguing that it costs more to deliver health services in regional Queensland. If that is true, it makes no sense whatsoever to support a policy that will reduce the number of people taking out private health insurance in the regions that will result in more people relying on public hospitals and health facilities in the regions, further driving up these costs. The Bligh government has also tried to defend its withdrawal of fundamental health services in the regions by arguing that it is difficult to retain specialist health professionals in regional areas. If that is true, it also makes no sense to support a policy that will reduce the number of people living in the regions with private health insurance whom specialist health professionals based in the regions treat and rely on to make their living. If they find it more difficult to make a living in the regions, surely it will be even harder to retain specialist health services in the bush.

The withdrawal and centralisation of more and more health services into our larger cities has meant more and more patients have been forced to travel longer and longer distances to access treatment under this long-term Labor government. The LNP is committed to helping regional, rural and remote Queenslanders to access these services by doubling the cents-per-kilometre subsidy from 15c to 30c and doubling the accommodation subsidy from \$30 to \$60 per night under the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. Increases to the PTSS, given more and more people have been forced to travel more and more often for health services, are long overdue and have been ignored and neglected by the Bligh Labor government and the Beattie Labor government before it. The LNP will attempt to provide some relief by delivering the overdue increase to the PTSS, but one wonders if the already enormous waiting lists to access health services in regional hospitals will be even further extended by thousands of people being forced to abandon their private health insurance as a result of the loss of the rebate through this means test. It is a short-sighted, narrow-minded policy from the Gillard Labor government supported by this tired, compliant Bligh Labor government that is failing to stand up for Queenslanders, particularly Queenslanders living in the regions.


 **Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.01 pm): I rise to support the government's amendment. Members will know that this government got our report card recently—still No. 1 on elective surgery according to the report on government services and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. When this government came to power, Queensland's waiting times were a national laughing-stock. Now we are on top. When the LNP was in government, more than 8,500 patients waited longer than a year for surgery. Last month's report shows the portion of people waiting for more than a year is down to 2.5 per cent for 2009-10. This is well below the national average of 3.5 per cent. However, we have improved even more since then, with independent Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures for 2010-11 putting Queensland first in the nation for the number of patients who have waited more than one year at just 1.3 per cent.

This \$3 billion in federal funding that we are debating here tonight will deliver improvements in three priority areas for Queensland: better emergency departments, faster elective surgery and more hospital beds. This funding will deliver better emergency departments in terms of a new service delivery target of four-hour treatment which means reduced waiting times; faster elective surgery, ensuring more Queenslanders get surgery within clinically recommended times, rising to 4,400 additional cases per year in 2013-14; and more hospital beds in terms of funding for new sub-acute care hospital beds throughout the state over the next four years. I recall Mark McArdle, the member for Caloundra, at a rally outside Canossa Aged Care Complex in late 2010 protesting about public palliative care beds being cut. Even then the member for Caloundra would not commit to ongoing funding of these beds under an LNP administration. Recently I announced an extra \$700,000 this financial year for Canossa Care to continue providing palliative care public beds, and still the LNP is complaining about it. These funds from the federal government will also deliver new community based services for young people with mental health problems and a range of aged care services across Queensland. The federal government is also providing additional funds to be used where needed in either ED, elective surgery or sub-acute beds to meet the reform targets.

We have slashed elective surgery waiting lists, which blew out to 8,500 when the LNP was last in government. We have more than doubled the number of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals since 2005. In that time we have also more than doubled the Health budget. At \$11 billion, it now accounts for a quarter of the state budget. We are delivering more services sooner and closer to home.

The new Liz Plummer Cancer Centre we opened in Cairns last year means that 340 people no longer need to travel for treatment. On the Sunshine Coast the new radiation therapy services we funded mean that around 100 people can now access this care in their community without needing to travel to Brisbane. The Bligh government is committed to investing in delivering more health services for Queenslanders, no matter where they live. That is why we are building and expanding hospitals throughout the state. By contrast, the LNP has an infrastructure plan that does not include a single new hospital or health building budget—not one. The only official LNP policy on health infrastructure is Campbell Newman's plan to rip \$400 million from the budget for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Who will pay for the new Tin Can Bay Hospital costed at at least \$100 million that the member for Gympie is calling for? No LNP funding was identified. Who will pay for the \$100 million price tag on the LNP promise to increase the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme? No LNP funding source was identified. The LNP simply has not got a grip on the budgetary process. It thinks it can conjure up a wish list and then magically the funding will just appear.

(Time expired)

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (6.06 pm): I rise to condemn Labor's ill-conceived plan to cut the private health insurance rebate because it will put added stress on our already overloaded state public hospital system. Significantly in 2007 prior to the federal election Labor promised to retain all existing private health insurance rebates, but it has reneged—just like it has reneged on other core election promises. The move to cut the private health insurance rebate makes no sense at all and it will have huge ramifications here in Queensland, especially at a time when people are already doing it tough. The cost-of-living pressures are getting much worse, as water, electricity, public transport and vehicle registration charges continue to rise. Even this week things have got a whole lot tougher, with the major banks raising their interest rates even though the Reserve Bank did not alter the cash rate. The looming Labor carbon tax will also put further stress on people's hip-pocket nerves in a big way.

Cutting the private health insurance rebate will not be just felt by those on higher incomes who will incur up to a 43 per cent increase in their premiums, but it will adversely affect all Queenslanders who have private health insurance and those who do not. Those currently with insurances will now have to make the decision whether they can afford the higher premiums. Some will downgrade to a lower level of cover with less options, but many others will have no choice but to drop out altogether as they have already stretched their budgets to the limits, leveraged and mortgaged to the eyeballs. Those who cannot afford the increased premiums will now be forced to join the many thousands languishing on the waiting lists at Queensland's public hospitals. Less people being treated in private hospitals means more people being treated in public hospitals. The stressed system will become even more stressed and waiting times for surgery and in emergency departments will blow out even more. Pressure on the Australian public hospital system will sharply increase with more than 845,000 additional treatments as people withdraw from costly private health insurance cover.


I am from the Gold Coast and I can give you a couple of local examples. More than 2,000 Gold Coasters are waiting to see a neurosurgeon while other specialists have patients waiting three years for an appointment. The Gold Coast health district is facing a \$33 million budget deficit this financial year.

Massive cutbacks are being made across the Gold Coast health system after the district last year went over budget to the tune of \$16.4 million. What happens to the overstretched Gold Coast public health system when some of the estimated 420,000 Gold Coasters with private health insurance either downgrade or drop their cover, particularly given that the Gold Coast has a population that is older than the rest of the nation and that it is generally accepted that the elderly usually require more medical services? I can almost see the ambulances ramping up at the choked emergency departments at Gold Coast hospitals already. We have a higher rate of private health insurance coverage on the Gold Coast than in the rest of Queensland because the local public system is so run down.

This move to cut the private health insurance rebate is a recipe for disaster, especially for Gold Coasters. The federal Labor government and the Greens would have us believe that only a few high-income earners will be impacted by the proposed means testing, but nothing could be further from the truth. A means test means that everyone suffers and pays in one form or another. More than 2.4 million people with health fund membership will face immediate premium increases. Private health cover is not for the rich people. Of the 11.6 million privately insured Australians, 5.6 million of them have an annual income of less than \$50,000. Furthermore, when people drop their private health insurance coverage, the insurance pool shrinks, with those who are left facing even higher premiums. That has a profound knock-on effect. Higher insurance premiums make insurance more unaffordable for more people, so they drop their coverage. Hence premiums rise again. It is a vicious cycle. The federal government has produced figures saying that up to 30,000 people may quit private health insurance, but independent analysis says that it is likely to be hundreds of thousands of people, adding up to 2.8 million people over the next five years. Queensland's overloaded hospital system is already in crisis mode. It simply cannot handle this extra strain.

The LNP believes that all Queenslanders should have a real choice when it comes to health care. Providing affordable private health insurance should be a priority of government of all persuasions. The move to cut private health insurance is a classic and blatant case of cost shifting from the Commonwealth to the state's overstretched public system and it should be condemned. This government has no ideas. It is bereft of ideas. Queenslanders need to take their anger out at the ballot box.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. DM WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (6.11 pm): An extraordinary air of unreality pervades this chamber when, just days out from an election campaign, an opposition comes in here arguing about a federal issue—a matter that this state government for all the areas that it can control, for all the decisions that it can make, for all the things that it can do, can do nothing about. If this motion were carried, the state government could do nothing about it. It is entirely a federal issue. How bizarre it is that we have in this House an opposition, led by a retired councillor, coming in in the middle of an election campaign arguing about a federal issue. Honourable members on the other side of the House do not even seem to know where they are. If they want to have some sort of effect on that issue, then they should get preselected for the federal parliament. But if on the other hand they want to affect any of the thousands of issues that the state government can affect, this is where they should be. This area of unreality comes from the fact that the members opposite want to debate an academic and entirely hypothetical issue.

If—heaven forbid—the ‘member for nowhere’, Mr Campbell Newman, were to some day ride into office on the back of the honourable member for Callide, it would be the most out-of-touch and irrelevant government since Master Blaster ruled in the Thunderdome. The members opposite have no sense of what they are supposed to be talking about in this place. If they were—heaven forbid—in government then they would presumably come in here and try to legislate federal issues and local government issues, because they fundamentally do not know what they are doing.

But there is something that the members opposite do know. They all know what this document is that I am holding above my head. This is a parliamentary pay slip. They get one of these every two weeks. This happens to be a pay slip of a humble backbencher. That honourable member, along with every other honourable member in Australia, if you take into account the allowances that they get, is prima facie within the threshold. If you take into account the allowances, every member of parliament gets more than \$166,000 a year, which is within the threshold.

What honourable members on the other side did not say when they made their speeches was that they were arguing in favour of their own vested interests. In defiance of the rules and the spirit of the laws relating to the pecuniary interests register, those honourable members did not get up and say that they were arguing for the maintenance of their own income. They were arguing for their own greed and avarice.


Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, I cannot hear the speaker. That is not an interjection; it is just yelling out for the sake of it. I do not find that particularly edifying and I do not think that anybody listening to the parliament does either.

Mr WELLS: This rebate ought to be called the politicians' rebate, because a person has to earn at least as much as a politician in order to get the benefit of this rebate. So honourable members on the other side who are saying that they are opposed to this rebate ought to come clean with their constituents. When they go out on the hustings, in addition to wearing their little LNP badge why do they not wear another one that says ‘Unrepentant recipient of social welfare’, because that is what they are: \$0.8 billion of this rebate goes every year to income earners of the income level of honourable members of this House that could otherwise be going and would otherwise be going into the state hospitals system. Were it not for them receiving that money, the Queensland government would be receiving more money to look after the state hospitals system and to look after its other responsibilities.

When the members opposite have one of their battlers in their electorates come into their office and say, ‘I can't get an operation because I am one of the more than 52 per cent of Australians who do not have private hospital cover and I do not have an urgent condition but I need an operation,’ instead of just sympathising with them they should tell them that, rather than them having an operation, they would prefer to have a few extra dollars in social welfare payments paid into their own account because they do not care about them. I do not think politicians should be receiving this rebate and I do not think people who earn more than politicians should be either.

(Time expired)

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.17 pm): Tonight the old class warrior from Murrumba is going at it hammer and tongs.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: We have the class warrior from Lytton going for it hammer and tongs, too. The class warrior from Lytton is cranking it up again. Tonight's motion moved by the member for Caloundra is, of course, a very important motion. It goes to the heart of what ails Queensland and that is the appalling record of Labor in keeping promises that have an impact on the cost of living.


This issue of private health insurance and the rebate highlights Labor and every Labor member's propensity to say one thing to get elected and to do another once they are elected. That 'another' is invariably at the cost of Queensland families and Queenslanders. They promise one thing to get elected and they do another thing once they are in and it always costs Queenslanders more money. Here in Queensland Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, voted in favour of asset sales. Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, voted to remove the fuel subsidy. Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, introduced the waste tax. Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, voted to abolish the family home stamp duty concession and Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, supported the carbon tax—another broken promise by Labor, a broken promise by the Prime Minister who said, 'There will be no carbon tax.' Today, we will find out whether Labor's member for Ashgrove, Kate Jones, will support her federal colleagues in breaking yet another promise about the private health rebate—a solemn promise made by not one but two Prime Ministers that they would keep the private health rebate.

What has each of these Labor broken promises done? Each Labor broken promise, supported by each and every Labor member in this House, has increased the cost of living for Queensland families. Queensland families continue to be slugged by this long-term Labor government. The latest broken promise on the health insurance rebate is going to add even more costs for families and for Queenslanders. It will add costs to all those people who live in the federal seat of Ryan, 73 per cent of whom have private health insurance, and in the seat of Brisbane, 63 per cent of whom have private health insurance. It will affect Gold Coasters. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* today reports that 320,000 people on the Gold Coast will be affected by Labor's broken promise. That is 60 per cent of Gold Coasters. Families across the length and breadth of Queensland will be hit by yet another Labor broken promise supported by every Labor member of this House.

What are those hikes likely to be? Up to \$500 for singles and up to another \$1,000 for families throughout Queensland. Because it is class warfare, because the Labor Party does not support freedom of choice, you will also cop an increase in the Medicare surcharge if you do not take out private health insurance. So you are faced in Queensland under Labor with Hobson's choice. As the member for Caloundra said, you can reduce your cover, you can have no cover, or you can get slugged more by Labor. Truly class warfare against those who want to provide for themselves and enjoy freedom of choice.

We heard the health minister talk about health reform. What is the reform we have seen since 2005? We have seen longer waiting lists for waiting lists, we have seen longer ramping times, we have seen more access block and, to complete the circus, we have even got our very own fake Tahitian prince. Who has been the ringleader of this three-ringed circus? It is the health minister over there who has presided over it. He is so proud of his creation that what does he want to do? He wants to take a wrecking ball to it. This edifice that he has created over the last 10 years that he is so proud of he wants to take a wrecking ball to.

Tonight Labor members have a choice. It is a simple choice for members like the member for Ashgrove, the member for Chatsworth, the member for Stafford—all Labor members. Where do you stand? More taxes and less choice or a fairer Queensland for Queensland families?

 **Hon. RG NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts) (6.21 pm): The member for Clayfield has tonight sought to personalise this debate. He has sought patently to personalise this debate around the voting record of the member for Ashgrove. That is exactly what he did. What is the response to that? We know about the leadership record of the LNP candidate for Ashgrove. What is that record when it comes to the cost of living? That record is to go to the election promising to resign if rates went up beyond CPI and then, over the course of his leadership, to put up rates by a full 43 per cent. Why would the member for Clayfield do that? There are two possibilities. The first is that his point was entirely rhetorical and he hoped that nobody would pull him up on it and the second is that he is happy for the LNP candidate's record as Lord Mayor to be heard. Because the member for Clayfield is the one member of the leadership team on the LNP side thus far who has not ruled out the possibility of running for the leadership in the quite possible event that the LNP win the election but Campbell Newman does not win his seat. That is a real possibility. The member for Clayfield has refused to rule out that possibility.

Often times politics is about priorities. In moving this motion tonight the LNP show us their true priorities for all of us to see. Just once a week the LNP gets the opportunity to move a motion and to have the whole House debate it. This week in parliamentary terms is perhaps more significant than ever before because this is the last sitting week before an upcoming state election. On this incredibly pertinent point, at this critical time, what has the LNP done? Have those opposite chosen to move a motion about a state issue that they think is important? Have they chosen to come in here and talk about economic management? Have they chosen to come in here and talk about health, education, public

transport? They have not. They have come in here and they have moved a motion about an issue which is entirely within the realm of the federal government. What is that issue? As we know, the federal government has sought to remove a private health rebate, a matter of debate in the federal parliament, for people with household incomes of more than \$258,000 a year. That is 2.8 per cent of Queensland households. Protecting that is, in this critical debate, the LNP's absolutely highest priority. I believe that that utterly says it all.

This is the party that opposed Medicare when it happened and that opposed the establishment of Medibank Private. The Liberals and the Nationals are the parties that sat in here silent while the previous federal government ripped nearly half a billion dollars out of public dental services. But it is important enough to protect a subsidy for 2.8 per cent of households that they choose it as their No. 1 priority for debate for the week. Frankly, I believe that when it comes to their priorities that says it all.

Labor has delivered in terms of health. We have delivered significant hospital upgrades right across the state: a new hospital in Mackay, significant changes in Cairns, major improvements in cancer services and we are delivering a major upgrade to the Ipswich Hospital. But those opposite have been silent while funds have been pulled out of public health and make the maintenance of a subsidy for the few their highest priority here.

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

AYES, 46—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Male

NOES, 35—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 46—Attwood, Boyle, Choi, Croft, Darling, Dick, Farmer, Grace, Hinchliffe, Hoolihan, Jarratt, Johnstone, Jones, Kiernan, Kilburn, Lawlor, Lucas, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Reeves, Roberts, Robertson, Ryan, Scott, Shine, Smith, Spence, Stone, Struthers, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson. Tellers: Keech, Male

NOES, 35—Bates, Bleijie, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Foley, Gibson, Hobbs, Hopper, Horan, Johnson, Langbroek, McArdle, Malone, Menkens, Nicholls, Powell, Pratt, Robinson, Seeney, Simpson, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Wellington. Tellers: Rickuss, Sorensen

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House notes the federal Labor government's plans to:

- Invest more than \$3 billion in extra funding into the Queensland public health system through the national health reform partnerships,
- Invest in capital to help deliver hospital upgrades in SEQ, Toowoomba, Wide Bay, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Torres Strait, and western Queensland, under the national health reform partnerships; and
- Direct funding for an extra 180,000 public dental procedures into Queensland's public dental health services, but which was blocked by the LNP in the Senate.

Further, that the House notes that the LNP has opposed the national health reforms that provide for additional federal funding in Queensland and represents a reinvestment of the proceeds of the Commonwealth's plan to reduce the private health insurance rebate.

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Application of Same Question Rule to Cognate Bills



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have ordered that a ruling regarding the application of the same question rule to cognate bills be circulated. I seek leave to have the statement incorporated in the parliamentary record.

Leave granted.

On 11 May 2011, the Member for Kawana introduced a private member's bill, the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill, the PMB. On 7 September 2011, the then Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State introduced a government bill, the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill, the government bill.

The PMB seeks to amend the Criminal Code in order to insert 'an exempt two-up game'. The aim of the bill is to remove any doubt that the criminal law of unlawful games under section 232 of the Criminal Code does not apply to a particular exempt two-up game held in a licensed club or hotel in conjunction with an Anzac Day celebration.

The government bill seeks to allow for the responsible, not-for-profit conduct of two-up games by the RSL or Services Clubs on Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and related dates prescribed in a regulation. On 8 September 2011, the House agreed to debate the bills cognately following the Finance and Administration Committee's report on the bills.

The bills, in essence, seek to achieve the same objective. The Finance and Administration Committee noted in their report that 'the basic objective of both Bills is to ensure that those participating in two-up games whilst celebrating Anzac Day are not at risk of prosecution. The two Bills under consideration by the Committee offer two alternatives of achieving that objective.'

Standing Order 87(1) provides that unless the Standing Orders otherwise provide, a question or amendment shall not be proposed which is the same as any question which, during the same session, has been resolved in the affirmative or negative. A number of Speaker rulings in relation to this issue have been made in recent years. In summary:

- The matters do not have to be identical, merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form;
- There is no rule preventing the presentation of two bills on the same subject, or indeed opposite intent. However, if a decision of the House has already been taken on one bill, the other is not to be proceeded upon; and
- An amendment cannot be moved to a bill that has already been moved to another bill and defeated or is substantially the same as a bill that has been defeated.


I am satisfied that the bills seek to achieve the same objective and the same question rule is enlivened. Therefore, it is necessary to consider how the bills should be proceeded with. I foreshadow that the second reading question for the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill, the government bill, will be put first. At that point I will immediately make a ruling in relation to the application of the same question rule for the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill, the PMB. The PMB would then be effectively discharged from the Notice Paper, as the ruling would not allow any further decisions to be made on that bill. As there will have been no decision taken in relation to the clauses in the PMB, members would be able to move amendments to the government bill to deal with the matters contained in the PMB.

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (DISTRIBUTION AND RETAIL RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 76, on motion of Mr Robertson—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. S ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (7.35 pm), continuing in reply: As I was saying prior to the dinner break, this bill is a continuation of the government's commitment to ease the pressure of water prices for South-East Queenslanders and to end the blame game. The Bligh government acted when councils failed to deliver price relief for their ratepayers. In April last year the Bligh government stepped in and announced a two-year price cap on council water and wastewater charges. This means that in 2011-12 South-East Queenslanders are now paying less on their water bills. For example, in the Redlands the price cap saving is \$87 a year, on the Gold Coast it is \$116 a year, on the Sunshine Coast it is \$94 a year, in Logan City it is \$111 a year, in Brisbane City it is \$38, in Ipswich City it is \$70 and in the Scenic Rim it is \$132. This is because of the Bligh government.

In contrast, in June last year the LNP voted against the bill. They voted against reduced water bills. That is to their eternal shame. Let us forget all the pious nonsense that has been spoken by LNP members during this debate. The simple fact is that, when push came to shove, when they were asked to nail their colours to the mast and support this government's cap on water prices which delivered savings to South-East Queensland ratepayers, they squibbed it.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: They took the political option and opposed this government's measures to reduce water bills in South-East Queensland. That includes the constituents of the member for Lockyer. He voted against it, to his eternal shame.

Mr Rickuss: Nine billion dollars you wasted on water.

Mr ROBERTSON: To his eternal shame, he voted against reducing water bills in the Lockyer electorate. The member for Lockyer stands condemned.

As part of the same announcement, South-East Queensland councils were given a once-only opportunity to opt out of their distributor-retailer and re-establish council owned and operated water and wastewater businesses. During this debate I have heard a lot of pious nonsense from members opposite about how we forced councils to embrace the distributor-retailers. We gave each and every council in South-East Queensland a one-off opportunity to opt out. The only council to put up its hand was the Gold Coast City Council. In Brisbane, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay and the electorate of the member for Lockyer they all put up their hands and said, 'We want to stay part of this set up.' That is the simple reality; that is the simple fact.

This was a direct response to several councils, predominantly the Gold Coast City Council, very publicly calling for their water businesses to return under the council banner, despite the fact that what they had was the same model as that asked for by Campbell Newman as the then chair of the Council of Mayors South-East Queensland. By tabling a letter, the member for Southport quite appropriately reminded this House about Campbell Newman's view that that was in fact the way to go. We have heard a lot of nonsense, particularly from the member for Kawana. He is a prancing, priming, pruning, preening poodle, but, at the end of the day, when the facts are put in front of him, he goes mute, silent and pathetic and is a mere shadow of the ego that he aspires to be. It was only the Gold Coast City Council—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: There are no prizes for second. Last year only the Gold Coast City Council put up its hand to divorce from Allconnex. In doing so, it agreed to pay the consequential costs of disestablishment to the Redland and Logan councils. I make this very clear: the Bligh government did not force this decision onto councils. They were given a choice. They were given the democratic right to consider and determine their own future. The Gold Coast City Council voted not once but twice for this to happen.

Let me further make it clear: South-East Queensland councils make a profit from water; the Bligh government, the state government, does not. In fact, we reported a \$438 million loss on bulk water sold to councils in the 2010-11 financial year. Fact! This is effectively a subsidy of \$375.8 per residential and non-residential property. Bulk water charges make up just 30 per cent of the average residential bill. Despite what those opposite have misleadingly suggested during the course of this debate, council charges make up 70 per cent. These charges go towards recouping the money invested in the water grid for the region for decades to come.

The shadow minister and other LNP members can criticise the government all they like for not capping bulk water prices but their own leader, Campbell Newman, has confirmed to media that he will not give councils control of bulk water or cap its price if elected, and that speaks volumes about what Queenslanders can expect under a Campbell Newman led government.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: As the member for Ashgrove quite eruditely suggested, members opposite can say all they like about their four-point plan, but at the end of the day when the fundamental question is asked, 'Will Queenslanders receive cheaper water bills under a Newman led Queensland government?', the answer is simply—

Ms Jones: No!

Mr ROBERTSON: I take the interjection from the member for Ashgrove. She has nailed him once again, as she has done day in, day out since Newman declared his candidacy for the electorate of Ashgrove.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: The genius that is the member for Kawana may wish to consider what his leader said himself. This weird experiment that they have engaged in over the past 12 months is just unfurling day after day after day. This is what Newman said in an interview with Madonna King on ABC Radio when he was Lord Mayor of Brisbane. Madonna King asked—

So for someone listening, do you believe that those increases in the water bills will be cut to what?

CN: Well they won't—

The question was asked, 'What will they be cut to?' And Campbell Newman said—

Well they won't. I don't believe—I'm not talking about cutting them, Madonna, because they've already gone through the roof, but what I'm saying is, I'm saying that water prices should be going up around CPI or in the low single digits—

That is a nice little hedge. He is saying they are either increasing up to the CPI or increasing in single digits up to 10 per cent. So they can go up nine per cent according to Campbell Newman. That is what he told Madonna King—

Mr Rickuss: Is that low single digits?

Mr ROBERTSON: He went on—

... or in the low single digits, not double digits increase.

Madonna King asked—

And do you think you can deliver that, are you saying you could deliver water bill increases of about the CPI increase?

CN: Well no ...

'Well, no.'

Mr Dickson interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: I say to my friend the member for Buderim that from what Campbell Newman has announced over the past couple of weeks about who is going to be on the front bench, I fear for his existence. I know he came up to my office the other week with his measuring tape, measuring the curtains, checking it out, feeling the leather and furniture saying, 'Oh, I think I'm up for this,' but I make this prediction tonight: you will never occupy a ministerial office under Campbell Newman.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! Please use the member's correct title—all members please.

Mr ROBERTSON: The simple fact is that Campbell Newman has been out there making all sorts of promises to candidates saying, 'You're going to be on my front bench. You're going to be on my front bench.' At last count his ministerial front bench was probably numbering around 25. I feel for the member for Buderim because he has worked so hard. He has done his best in the honourable tradition of shadow spokesperson but I have to say that I do not think he is going to get there. At the end of the day if Campbell comes across and sits on this side of the bench, he is going to say, 'Sorry, you're just not up to it.' His mate behind him, the erstwhile shadow Attorney-General of this state will I think be reduced. I think he might make it to parliamentary secretary but that is about it, brother.

After all the promises that Campbell Newman has made quite publicly about who is going to be a minister under his government, either he has to expand his ministry to over 25 ministers or you or you or you or you or you just ain't going to cut the mustard. With respect, the question that they should be asking Campbell Newman is, 'Am I going to get up? Am I part of your dream team?' Either Campbell Newman blows the budget for ministerial salaries or you and you and your mates are up for the night.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer! All members, I have been very lenient tonight. The minister is getting as good as he is giving. So I am quite happy to sit back.

Mr ELMES: I rise to a point of order. I know the argument is as weak as water, but I cannot think of anything else. I do not think the minister's presentation has anything to do with the bill. Perhaps we could go back to something at least containing some substance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order, but it is a relevant issue. Minister, I would ask that you return to the clauses of the bill.

Mr ROBERTSON: And appropriately so. It is a timely intervention. In its first year of operation Allconnex distributed approximately \$192 million in funds in profit to its participating councils, with Gold Coast City Council receiving approximately \$118 million, Logan receiving approximately \$48 million and Redland receiving approximately \$26 million in funds.

In addition, in 2010-11 Allconnex delivered more than \$200 million in capital work savings compared to the original budget inherited from council water businesses. So, despite the significant returns—significant profits—earned by Gold Coast, Logan and Redland councils, the Gold Coast City Council decided to withdraw from its distributor-retailer, Allconnex. As history shows, there was an opportunity for the Gold Coast City Council, having earned \$118 million profit in 2010-11, to put that profit back into reduced water bills, but they chose not to do so. They took the money. They took the \$118 million profit that they earned from Allconnex, stuck it in their back pockets and then criticised Allconnex for the water charges that they received a profit from. That is rank hypocrisy.

Mr Dickson: It was your plan—Anna Bligh's plan.

Mr ROBERTSON: No. I take the interjection. The member for Buderim knows that it is within the power of an individual council, having taken the profit from their water business, to do two things with it: they can use that money to spend it in other areas or they can reinvest it as a rebate for lower water bills. The Gold Coast City Council, despite the campaign that went on, stuck the money in their back pocket, let the water bills increase and gave no rebate to the people of the Gold Coast. They could have used that \$118 million profit as a rebate to lower water bills and rates for people on the Gold Coast. The fact that they did not do so proves one thing: just how fundamentally dishonest the Gold Coast council is. As I have described them before, and I do so again tonight, they are the worst council in Queensland, and that is a sad thing to say given their importance to the economy of Queensland. The fact that they would be run by such a bunch of imbeciles—fundamentally dishonest each and every one of them.

Mr DICKSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think it is inappropriate in this parliament to be talking with such disrespect about a local authority. It is a hybrid of our government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wendt): Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take that interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, it was not an interjection; it was a point of order.

Mr ROBERTSON: If you want to defend a council who pocketed \$118 million in profit and not return it in lower water bills to the ratepayers of the Gold Coast, then you stand condemned as much as the Gold Coast City Council does in terms of their dishonest campaign that they have run over the last 12 months. You are as bad as Mayor Ron Clarke and, as a result, as Campbell Newman's spokesman in this state, the ratepayers of the Gold Coast will get no relief under a Newman-led government.

Mr Rickuss: Come on. Back up your allegation. What was the money used for? Was there any fraud?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take the interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, order! Member for Lockyer, order! The minister has the call.

Mr ROBERTSON: I take the interjection. If the member for Lockyer thinks that pocketing \$118 million profit—

Mr Rickuss: Who pocketed it?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, please desist. Minister, please direct your comments through the chair. That is what this is all about—through the chair. Member for Lockyer, I ask you to cease interjecting.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is really simple. They earned \$118 million from the water bills that were paid by the people of the Gold Coast. It is absolute profit that the Gold Coast—

Mr Elmes: You just accused them of being dishonest.

Mr ROBERTSON: No. Member for Noosa, just hold on. Let me explain some fundamentals. You earn \$118 million profit. You put it in your back pocket and then you complain about the amount of money that people have to pay on their water bills. You have \$118 million that you can give back to your residents in a rebate and you refuse to do so. I have been in this place for about 20 years now and I cannot think of a more dishonest approach by a council than that taken by the Gold Coast.

They are the simple facts which none of you can deny. On the Sunshine Coast they earned a profit too. In Brisbane they earned a profit too. In Ipswich they earned a profit too. In the Scenic Rim they earned a profit too. What did each and every council do with those profits from those distributor-retailers? They put them in their back pockets. Did they use the profits as a rebate to bring down water bills? No, they did not. So all of your tory mates on those tory councils—each and every one of them—stand absolutely condemned by the facts about not reinvesting profits in lower bills.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Lockyer, I will not ask you again. The minister has the call. I would ask the minister to direct his comments through the chair. It takes a bit of heat out of the argument.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer. Minister, please direct your comments through the chair. The minister has the call.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is a lot more that I could say in relation to this, but in the time that is left to me I want to do two things. Firstly, in a formal sense I table the explanatory notes to the amendments that have already been circulated. We may or may not discuss them during the context of consideration in detail. As I have already reported in our response to the committee's analysis of the bill, we have, I think, responded positively to most of those ideas and those put forward by the councils. But if my opposition spokesperson wishes to discuss them further then that of course, respectfully, is a matter for him. I formally table the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes for Hon. Stephen Robertson's amendments [6449].

The final matter that I want to deal with is one that received some attention during the course of debate. Whilst I have on previous occasions dealt with this issue, I feel obliged in one of my last contributions in this House to try, as I have always done through my ministerial career, to put to bed nonsense, to try to put to bed beliefs that the community may have about a scheme—whether it be the efficacy of the Bradfield scheme or any other scheme—that will somehow deliver volumes of water or natural resources if only government would invest in it, if only we could see such projects that we are so blind to. I have on previous occasions spoken about the nonsense that is behind the Bradfield scheme, and I do so tonight about the Wolffdene Dam, because I think it is appropriate that we deal once again, as I have spoken previously, about the facts of the Wolffdene Dam.

Wolffdene Dam was actually first proposed back in about 1964. That was when the initial studies were done that suggested that a dam on the upper reaches of the Albert River at the Gold Coast would be a good idea, that it would actually add to water security for our part of South-East Queensland. It was to be a big dam, of almost Wivenhoe proportions. Wivenhoe has a capacity of around 1.165 million megalitres. The initial capacity of Wolffdene was to be around 1.080 million megalitres. So they were of comparable size. It was going to be a big dam. But the capacity of a dam does not in itself tell you what the yield of that dam will be. So it may have a capacity to store but, as the member for Hervey Bay would know, the yield is what actually matters. He knows, from discussions he had in his role as mayor of Hervey Bay over many years, that you can have a storage capacity but it is the yield that matters.

Back in 1964 it was believed that the capacity may be over one million megalitres but the yield was assessed at that time at around 133,000 megalitres per annum. That is what they actually thought they could take out with a high degree of reliability. Well, a further study was done back in the mid-2000s as to what those assumptions were and it was found that that was overly optimistic. With all of the tools we now have available to us—hydrology reports and good science—the yield was revised down from 133,000 to 79,000 megalitres. That is almost half.

To give members an understanding of what that actually means, Wivenhoe has around the same capacity as was predicted—over 1.1 million megalitres. The yield from Wivenhoe is 615,000 megalitres per year. What was Wolffdene's projected yield compared to that 615,000 megalitres? It was 79,000 megalitres. And that was before you took into account existing entitlements downstream for irrigators and other farmers and also before you took into account the need for environmental flows. So the logic suggests that even a number such as 70,000 megalitres per annum is going to be taken way down.

So the suggestion that Wolffdene would have saved us during the millennium drought is an absolute nonsense. It is a fallacy. It is a fake. What science tells us is that, whilst Wolffdene was going to be a big dam—of Wivenhoe proportions—its yield would have been less than one-tenth of what Wivenhoe delivers year in, year out. They are the facts.

Mr Dickson interjected.

Mr ROBERTSON: No, member for Buderim. At some stage you actually have to accept some facts. Even if, as it may turn out, you occupy the government benches, you will be dealing with exactly the same facts as I have put forward tonight and you will not be able to deny them. In terms of common sense and rational decision making, you need to take them into account.

The simple facts are: Wolffdene was never going to deliver the yields that were necessary to keep pace with population growth in South-East Queensland and it was never going to deliver security of water supply during the millennium drought. They are the simple facts. Those opposite should not continue on with their nonsense, whether it be flooding the inland from the Burdekin Dam or any other nonsense proposal that is talked about in pubs around Queensland. The simple fact is: when you do the actual studies and when you engage in good science, which is the basis of any decision making, you will walk away from Wolffdene every day of the week. That is the simple fact.

Mr Dickson: Why did you try to build Traveston Dam?

Mr ROBERTSON: Can I just give you this: we built Wyaralong Dam. Wyaralong Dam has a capacity of 103,000 megalitres—one-tenth of the capacity of the proposed Wolffdene—yet it has a yield of 25,700 megalitres. That is a far better performing proposition than Wolffdene would ever have been. The raised Hinze Dam has a capacity of 310,000 megalitres—one-third of what Wolffdene would have had. It has an annual yield of 83,700 megalitres. That is probably twice what would have been delivered from a Wolffdene Dam. By any rational analysis of yield rather than capacity, you would never invest one dollar—not one dollar—in Wolffdene Dam. They are the simple facts. From here on, if anyone argues this point against me I will fight them every day, to the day I die, with simple facts. With those few words, 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

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



Mr ROBERTSON (8.08 pm): I move the following amendments—

1

Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 14, lines 12 and 13—

omit.

2 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 14, line 14, '(3) Section 78(3)'—

omit, insert—

'(2) Section 78(3)'.


I have already tabled the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

 **Mr DICKSON** (8.08 pm): My comments relate to proposed new sections 33 and 34. I know that I have only three minutes to speak to this clause. It contains many proposed new sections I would have liked to talk to, but there is not enough time allowed.

Referring to subsection 33—and I use Urban Utilities as an example—the bill says that councils are allowed to have three board members as councillors on these boards. Given that there are five entities, how is that going to work, because there will only be representatives from three different councils being able to be represented and then all of these independent representatives and also an independent chairperson? In the case of Brisbane City Council's Urban Utilities, how will it be represented? Will it get the opportunity to put its councillor forward first? I ask the minister to explain to the House how that is going to work because I just do not understand the logic when there are five councils and there are three possible elected representatives able to go on those boards. Who will be the ones who miss out? I think the people of Queensland need to understand that.

Mr ROBERTSON: That is a fair question. I appreciate the background of the member for Buderim coming from councils where, like this place, decisions are taken based on votes. So I can understand where the member may be coming from—that is, someone who comes as a nominee of a particular council is there purely to represent the interests of that council so that when a decision is taken they vote as if they were purely as a representative of that council. That is not how boards operate. Indeed, it is not how boards such as cabinet operate either because—and you will find this contained in not just Corporations Law but also many learned treaties about how boards should operate—there is a responsibility on board members to make decisions based on what is ultimately in the best interests of that board of the distributor-retailer. So whilst they may be nominated by Brisbane City Council or Ipswich or whomever and they may come with a particular bent, and understandably so, at the end of the day they need to make decisions based on what is in the best interests of the entity.

Those decisions that are made by that entity, whether it be Unitywater or whoever, do get informed by the input of those individual board members having come from or being nominated by individual councils. But there is also a responsibility on those individual board members to seek out the opinions of other councils in their particular area. So I would expect—and, again, this is what constitutes good governance—that if someone is nominated by the Brisbane City Council to sit on the board of Queensland Urban Utilities they would nevertheless take in due consideration the interests of Lockyer or some of those smaller councils in those areas. That is what good governance is all about. Whilst I understand where the member is coming from, the simple reality is that board members have a higher responsibility than just simply representing the interests of the constituency that may have nominated them. There is nothing unusual about that. That is how boardrooms operate, whether it be in the private, public or government owned corporation sector.

In my view—and it is a common view—for example using the Queensland Urban Utilities situation where a number of smaller councils will not get 'direct representation', nevertheless they would have an opportunity to put forward their particular views through a variety of consultative mechanisms and it would be the responsibility of the board to consider those. If they do not consider those, then they are not acting with due prudence in terms of their responsibilities as individual board members.

What we are trying to do here is strike a balance—that is, recognising, if you like, the real politic of board composition that there is an argument for people with a direct interest to sit on those boards. But, at the end of the day, those boards have a wider responsibility and that is to sustain the financial and other sustainability of the organisation as set out not just under legislation but under their statements of corporate intent and other documents that go to directing or guiding those board members as to how they act in the interests of all of their constituencies across the geography that they are required to consider in their deliberations.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—



Mr ROBERTSON (8.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

Clause 18 (Replacement of s 51 (Local government directions relevant to duty))

Page 24, line 23, after 'with'—

insert—

'unless it is unlawful to do so, or complying with the direction in the way directed would constitute an offence against this Act or another Act'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—



Mr DICKSON (8.16 pm): Looking at subdivision 2 relating to entitlements at 92BX dealing with the Gold Coast City Council bearing its own withdrawal costs, we all understand what is going on. This is the second time that the Gold Coast is going through this. We are basically doing this thing in reverse this time around. It is a bit like a dance. I would like to know exactly what it is going to cost the Gold Coast City Council, and it is to pick up the tab for the other two councils. I ask the minister to also inform the House what costs will be involved. I would appreciate it if the minister could break that into those three sections. I understand that the Gold Coast will be paying the lot, but it could be very expensive or it could be very cheap. I am sure the minister is very aware of exactly what those costs will be.

Mr ROBERTSON: The simple fact is that I cannot quantify what the costs will be. That is purely and simply a matter for the Gold Coast to finally determine, indeed in—hopefully—cooperation with both the Redland and Logan councils. The Gold Coast City Council has over the past number of months commissioned a number of reports that do an estimate of the costs incurred and some of those costs go over the \$100 million mark. I am aware that Mayor Ron Clarke has disputed those even though it was a council commissioned report. He is suggesting a much lower figure. At the end of the day it is going to take a lot of financially skilled people to come up with the final figure. I must admit that I do feel a level of sadness for the people of the Gold Coast in that, whatever the figure is, it will have a financial impact on the good people of the Gold Coast because, at the end of the day, someone has to pay those bills. Ain't nothing for free. So we will just have to see, as the three councils work through the issues about the costs, what the financial impact is. But it is not the role nor the responsibility of the state government to make a determination on what those costs are.

We have put into this bill a process for how those councils should sit around and determine what those costs are and a dispute resolution procedure should they not be able to reach a consensus, which is our preferred position, I may add. At the end of the day if individual councils are unhappy or are unable to agree, they have a procedure that they can follow. As I say, it is not the role nor is it the responsibility of this state government to determine what those costs are. This is a council owned business. It is the council more so than anyone else that knows what the costs are of dissolution and, indeed, the costs of re-establishing individual council water businesses.

Rather than the member and I having the argument across the chamber as to whether this is a wise decision by the Gold Coast City Council, history will tell us. I look forward in my dotage to at some stage considering whether a correct decision was made by the council, but it is first, foremost and last a responsibility of the councils to work out. I move the following amendments—

4

Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 3A)

Page 39, after line 18—

insert—

'(vi) the scheme otherwise complies with this Act;'

5

Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 3A)

Page 52, line 5, 'incurs'—

omit, insert—

'has incurred'.

6

Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 3A)

Page 53, line 1, 'incurs'—

omit, insert—

'has incurred'.

7

Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 3A)

Page 57, lines 24 and 25, 'or confidence'—

omit, insert—

', confidence or duty'.

8 Clause 23 (Insertion of new ch 3A)

Page 58, line 22—

omit, insert—

'(4) For subsection (1), (2) or (3), a thing done under this chapter, or doing something under this chapter, extends to the doing of all acts preparatory to or otherwise for the purposes of doing the thing, including, for example, all things done in preparation for any of the following matters—

- (a) Allconnex ceasing to be a service provider;
- (b) a withdrawn council becoming a service provider for its local government area;
- (c) the retransfer;
- (d) Allconnex's dissolution;
- (e) anything consequential or incidental to a matter mentioned in paragraph (a) to (d).

'(5) In this section—'

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 23, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 76, as read, agreed to.

Clause 77—



Mr ROBERTSON (8.21 pm): I move the following amendments—

9 Clause 77 (Insertion of new ch 6, pt 6)

Page 113, after line 23—

*insert—***'120A Authorised exchange of information**

'Section 92BS applies to a party to the retransfer exchanging information with another party under that section from the period starting at the beginning of 11 October 2011 and ending on the date of assent.'

10 Clause 77 (Insertion of new ch 6, pt 6)

Page 113, after line 28—

*insert—***'121A Application of s 99ATA to withdrawn councils and Allconnex**

'(1) Despite section 99ATA(2), the details of the charges relating to a withdrawn council's water services and wastewater services for the financial year starting on 1 July 2012 must be published on its website by 1 July 2012.

'(2) To remove any doubt, it is declared that—

- (a) section 99ATA(1) and (2) does not apply to Allconnex for charges relating to the financial year starting on 1 July 2012; and
- (b) section 99ATA(3) and (4) does not apply to Allconnex for proposed charges for the financial year starting on 1 July 2012.'

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 77, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 78 to 105, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (8.22 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. S ROBERTSON (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Water Utilities) (8.22 pm): On the occasion of my 50th birthday, on the occasion of the last bill that I am responsible for—

Mr Gibson: Oh, dear!

Mr ROBERTSON: I am tearing up too, member for Gympie. 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.


CHARITABLE AND NON-PROFIT GAMING (TWO-UP) AMENDMENT BILL

CRIMINAL CODE (ANZAC DAY BETTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill resumed from 11 May 2011 (see p. 1352), on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (8.23 pm): I move—

That the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

The Finance and Administration Committee provided its report on the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 and the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011 on 1 December 2011 containing four key recommendations. The Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the government and the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011 was introduced as a private member's bill. The basic objective of both the government's bill and the private member's bill was to ensure that those participating in two-up games while celebrating Anzac Day are not at risk of prosecution.

The government's bill sought to achieve that aim by proposing changes to the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 which would allow for two-up games to be conducted on Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and other days prescribed in a regulation in Returned and Services League clubs or at functions at other licensed premises if the person conducting the game is approved by an RSL subbranch. On the other hand, the private member's bill proposed amendments to the Criminal Code 1899 to make two-up lawful if played in licensed premises on Anzac Day.

The committee considered both alternatives and recommended that the government bill be passed and the private member's bill not be passed. The private member's bill was an ill-considered and rushed proposal, which is reflected in the committee's decision that the bill not be passed. In summary, the member for Kawana's bill proposed to allow minors to play two-up, which essentially permits illegal gambling, and extend two-up gaming to all licensed clubs and hotels, which is not only what the RSL said that it did not support but also inconsistent with the current exclusivity agreements with casinos and potentially would leave the state open to compensation claims. Licensed premises would put a charge—an entry fee—to play two-up and there would have been no restrictions on how profits were used. That means that venues could charge what they like, palming themselves off as doing something for diggers, and there would be no money directed to support ex-service men and women and their families. The bill would also amend the Criminal Code which would be inconsistent with every other jurisdiction in Australia, as all other jurisdictions legalise gaming, including the authorisation of two-up, in a gaming act, not the Criminal Code.

The committee also made two further recommendations to amend the government's bill. Firstly, to clarify the status of two-up as a game, the committee recommended that the definition of the meaning of 'game' in section 11 of the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act be amended to include two-up as an example of a game. Secondly, the committee recommended that Remembrance Day be excluded from the days on which two-up is allowed to be played as the RSL (Queensland Branch) noted that Remembrance Day was considered to be a more sombre day of remembrance than Anzac Day. That was the RSL's view on that matter. That is what the committee took into account—and fair enough on that basis.

The government supports the recommended changes to the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 and is happy to introduce the necessary amendments during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. This is the strength of the committee system at work. In addition to these amendments, the government has initiated further amendments in relation to the consumption of liquor on Good Friday at all major sports facilities. These amendments will bring Queensland into line with other Australian jurisdictions that permit the sale of alcohol on Good Friday at major sporting events. My ministerial colleague will say a little bit more about that later.


This amendment will allow the Queensland Reds to play the ACT Brumbies at Suncorp Stadium on 6 April this year. I should point out that, as a Reds ticket holder, I will be at that game. If the restriction on the sale of alcohol is not relaxed, the match will be relocated interstate, where I would not be.

An honourable member: You wouldn't go.

Mr LUCAS: I would not be able to go. I would go to the Manly Hotel and watch it. With the match being held on 6 April, I will be there and I will be able to watch it without anyone saying to me, 'Listen, can I just talk to you about the railway station,' or some particular issue. I will say, 'Talk to the new member. I am watching the football. Don't talk to the old feather duster, talk to the rooster.'

These amendments have been circulated in the House and I thank the shadow ministers for their cooperation in relation to that. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for its consideration and reporting on the bill. I note that the committee has provided a substantive report that deals with the bills in some detail, which was informed both by written submission and public hearings held with department officers and stakeholders. I table the government's response to the recommendations of the committee. As I said, the government commends the committee for an excellent job done.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 9—Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 and Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011—Government response [\[6450\]](#).

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (8.30 pm): I am pleased that the House will have the opportunity this evening to amend the current law that in its existing form makes it illegal to play a game of two-up on Anzac Day. This is a tradition that goes back to World War I, a tradition that was built on the mateship and camaraderie of our Australian diggers fighting in the trenches of Europe. I am also pleased, but not surprised, that the LNP has led the debate for this change which stems from events in Cairns last year where it was reported that there were threats of prosecution in some clubs and pubs if the game of two-up was played on Anzac Day. Until then this was a law that has essentially not been enforced on that particular day due to the historical significance of the game.

The LNP's proactive approach to this issue has brought about debate in this House and finally common sense will prevail on this issue. I have said it before in this House and I will say it again: this government is nothing more than can-do copycats. We saw it with the ongoing debacle on the water reforms earlier today and this evening and we have seen it with so many other policy announcement backflips. The LNP raised this issue early last year. We then introduced a bill shortly after that—in May, if my memory serves me correctly. It was not until some months later in September that the government introduced its bill—some nine months later. The LNP was certainly leading the charge to end this ridiculous situation we had in Queensland.

We believe that the game of two-up should continue to be played in commemoration of the Anzac spirit. We also believe that the purpose of playing the game should be as a traditional ritual rather than for any monetary gain. It is this approach that underpins our position and reasoning for introducing a simple amendment to the Criminal Code that adds an exemption to section 230A of the Criminal Code when playing the game of two-up at a permitted two-up venue on Anzac Day each year. In contrast, the government introduced the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill which seeks to complicate the process of removing that anomaly.

Importantly, however, both bills do seek to address the existing situation that relied on the good nature of law enforcement officers to turn a blind eye on this issue in the spirit of Anzac Day. I commend the RSLs, Clubs Queensland, the Queensland Hotels Association and all the individual submitters to the committee process. I think it was good. I said at the outset that the LNP certainly drove policy debate on this issue but, just like two-up, in the spirit of comradeship we will be supporting the Attorney-General's bill. Despite both bills achieving an objective at the end of the day that essentially allows people to play two-up on Anzac Day, I believe our bill was far simpler and a far easier way to achieve that commonsense objective.

There were six submissions from peak bodies, including one from myself. These were from the Queensland Hotels Association, the RSL & Services Clubs Association, the Law Society and others. I thank those organisations for the timely consideration of those bills. In terms of one of the RSL organisations, I did sit down with the organisation after the government had introduced its bill and talked about the differences between the bills. I told the person to use the committee process afforded to them to have their discussion. It certainly did take place. The lady involved made a great submission. The RSL (Queensland Branch) made a number of recommendations for the consideration of the committee. They included that two-up only be played on Anzac Day. The Attorney-General can correct me if I am wrong, but the recommendations of the committee in terms of Remembrance Day was accepted. That was one of the recommendations from the RSL (Queensland Branch). They made another recommendation in terms of the ability for an RSL subbranch to play a game of two-up in a venue other than a licensed venue such as a community hall. This was to assist communities, in particular in rural and remote parts of the state, that do not have access to licensed venues.

Other recommendations were that the term 'RSL' have a further definition; approval be given in writing by an RSL subbranch of the venue at which the game can be played; the closest RSL district office will conduct this approval in the absence of the local subbranch; and entry fees should be defined as a donation to the RSL subbranch which will allow the subbranch to continue its vital welfare services. I believe in the meeting I had with that group they indicated that they were not particularly worried about what the cost was—it could have been \$1 or \$10; they were just happy to have the donation which is noted as the entry fee for the game when played on Anzac Day.

Of those recommendations I note that the first recommendation was also suggested by the committee. The Law Society, as always, contributed a very thorough examination of those bills. I draw the attention of the House to the following statement in their submission that reads—

For the reasons outlined above, the Society proposes locating the relevant provisions within the Criminal Code, as in our view the substance of the proposal does not fit within the scope of any of the existing gaming acts.

This was the view of the LNP and myself when drafting the legislative amendment with the underlying notion that the intent of the changes was for reasons of historical significance and tradition rather than for monetary gain. The LNP will abrogate the criminalisation that currently applies under section 232 of the Criminal Code to allow Queenslanders to partake in a game of two-up on Anzac Day. I will not read the provisions of section 232. If members are interested they can refer to the Criminal Code themselves.

The key difference between the LNP bill and the government bill is that in our bill we did not discriminate in relation to which licensed venue this change would apply to. While we understand and support the purpose and responsibility of the Returned Services League (Queensland Branch) or a subbranch in supporting the welfare of the returned service personnel, we believe that the process should be as simple as possible, hence our amendment. At the time I did make the comment that the government's bill was certainly cumbersome in some aspects and, in stark contrast to the LNP, focuses more on regulation and restriction than simply amending a technicality. Without incriminating any particular people, the Kawana RSL subbranch, which is located in the Kawana Surf Club, has been conducting games on Anzac Day and people have participated in particular games. I do not mention the game they play; suffice to say everyone was very jovial and had a good time and nothing came of it. The whole purpose of this bill is to support groups like the subbranches, the RSLs and combined groups like mine in Kawana such as the surf club and the RSL. We want to avoid any threats such as those that occurred in Cairns that persons would be fined or charged for playing a game of two-up on Anzac Day. Hence we wanted to deal with it under the Criminal Code.

The Attorney-General outlined some perceived faults in the LNP's bill. In his second reading speech he stated—

There are a number of issues with the amendments proposed in that bill. They are: in exempting two-up from the definition of unlawful games in the Criminal Code, it would create an inconsistency in the legislative framework for legalised gaming, as all legalised gaming is authorised under a gaming act.

I draw the attention of the House to *Legislation Alert No. 6* of the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee that was tabled in the House on 23 May 2011. Clause 3 of the bill amends section 230A of the Criminal Code for the purposes outlined. The committee in its report went through various acts of parliament that the bill would actually in fact not amend. Statements from the Law Society in its submission confirm to some extent the LNP had a right and clear position by doing it in the Criminal Code and not the gaming acts. I note the submissions to the committee concluded that there were some technical recommendations and suggested changes to both bills. I do say in the spirit of companionship with the honourable Attorney that the spirit of both bills serves the same intent. The spirit of my friendship has extended to the fact that the intent of both bills reaches an objective that is the same. However, I will make the point that I believe our bill adds less regulation and is less burdensome on people than what appears will be a system of regulation that will have to be undertaken either through the RSLs, subbranches or the department. I believe the Department of Justice, in its submissions to the committee, made mention of the fact that there in fact would be a burden.

I refer to the report at page 7 in the second last paragraph where the committee said—

... that the Private Member's Bill does not conform with the normal practice in Queensland when legalising forms of gambling through appropriate enabling legislation which creates a regulatory framework around the gambling activity rather than simply decriminalising it.

That was the whole point. We wanted a simple element to decriminalise that aspect of it and the best way to do that was through the Criminal Code. Queenslanders are at the point when they want government to stay out of their lives. They are sick and tired of governments telling them what they can and cannot do, how they can wash their hands, how they can do whatever and how they can have a game of two-up on Anzac Day. Although I am happy that we will be proceeding to fix this anomaly tonight, I still hold the view that it would have been sufficient to deal with the issues within the confines of the Criminal Code. However, I note that the RSLs and subbranches will benefit from the government's bill because of the entrance fees and donations. I make the point that it cannot be for monetary gain but simply for returned service men and women, and the RSL supports that.

In light of the continued mateship that I will show towards the Attorney-General tonight, I will not use my 48 remaining minutes; I will only use another 40. Our approach was quite simple: to introduce a minor amendment that ensured playing a game of two-up on Anzac Day is legal in particular venues. That was the commonsense approach to resolve the issue. Do members know who suggested that commonsense approach? It was not the Attorney-General. It was none other than Campbell Newman.

Mr Lucas: And he got it wrong.

Mr BLEIJIE: He did not get it wrong.

Mr Lucas: He got it wrong according to the committee and the RSL.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjections from the Attorney-General. If the Attorney-General reads the complete submission, the Law Society says it ought to be placed in the Criminal Code rather than the way the Attorney-General is doing it. At the end of the day, I do not believe the RSL subbranches or any other submitters would have cared less whether it was in the Criminal Code or in the gaming act; they just want it done. I think they will be happy just to see this take place. Therefore, the LNP will be supporting the bill. I believe that as we approach Anzac Day—

Mr Lucas: When you get rolled on something, you shut up. You don't highlight it.

Mr BLEIJIE: The more he talks, the more I am going to talk. I am happy to take an interjection from the member for Ashgrove if she cares to take her seat.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill): Order! Member for Kawana, resume your seat. I have been really lenient, but it is getting on. I would like all members to maintain some decorum. Member for Kawana, I am sure you are nearly finished.

Mr BLEIJIE: Shortly, on 24 March, Queenslanders will have an opportunity to vote and this issue shows the type of leadership of Campbell Newman. He went to Cairns, he saw that there was an issue and he acted on it. The LNP acted on it and here we are. If Campbell had not acted on it in Cairns, the Labor Party would not have introduced its bill and we would not have legal two-up on Anzac Day in April. Out of 22 years, we have had 20 years of inaction. If this was such an important issue for the government, why haven't they done it for 12 years?

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could you both please—

Mr Lucas: I'm not talking about him. I'm talking about the person sitting behind him.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, I do not mind who you are talking about. I do not want you talking about anyone.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is time to get Queensland back on track. It is time to see change in Queensland, and this is the type of change we need. Time and time again we have come into this place and introduced private members' bills on topics that for 12 years the government has not thought about and all of sudden—bang! It becomes its idea. The community knows who made this happen. The community knows it was not the member for Ashgrove who made this happen. It was the Liberal National Party under the leadership of Campbell Newman.

Mr GIBSON (Gympie—LNP) (8.43 pm): I too rise to speak on the cognate debate of the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill and the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill. I note that this bill and, indeed, the way in which the committee process has worked really highlight when the parliament works at its very best. An issue was identified—and I take the points that have been made in the discussion earlier—and a private member's bill was introduced which triggered debate and analysis on the issue. The government then introduced its bill, which may look at a different way of achieving the same policy outcome. Tonight we are debating a piece of legislation that will ensure that we are bringing Queensland into the 21st century and removing what I think all acknowledge was a problem involving two-up that no police officer worth his salt would have ever prosecuted. However, the threat was there and this bill removes that threat. That is a very important element.

Two-up is indeed iconic. It is about more than just gambling; it is about the very element of mateship. As a young Army officer, on Anzac Day I went to RSLs. It was not just about playing the game; it was about being with the old diggers, chatting with them and socialising around this very iconic activity. As we see from the committee's report, two-up reflects the very larrikinism of the Australian character. Men could play a gambling game whereby if the MPs or police came along the evidence could be hidden immediately and as soon as they left you could be sure that the coins would come out and they would be playing again. To me, that sums up the very nature of two-up.

I will focus the remainder of my time on an amendment contained within the bill. The bill amends the Liquor Act 1992 and addresses the provision of a sporting event being held at a major sports facility on Good Friday. Within our society Anzac Day is recognised by all, even those who have never served and those who are pacifists and see war as an incredibly unnecessary evil, as a sacred day, as is Good Friday. For a whole range of faiths Good Friday, as a part of Holy Week, is a time of fasting that is often associated with penance. As our society has evolved and changed, it does not have the same high level of sanctity, but it still has associated with it an element that I believe we should continue to preserve within our society. That being recognised, there is a failing within the Liquor Act that would have prevented the Queensland Reds from playing at Suncorp Stadium this Easter Friday. The amendment in the bill is designed to address that.

I wish to make a couple of observations. The first is that, had the flood inquiry not requested an extension of days and the Premier had called the election for her preferred date of 3 March, this amendment would not be before the House and most likely that game of rugby union involving the Queensland Reds would have been lost to Queensland. What is of concern is that the government was aware of that last year. It failed to act in a timely manner to ensure that this amendment would be brought before the House. Therefore, we are fortunate. This is not the result of planning or proper


administration. We are fortunate simply because of luck. So often that is what we have seen under Labor when it comes to the management of sporting events. We all remember last year when the government was caught asleep at the wheel. As Suncorp Stadium's numbers surged, in September we had to amend the Major Sports Facilities Act. To me that highlights the failure of this Labor government in administering our major sports facilities.

I come back to the actual wording of this amendment. I believe we can support it. I believe it is appropriate and it would continue the sanctity that is associated with Good Friday. However, I have flagged with the Minister for Sport—and I believe he has spoken to the Attorney-General about this—that we need to amend its times. This is about sending a message. I believe we should amend the time from '10 am until 12 midnight' so that it reads '12 midday to 12 midnight'. That says to the community that we recognise that the morning of Good Friday is a time for them to focus and then from midday onwards it would be appropriate for alcohol to be served. This is not inconsistent with provisions already in the Liquor Act. The time for Anzac Day is from 1 pm. I do believe we need to extend it. It provides us, as a parliament, with the opportunity to send a message to the community that Good Friday is still a day that we recognise is sacred for many. We will still allow those who enjoy participating or viewing a sport, whether it be at Suncorp Stadium or the Manly Hotel, to support their favourite team. More importantly, we are able to have those games here in Queensland.

Mr Lucas: You can come down the Manly with me if you like.

Mr GIBSON: If we were not going to be able to see the game at Suncorp Stadium I would be at the Manly. I hope to be at Suncorp Stadium on that day to see the Reds play.

As I indicated, this amendment has the support of the opposition because it is a necessary amendment. It brings us into line with other states in Australia that have no doubt had a similar trigger point in relation to their sporting events. We now find ourselves falling into line. In the case of rugby union in particular, on Good Friday we will see a game in New Zealand, a game on the east coast of Australia, potentially a game on the west coast and then across to South Africa. It is a reflection of the modern scheduling of sports and how they cater to their television market. More importantly, we are ensuring that a great game will be retained here in Queensland. We fully support these amendments.

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.51 pm): The Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 was introduced to the parliament in September last year. As you would be aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill was then referred to the Finance and Administration Committee on that same day. However, the House should also be aware that another bill called the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill was also introduced as a private member's bill on 11 May 2011 by the member for Kawana. In view of there being two similar bills, the Legislative Assembly also referred this bill to the Finance and Administration Committee on the same day and at the same time agreed to treat the bills in cognate. Normally, under standing orders the committee is required to report to the House within six months of the referral, which would have been sometime in March 2012. However, I want to point out that the committee agreed to a timetable which achieved a reporting date of 1 December 2011.

During its deliberations I can report that the committee found that the basic objective of both bills was to ensure that those participating in two-up games whilst celebrating Anzac Day are not at risk of prosecution. However, the two bills under consideration by the committee offered two alternatives to achieving that same objective. Therefore, after due consideration of both bills, the committee considered the government bill to be the better alternative. To come to this conclusion the committee heard evidence that Remembrance Day should not be one of the days on which two-up is allowed due to the more sombre nature of this particular day. That was brought home quite clearly to us. The committee also considered that the definition of 'game' needs to be clarified to include two-up.

I can advise that the committee received six submissions from the Queensland Hotels Association; the RSL & Services Clubs Association Queensland; Clubs Queensland itself; the Queensland Law Society; the Returned and Services League, Queensland Branch; and also the member for Kawana. We also held a public briefing with departmental officers on 12 October. They included the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General; the Deputy Director-General, Gaming and Fair Trading, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; the Executive Director, Office of Regulatory Policy, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; as well as the Acting Director, Office of Regulatory Policy, Department of Justice and Attorney-General; and the Principal Policy and Research Officer, Office of Regulatory Policy, Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

We also conducted a public hearing with industry representatives on 16 November which was very well attended. We had people from the Queensland Law Society, Queensland Hotels Association, the RSL and Services Club Queensland Incorporated, Commercial Operations from the RSL—that is the commercial manager—as well as again the Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General who came along as did some other people from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank those who took the time to provide submissions and those who met with the committee and provided additional information during the course of the inquiry. I would also like to thank the departmental officers for their cooperation in providing information

to the committee on a timely basis. In particular, the committee appreciated the attendance of departmental officers—at short notice in some cases—at the committee's public hearings. Their presence assisted the committee greatly in resolving and clarifying issues as they arose.

I should also point out that we are talking about the amendment to the Liquor Act 1992 which regulates the sale and supply of liquor. As was pointed out a few moments ago, the Queensland Reds game, which is going to be played on Good Friday, 6 April at 7.40 pm, would have been under some duress in relation to the sale of alcohol if not for this amendment. That certainly makes good sense, and I notice the support is bipartisan in that respect. From that perspective I think it is a good outcome for everyone concerned.

Finally, I would like to thank the other members of the committee. I think we have a very good working committee, particularly our research team of Deb and the others. Without doubt we have one of the best research teams available as well. With that, I commend this bill to the House.



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (8.55 pm): I rise to speak to the cognate debate. I listened to the minister's contribution in relation to the opposition's bill and noted that his contribution included a statement that the bill as it was tabled exposes the people of Queensland to some legal liability if it passed. I take that advice genuinely and for that reason—

Mr Lucas: It is about the agreement with the casinos. The casinos have the exclusive right to do two-up.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I heard the minister say that. I think that is important. Sometimes those of us who have been here for short periods—and longer periods—do not understand. We do not keep in our mind all of the details of legislation and agreements and it is important for us to recognise that.

The legalisation of two-up on Anzac Day will give some peace of mind to some people, and I support it. I know that the diggers slip off in various ways to places to play two-up. I think there will be a down side to this legislation. I am going to support it, but I think there will be a down side to this legislation. There is a bit of larrikinism in Aussies who enjoyed the fact that it was not legal. That added an edge to the two-up game. I think that once it becomes legal the shine will go off a little bit. I do not know that too many of the games had a 'cockatoo'.

Mr Lucas: It was never legal when played during the war.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: In my electorate I am sure it did not happen because we have very law-abiding citizens. However, if it did I am sure it was done with a great spirit of camaraderie. I do not know whether they ever had 'cockatoos' at any of the venues. However, I do think that something will be lost when this bill is passed. Yes, it will give it legal coverage but it will take away that edge that it has always had with the whispering and, 'This is where the game is.'

I support that amendment. As the second reading speech said, Anzac Day and Armistice Day are very important days in our recognition of the freedom that we enjoy, the price that freedom holds and the cost of war. I think we should never lose sight of that. We are a unique nation in that our democracy was not built on conflict; it was built on agreement and consensus. I know that I do not appreciate it as much as I should. Anzac Day is a very important day for me and for everybody in recognising the sacrifice of our men and women in all theatres of war and across all of the areas of the service.

The amendment talks about the serving of alcohol at major sports facilities. Anzac Day and Armistice Day are sacred in the sense of our recognition of the cost of war and the price of peace. We have other sacred days in the Christian faith. Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Christ. Good Friday is a very solemn day when we recognise and remember the death of Christ and we remember Easter Sunday for the resurrection. Many people recognise those days in different ways, and I acknowledge that. For some people part of that recognition is getting out and having a good time.

I appreciate the amendment that the opposition have indicated they will allow to pass, and I will certainly be supporting that. I just think it should be put on the record that we appear in many instances to be sensitive to the religious importance of so many groups that live and share our nationhood but we readily compromise the values on which we, as a second nation in this country, are built. I believe we need as a parliament and we need as a community to recognise the importance of those sacred days in our Christian calendar. I understand the purpose of this amendment, but I place on the record the concern that is often expressed to me that we also need to give protection and sanctity to those days that are important to our Christian faith.



Mr ELMES (Noosa—LNP) (9.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011, introduced to the House by my colleague the shadow Attorney-General and member for Kawana, Jarrod Bleijie. One of my constituents recently said to me, 'You know, Glen, the thing about common sense is that it just isn't common.' The bill before the House is just common sense. It is just common sense that the change it proposes should have been made many years ago. It sums up the approach of the shadow Attorney-General. His approach is thoughtful, pragmatic and one of common sense.

We hear from time to time how the 'fun police' intervene and act in a way that just has you shaking your head in disbelief. The reported threat on the Red Beret Hotel—also known locally as 'The Red Hat' or, in typical North Queensland fashion, as just 'The Hat'—by Cairns liquor licensing inspectors over the hosting of a two-up game on Anzac Day last year is an example. This game has been conducted for 20 years. The proceeds are donated to Legacy. It is held once a year—on Anzac Day. It is held in a pub named in honour of an Australian Army parachute unit. It is part of the Anzac Day tradition. It is a time-honoured part of the ritual celebration of what is becoming Australia's national day. That ritual is for returned servicemen renewing mateships forged in the field of battle. That ritual is for returned service men and women honouring those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and did not come home alone. That ritual is about comrades talking about shared experiences which they cannot bring up with anyone else because others just cannot understand, cannot comprehend the experience of war.

The actions of those liquor licensing officials in Cairns are not about enforcing antigambling laws. It is not similar at all to the issue in the federal parliament over precommitment limits to gambling on poker machines. It is not about preventing problem gamblers from losing their homes and their families as a consequence of legal or illegal gambling. It says nothing about all the forms of gambling which are legal and tolerated by society. It says nothing about lotto or gambling on horseracing or playing roulette in a casino or betting on football games or even the controversial advertising of that betting on football.

The bill before the House is about ensuring that officials, such as those in Cairns, are not compromised by their obligation to their duty. I understand their dilemma. The Bleijie bill ensures that officials do not have to 'turn a blind eye' to the breaking of a law. It ensures that officials do not have to set aside their obligation to enforce the law. This is about ensuring that officials who do their job do not bring the law into disrepute by enforcing a law with which the bulk of the community at large do not agree or support. It is to ensure that enforcement of a silly, unintended consequence of a sensible law does not make the law subject to public ridicule.

I ask members to note that the amendment proposed by this bill to section 230A of the Criminal Code means that two-up on Anzac Day in a permitted two-up venue becomes legal. It is so simple—such an elegant solution to a vexing problem. Section 234(1) of the code says that a person who conducts an unlawful game commits an offence and may incur a fine of up to \$20,000. Section 234(2) of the code says that a person who plays an unlawful game commits an offence and may incur a fine of up to \$4,000. The value of these penalties denotes how serious breaches of this section of the code are regarded.

The bill before the House proposes changes to the Criminal Code which are measured and responsible. They will allow two-up to be legal on Anzac Day only. They will also allow two-up to be legal in a licensed club or a licensed hotel only on that day. I commend this bill to the House. It is simply legislating common sense.

However, we are forced by cognate debate to address the government's Johnny-come-lately response to the member for Kawana's initiative in the form of the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011. If there is any bill which shows more clearly how tired, lazy and out of touch the Bligh Labor government has become more than this one does, then I would like someone to show it to me.

Firstly, the Bligh Labor government had to be embarrassed by the member for Kawana to even address this simple issue. We on this side of the House have become very used to that. In a cognate debate on the Child Offender (More Stringent Offender Reporting) Amendment Bill 2010 and the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010, I reminded the House of the distraction tactic to which the Bligh Labor government is prone when I said—

Generally on a slow news day, but sometimes when the political spotlight is on another of their failures, some spokesman for the government will accuse us on this side of the chamber of a lack of policy. But is this allegation valid? During the life of the 53rd parliament, members of the ... LNP opposition have brought in private members' bills on matters of critical public interest and concern on no fewer than seven occasions. Rather than allow such a bill to be debated on its merit and in the public interest, the practice of the Bligh Labor government is to procrastinate, to put the private member's bill at the bottom of the *Notice Paper* and to keep it there. By this political approach, the minister responsible is then given time to address the issue that the LNP has raised and bring it on—

in the case of the Attorney-General—

as his or her own legislation.

With the bills before us today we have yet another example of a lazy, copycat government.


The next failure in the government's proposal is to make unnecessarily complex that which should just be so simple. This complexity is in partnership with the bureaucracy to establish another mini army, a new battalion of public servants not to address the simple problem of two-up on Anzac Day but to create an empire of occasions which should be remembered by being able to play two-up legally.

Finally, what highlights the Bligh Labor government's failure is its inability to create a sensible administrative structure. This solution is so convoluted that the designers were exhausted before finishing the design and simply gave up. How do we know? Because no lesser luminary than the

member for Cairns drew that to our attention. Her argument at the public briefing with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to the Finance and Administration Committee was, when a loophole in the Bligh Labor government's proposed processes came to the fore, the power of public opinion would address the shortfall in administrative competence. On page 4 of the transcript of that briefing, the member is quoted as saying, 'And local members could put pressure on them if that event occurred,' when speaking about profit from two-up and that it should flow to community benefit funds—that is, the member was relinquishing her responsibility for good legislative and administrative practice to public opinion to save her bacon when failure occurred. Then on page 8 in a similar vein the member is quoted as saying—

Might I put on the record first that, at least so far as the culture of Cairns is concerned, I have no concerns, similar to Mr Crandon. If indeed the ex-servicemen discover that the RSL sub-branch is handing out the money to somebody other than Legacy or their direct interests, there would be a hell of a stir. It would be on the front page of the *Cairns Post*. They will speak up pretty well and you will not need Brisbane to worry about regulating them.


I put it to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that if the government's bill before the House does not do the whole job as the member is confessing then why have it at all?

 **Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (9.09 pm): My timing turns out to be excellent in being able to inform honourable members of the House as to why I do support this legislation that we are discussing this evening. It is not of course legislation reflecting major social change. It is, however, legislation to provide good order throughout Queensland on one of the most important days on the Australian annual calendar.

I confess that it is in my electorate and adjacent electorates where there has been some disorder in past years, where the enthusiasm of being part of a two-up game has led some to, wittingly or unwittingly, breach the law. It is indeed good policy, as we are dealing with it tonight, to put some order and rigour around what is and is not permissible on Anzac Day, particularly with regard to two-up.

It is a very important thing, of course, for those of all ages associated with Anzac Day, not just those directly concerned as returned servicemen but also the families of those who have now passed on who served on fronts overseas, those who have lost loved ones and the young ones who come from all the schools—at least they do in Cairns—to join in the parade, to watch the parade, to pause for a moment, to be so proud to be Australian. And it is important that after the parade and the official occasions of Anzac Day there is some collegiality, some good humour, some joining together and celebration of what it means to be Australian. And two-up connects to that for very many people.

I am pleased, therefore, to support this bill. It provides appropriate rules about where, when and how best it can be managed and ensures that any moneys that are made will go towards supporting the RSL. I was pleased to be on the committee that examined this bill and was impressed, as I have been in years past, with the sensible advice provided by key stakeholders, in particular of course RSL Queensland and Clubs Queensland. Their expert advice guided us well. I recognise the minister and his department for the sensible wording that has made the bill before us this evening workable. The fact is that the opposition's attempt was not workable and they should be thanking us indeed as the government for providing the expertise and direction that means we can join together tonight and support the legislation before the House.

 **Mr WETTENHALL** (Barron River—ALP) (9.12 pm): I rise to support the government bill and make a couple of comments in relation to the opposition bill. The opposition private member's bill has sought to amend the Criminal Code so that a two-up game held in a liquor licensed hotel or club in conjunction with an Anzac Day celebration will not be an unlawful game. If this private member's bill were to be assented to in its current form, its effect would be to allow two-up games to be played in all liquor licensed clubs and hotels on Anzac Day as well as in casinos which are authorised to play the game under the Casino Control Act 1982. Two-up games would not be permitted to be played in non-licensed venues.

There are a number of problems with the private member's bill. These include that, in exempting two-up from the definition of 'unlawful game' in the Criminal Code, it would create an inconsistency in the legislative framework for legalised gaming, as all legalised gaming is authorised under a gaming act.

While two-up is part of Australia's military tradition, the private member's bill does not restrict its play to returned and services league clubs—RSL clubs—but extends it to all other liquor licensed hotels and clubs. The extension of two-up games into all liquor licensed clubs and hotels is inconsistent with current exclusivity agreements with casinos and could potentially leave the state open to compensation claims. The private member's bill does not prevent minors from playing two-up games and the private member's bill makes no provision for where potential revenue derived from the playing of two-up games would be directed, therefore potentially allowing businesses to conduct the game as a profit-making venture.


A number of those flaws in the private member's bill I believe are inconsistent with the public's expectation about what a relaxation of the current arrangements ought to bring about. The Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 addresses these issues. The authority to

conduct two-up games will be restricted to RSL and services clubs or to functions in other licensed premises under the Liquor Act if approved in writing by an RSL subbranch. This will allow the RSL to organise two-up games as part of commemorative activities in areas where there is community demand but for which no RSL or services clubs are located nearby. This should ensure that, if there is demand, rural or regional areas will be able to participate in two-up games on these specific days. Two-up can only be played on designated days. These include Anzac Day and other days that may be prescribed in a regulation and are significant to the remembrance of the sacrifice for the nation of the men and women of its Defence Force. Unlike the private member's bill, minors will be prohibited from participating, which is entirely appropriate.

To ensure two-up is not used for profit making, provisions within the bill prohibit commissions on wagers by participants. However, the bill will allow an entry fee if all money raised is donated to the RSL organisation or an RSL subbranch to be used for purposes to support ex-service men and women and their families. It is not the intent of the bill that any of this money be used for club administrative purposes.

Furthermore, the authority to conduct two-up games is provided for in a gaming act, the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999, which maintains consistency with the current legislative framework for gaming. The Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 would ensure that two-up games are regulated appropriately, with minimum impact on the community, and retain their link to Australia's military tradition.

In conclusion, I draw the attention of the House to a couple of comments that have been made during the course of the debate, particularly by members opposite. It is not the case that last year at around the time of Anzac Day attention was drawn to this issue on account of the fact that prosecution of a licensed venue was threatened. That is not the case at all. It is the case that the Red Beret Hotel at Redlynch in my electorate is the hotel that was identified as one that had been threatened with prosecution. My understanding is that that is not the case at all. The response by the opposition through this private member's bill has been half-baked. The government's bill addresses the real issues but, most importantly, maintains the important nexus between the military tradition of playing two-up and the playing of that game under a new regime. That is the most important thing that we need to bear in mind. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.18 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on two bills—the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill 2011 and the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill 2011. Of course, the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill was the first bill to be submitted for consideration. It was submitted by the LNP, by the shadow Attorney-General. A few months later that was followed up by the Attorney-General realising that after 20 years he should probably do something about legalising the game of two-up. As a result of that, the Finance and Administration Committee, of which I am a proud member, was given the role of looking at the two bills and giving consideration to them and performing the job of reviewing the bills, taking public statements and making recommendations to the House.


I congratulate our committee support staff in particular for ensuring that we could complete our committee work and table the report on 1 December. That was something that was a conscious decision by the committee. If one refers back to the minutes of the committee, they will see that we did make a conscious decision to speed up the process and ensure that the bills could potentially be debated before Anzac Day this year. We were endeavouring, on the off-chance that parliament came back this year—and here we are—to legalise two-up for Anzac Day this coming year. There was some interesting banter that took place during our deliberations as to the strategy when playing the game of two-up. There was a little bit of toing and froing as to what you should and should not do.

Mr Lawlor interjected.


Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection. We had to explain the finer points of the game to one or two people to give them a better understanding of what the game of two-up was all about. Importantly, I note that the amendments as recommended by the committee were accepted by the minister and those amendments were two very important ones—that is, to clarify that two-up is a game under the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 by using it as an example in the act and to exclude Remembrance Day from the days on which two-up is allowed to be conducted by RSL and services clubs and persons approved by the RSL subbranch as it is considered to be a sombre day of remembrance. That was a message that the committee received very loud and clear from organisations, the RSL in particular, in their submissions to the committee.

The committee did a fine job and the chair of the committee ensured that we were all given ample opportunity to examine the evidence given to us by those people who nominated themselves as interested parties. As a result, as I said earlier, on 1 December we were able to table our report and here we are today legalising the game of two-up. I take the point that the member for Gladstone made in that there will probably be a few diggers out there who will be a little bit unhappy that it is not illegal anymore

for them to have a game of two-up because there was a little bit more excitement in the game because of that. I commend the bill to the House and look forward to enjoying a game of two-up at the RSL at Helensvale in a few weeks time.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (9.22 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the cognate debate on these two bills. In relation to my private member's bill, which amends the Criminal Code, I note that members opposite have talked about minors playing two-up. The private member's bill that I introduced was quite prescriptive in terms of playing on 25 April—one day a year—at a celebration to commemorate Anzac Day and I also kept the normal provisions as currently prescribed under the Liquor Act 1992 in relation to what is a licensed club or a licensed hotel. I did that for a reason. For instance, my uncle was the original owner of the Ettamogah Pub. It has Australia Day celebrations and it has Anzac Day celebrations. I thought that the simplest way was that, if people had been getting away with it anyway—and the Attorney is right; there have been no prosecutions—and for regional and rural hotels and pubs that may not have subbranches of RSLs, if the community gets together on the one day a year to commemorate Anzac Day I thought that they ought to have the right to play a game of two-up.

That is why we did it through the Criminal Code. That is why it is prescriptive to say it is for a celebration. It was not open slather for minors to go out every day of the year and have games of two-up and bet money on them. It was not that at all. It was prescribed as one day at a celebration to commemorate Anzac Day at a licensed pub or a licensed hotel. We did that because licensed hotels, pubs and clubs under the Liquor Act obviously have all of the provisions in relation to security so it would be in a contained environment. That is why we did it under the Criminal Code. I just wanted to explain that to members opposite in terms of this idea that minors were going to go rank at two-up games, because it was pretty prescriptive. As I said, both bills achieve an intent at the end that I accept. I do have issues with the regulation. The government's bill is certainly more burdensome in terms of RSLs, but at the end of the day they get an entrance fee so they make some money out of it and we envisage that diggers and men and women will receive more support from this. I thank all honourable members who contributed to the debate.

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (9.25 pm), in reply: I table the explanatory notes for the government amendments.

Tabled paper: Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes to Hon. Paul Lucas's amendments [6451].

I thank all members for their contributions and support for the amendments contained in this bill. Just for the record for those who would like to rewrite history, on 15 April 2011 the Premier of Queensland met with the local RSL in Cairns to discuss the possible legalisation of two-up on Anzac Day. The Premier announced on 16 April 2011 in the *Cairns Post* that she understood that two-up was one of the nation's big traditions and would carefully consider legalising two-up on Anzac Day in RSLs, and that is exactly what the government is delivering today—considered legislation. On that same day in the same article Campbell Newman decided that he would also like to advocate for legislation of two-up on Anzac Day. So let us just scotch this once and for all, and I table that article that makes it clear and I will come back to that in a minute.

Tabled paper: Weekend Post article, dated 16 April 2011, titled 'LNP leader takes on the fun police: Two-up? Yes, I can do' [6452].

This ill-considered legislation introduced by the opposition is in stark contrast to the far more workable legislation that the government introduced and is the basis for the legislation which we are now debating. The government has developed a considered bill resulting from broad consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The government was prepared to listen and act to make sure any necessary amendments were made when proposed by key stakeholders. As members have seen today, the private member's bill proposed by the opposition would have allowed two-up to be played in all licensed premises, including those with no connection to the RSL, even though in a submission from the RSL and Services Clubs Association of Queensland to the committee its CEO Penny Wilson stated that the association was previously made aware of the private member's bill and the association was pleased that this issue was being addressed. She said—

... although we did advise Mr Bleijie that we felt that this bill needed to be confined to the playing of two-up in licensed and services club premises.

I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Submission from the RSL and Services Clubs Association Qld Inc, dated 11 October 2011, to the Finance and Administration Committee in relation to the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill [6453].

Clearly the honourable member did not have too much interest in the RSL and Services Clubs Association's view in that regard. He preferred his own. The member opposite, true to form thinking he knows best, has highlighted his ignorance once again by completely disregarding this request.

The private member's bill is also solely about Anzac Day so, should the RSL request a lawful playing of two-up on another day that holds significance to military traditions such as Vietnam Veterans Day, the opposition would need to take this back to parliament for consideration, causing further delay to any necessary approvals, rather than by regulation, which is what the government has proposed. So far from being more inflexible, it is actually more flexible. This results from a carefully considered bill from

the Queensland government and a lazy policy attempt by the member opposite. The private member's bill also allows minors to gamble and there are no restrictions placed on entry fees or profits. Businesses could use two-up as a profit-making activity—stick it in the old sky rocket and not give it to diggers—rather than uphold the Anzac spirit in connection with the tradition of Anzac Day and military service.

I also refer the member opposite to page 7 of the committee report which outlines that industry supported the government bill—this is the all-party committee report—as the better solution to how the playing of two-up could be legalised on Anzac Day. I understand that, while some submitters had minor suggestions for the government bill, luckily there was one submission that supported the private member's bill, and that was from the member for Kawana! As I say to my staff frequently, self-praise is no recommendation. Even though there is no evidence of an actual prosecution for playing two-up on Anzac Day, the government's bill is a sensible, carefully considered and, most importantly, a consulted proposal to permit the lawful playing of it on Anzac Day. Of course the opposition—one of the laziest yet best resourced in the country—proposed a rushed policy that made amendments to the Criminal Code, which is not only inconsistent with other jurisdictions but allows venues to pocket profits without giving them back to the people the RSL represents—ex-service men and women and their families. The government's bill, however, amends the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 to legalise the playing of two-up on Anzac Day and other days prescribed under regulation that are significant to the remembrance of military personnel.

The association between Australian diggers and two-up has been institutionalised in ritualistic games of two-up held after the memorial service every Anzac Day. The annual Anzac Day two-up game has become an important link that has united and revitalised generations of war veterans. I think the honourable member for Gympie made the point that as a young officer he would play with older diggers. I think he drew attention to a very significant linkage. That is why the government's bill allows two-up to be played only at an RSL club in Queensland or at other licensed premises if approved in writing by an RSL subbranch—not at any licensed premises such as the opposition is proposing. Again, that is one of the reasons we are advocating this bill. It is about bringing people together and acknowledging the traditions. It is not just about saying, 'Off you go and do it by yourself.' Australian soldiers are very social people. In fact, they can get into a bit of trouble when they are very social. One of my favourite movies, that great Vietnam War movie *The Odd Angry Shot*, in many respects indicated what soldiers got up to when they had a few beers under their belt. So we are saying, 'When you are together, that is what we want you to be—with other diggers, with people who honour your memory or the memory of those who served with you in what you have done.'

To protect the vulnerable, the bill prohibits minors from participating. I repeat: the private member's bill does not do that. The Queensland government understands that many licensed premises provide a range of services and amenities unrelated to gambling, but it is important that young Queenslanders are exempt from being involved in gambling related activities. To ensure that two-up is not used for profit making, provisions within the government's bill prohibit the acceptance of commission on wagers by participants. However, the bill allows an entry fee only if the money raised is donated to the RSL or an RSL subbranch and is used to support ex-service men and women and their families. It should be emphasised that it is the intent of the bill that all money raised will be used for this purpose and, as I think the member for Barron River indicated, not to be used for club operating expenses or other administrative functions. Regrettably, our World War 2 population is now quite elderly and, therefore, in need of support. Our Vietnam veterans are getting older. Regrettably, we now have a number of ex-servicemen from Iraq, Afghanistan and other places. Obviously, there are some families that are being looked after by Legacy but, owing to the various problems that people sometimes have after military service, there is a significant need to provide support for them as well.

I now move to the other amendment that relates to consuming liquor on Good Friday. Major sporting events bring significant benefits to Queensland by providing entertainment for Queenslanders, increasing tourism and giving valuable exposure to our state in the international sphere. This amendment helps to secure these benefits. My colleague the Minister for Sport will speak in more detail about that amendment. I acknowledge that the member for Gympie raised an issue in relation to opening times and suggested that noon would be a better time to open rather than 10 am. I think that is quite a responsible and reasonable suggestion that the government is more than happy to acknowledge. There will not be very many sporting matches starting at midday—or indeed at 10 am. The later opening time sends the message that this day is not the same as usual. People should not assume that on Good Friday it is business as usual. I think that is a reasonable point.

I would like to thank the Finance and Administration Committee for its consideration of the bill and the substantive report that it provided, which was informed by public hearings. I note that the committee recommended that the bill be passed with only minor amendments. The government has listened to its stakeholders and fully supports the recommendation of the committee. As such, the government will remove Remembrance Day as a day upon which to play two-up as the RSL advises that it is a more sombre day of remembrance. I should note that in one day in the battle of the Somme the entire

population of my district—40,000 people—were killed. That is the terrible terror of World War I. You cannot contemplate that, prior to nuclear weapons, you could kill 40,000 people in a day. That was how horrific that war was.

The government also supports the recommendation to ensure that two-up be defined specifically as an example of a game in the act. Accordingly, some minor amendments will be made during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. That amendment reflects our commitment to have a balanced and considered approach. I should declare that I am a member of the Manly-Lota RSL subbranch and also a member of the Wynnum RSL Club. I am very privileged to be a member of the Manly-Lota subbranch. There is not a finer group of men and women who you will ever meet in terms of having a drink with them. Last year at the Manly Anzac Day ceremony my youngest son had the privilege of delivering a speech in remembrance. I was tremendously proud of him. He did it off his own bat without my suggestion or help. You do not get a greater honour than to be able to do that.

In terms of the legislation, I simply make the point that people can play politics if they want to with this legislation, but the Premier indicated that we would act. There is a year between one Anzac Day and another. We have never had a prosecution. The government sat down and did the job properly. If anything, this is another example of where Campbell Newman shoots his mouth off and gets someone like the member for Kawana to whack in some legislation. Then we see that it does not work. That is why the committee, with opposition representatives on it, recommended the government's preferred solution. The committee did not recommend the honourable member's bill. It is fine for him to say that the Law Society thought that the amendment should be contained in the Criminal Code. You do not want to load up the Criminal Code with more and more provisions. The Criminal Code is supposed to contain significant and substantive provisions of our criminal law that people are prosecuted under. It is a great work of art that was completed by Sir Samuel Griffith in 1899. It is not the place for this amendment and other states have not recognised their criminal codes as being the place for such an amendment. Not only did the committee recommend and prefer the government's solution, so did the RSL.

I say to the honourable member that when he is on his feet saying things like, 'The more you say things the longer I will speak,' he reminds me of one other member in this parliament, and that was the former member for Clayfield, Santo Santoro. I exhort the honourable member to not seek to emulate his achievements in this House or elsewhere, because I do not think that that is the record that anyone would want. It certainly was not the one that people on his own side wanted. As I indicated, the member for Gympie, in a short and succinct contribution, made the point about two-up being illegal when played by the diggers. The member for Gladstone, in an equally short and succinct contribution, made that point as well.

The other point that I wanted to highlight was one that the member for Gladstone raised in relation to liquor on Good Friday, which I think was a significant one. She indicated that we need to make sure that we do not forget things that are an important part of the cultural traditions of this country. In that regard I certainly would endorse her comments. We say the Lord's Prayer or other prayers in the Christian tradition in parliament. However, I also say that the great thing about this country is that you can be a person of any faith or, indeed, of none. I am not interested in, for example, the religious preferences or none of a leader. I think that distinguishes us from people in the United States in a very positive sense. As the old ditty used to go, 'Mr Smith went to mass and he did it every Sunday. Mr Smith went to hell for what he did on Monday.'

I also would say to the honourable member for Gladstone that in relation to religious significance, ultimately that is not a matter that is dictated by legislation. In relation to countries, states and religious denominations—in fact, my own is a classic example of it and perhaps more so a classic example than hers—setting edicts, as mine has been known to do from time to time, you do not legislate religious or moral values. They are observed as a result of learned behaviours from your family and friends and the society that you grow up in. People will observe Good Friday based upon how they are raised or what their beliefs are rather than what the legislation says. I do not expect that this legislation will have more or less effect than that. However, I think we need to acknowledge those issues. It is interesting to note that at some of those Anzac Day football matches the organisers try to tie them into Anzac Day. So, if anything, they enforce the power of the Anzac Day message. I think that is an interesting point.

The member for Kawana in his summing-up pointed out that the reason he did not restrict—

Mr Bleijie: It was a quick sum-up.

Mr LUCAS: It was. I will admit that. He mentioned that the reason he did not restrict the bill to only RSL sanctioned events was that in some places there might not be a subbranch or club.

As someone who has travelled Queensland a fair bit, particularly to rural communities in my role as local government minister and in my work around natural disasters, my understanding is that like a masonic lodge just about every small country town has an RSL subbranch if not a club. I do not really think that is a valid observation.

To finish off this point I refer back to the article I tabled from the *Cairns Post*. I observe two points in that article: Cairns RSL subbranch spokesperson Peter Turner said he would support the move as long as the proceeds went to war veterans. With the government bill yes, the opposition bill no. The Premier indicated the government was not considering extending the exemption to other licensed premises. In the government bill yes, in the opposition bill no and the committee says yes. I commend the government's bill to the House.

Question put—That the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Honourable members, the question before the House is that the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill be now read a second time. I draw member's attention to the Speaker's ruling circulated in the chamber earlier this evening regarding the application of the same question rule contained in standing order 87. Standing order 87 provides that a question or amendment shall not be proposed which is the same as any question which during the same session has been resolved in the affirmative or negative. The Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill seeks to achieve substantially the same objective as that contained in the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill which the House has just resolved to read a second time. Therefore, under standing order 87 the Criminal Code (Anzac Day Betting) Amendment Bill cannot proceed and is therefore discharged from the *Notice Paper*.

Consideration in Detail

Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming (Two-up) Amendment Bill

Insertion of new heading—



Mr LUCAS (9.42 pm): I move the following amendment—

1

Before clause 1

Page 4, after line 1—

insert—

'Part 1 Preliminary'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new heading—



Mr LUCAS (9.42 pm): I move the following amendment—

2

After clause 1

Page 4, after line 4—

insert—

'Part 2 Amendment of Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2—



Mr LUCAS (9.43 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

Clause 2 (Act amended)

Page 4, line 6, 'Act amends'—

omit, insert—

'part amends'.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



Mr LUCAS (9.43 pm): I move the following amendment—

4

After clause 2

Page 4, after line 7—

insert—

'2A Amendment of s 6 (Meaning of *art union*)

'Section 6, 'envelopes and a promotional game'—

omit, insert—

'envelopes, a promotional game and two-up'.

2B Amendment of s 11 (Meaning of game)

'Section 11(1), examples—


insert—

'6 two-up'.

This is a minor consequential amendment that is necessary due to the way art union is defined in section 6 of the act by stating that it is a game other than those listed in the section. The amendment clarifies that two-up cannot be registered as an art union.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3—

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (9.44 pm): Prior to asking a couple of clarification questions on clause 3, on behalf of the member for Gympie I disclose his interest that he did not disclose before—that being a member of the Gympie RSL subbranch and also a member of the Gympie RSL. I disclose that I am a member of the Kawana RSL and the Caloundra RSL.

In relation to clause 3, which is essentially the entirety of the bill, I refer the Attorney to 179(2)(f), where it talks about the RSL or services club mentioned in paragraph (a)(i) or person approved in writing under paragraph (a)(ii) does not charge an entry fee for playing or charges an entry fee that is paid to the RSL or an RSL subbranch to be used to support ex-service men and women. I have a question in relation to that and I ask for the Attorney's assistance. I remember reading one of the submissions—in fact I think it was from one of the RSL groups—that mentioned what the definition of an RSL is. An RSL is the licensed premise. When I met with the subbranch division they preferred that it was just the subbranch that conducted these. The point is that, if it is paid to an RSL as the licensed venue, where does the money go? If a subbranch conducts it, that is the charity and it is doing it for its members and the money goes through its system. If it is the RSL, it is getting pooled with liquor money and all the other money that the RSL as the licensed venue makes. Is it the Attorney's assumption that the RSL will keep a separate book for money paid to the RSL licensed venue and how is that distinguished from other moneys that the RSL makes as profit? For instance, the Caloundra RSL has an RSL and a subbranch, if the subbranch do it we know where the money goes.

Mr LUCAS: Doesn't the subbranch control the RSL?

Mr BLEIJIE: Some they do and some they do not. Some subbranches do not have venues. What is the audit regime where the money goes into the RSL licensed premise? That is the first issue. I am satisfied with the Attorney's answer in relation to communities in rural regions that it is his view that there should not be any place in Queensland where someone should not be able to have a two-up game in some subbranch or RSL across the state. Can the Attorney give me that assurance? What is the situation if that is not in fact the case?

Mr LUCAS: I clarify that, when I indicated that I was a member of those organisations, I was not suggesting that anyone should contend that there is any conflict of interest. The honourable shadow minister has indicated that as well. In relation to 179(2)(f) I would say to the honourable member that organisations under the act itself are subject to audit. There are also offence provisions under the act itself for noncompliance with the provisions of the act. That in itself is an issue. Secondly, I think my learned friend is not correct when he says an RSL gets other moneys and therefore how do we ensure it does not get mixed up. Subbranches get other moneys as well. Subbranches get moneys that are not only applied for the benefit of veterans and their families. I will give you a classic example of it. Most of the money that a subbranch gets is theirs, but my subbranch, Manly-Lota, gives out books to schoolchildren in schools on Anzac Day. That is a highly admirable purpose but it would not fit within this.

Clearly, if you get it you have to account for it in your accounts to demonstrate where the money went to. That would be the same whether you were a subbranch or an RSL. I think it is a pretty straightforward thing. There are no specific provisions about how you should do that, but it is not difficult to code things in your books to show how they came to be there and then you can account for them later on. I imagine that members would be very keen to ensure that that was the case. As indicated before, some RSLs and subbranches are homogenous entities. In fact, that is more the case with the Wynnum RSL subbranch in my electorate. The Manly RSL subbranch does not have a club behind it. I move the following amendments—

5 Clause 3 (Insertion of new pt 8A)

Page 4, line 13, 'For the purposes of this part, *two-up*'—

omit, insert—

'*Two-up*'.

6 Clause 3 (Insertion of new pt 8A)

Page 6, line 5—

omit, insert—

'Two-up under section 179'.

Those amendments relate to the major sports facilities in Queensland. My honourable colleague, the Minister for Sport, will speak to those.

Mr REEVES: The government is introducing these amendments to the Liquor Act 1992 to provide for the sale of liquor at major sports facilities such as Suncorp Stadium on Good Friday when a major sporting event is being held on that day. Presently under the Liquor Act, the sale of liquor to a person is prohibited unless it is associated with the consumption of a meal in a place designated for eating. The proposed amendments will remove this requirement by providing for ordinary trading hours at major sporting facilities on Good Friday.

As we have heard, the Queensland Reds are scheduled to play the ACT Brumbies at Suncorp Stadium on Good Friday, 6 April this year. In fact, this year the entire Easter weekend is set to be a blockbuster sporting weekend with the Brisbane Lions playing Carlton at the Gabba on Easter Thursday, the Reds versus the Brumbies at Suncorp on Friday, the Titans and Cowboys holding home games, and a possible Roar semifinal at Suncorp. Because of the very nature of their operations, major sports facilities in Queensland, such as Suncorp Stadium, do not comply with the requirements of the Liquor Act 1992, whereby the sale of liquor must be associated with the consumption of a meal on the premises.

Mr LUCAS: I should correct the record. The fault is entirely mine. My colleague is speaking to amendment No. 9 to clauses 5 and 6 as distinct from amendments 5 and 6 of the bill. It is clauses 5 and 6 as compared to amendments 5 and 6, just for clarification. What he said, anyway.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4—



Mr LUCAS (9.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

7 Clause 4 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 6, lines 26 to 27—

omit, insert—

'(b) another day that is—'.

8 Clause 4 (Amendment of sch 2 (Dictionary))

Page 7, line 5, ', for part 8A,'—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr LUCAS (9.53 pm): I should point out that that last amendment was the one that took out Remembrance Day as of right and in accordance with the wishes of the RSL and also the recommendation of the committee. I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr LUCAS: I move the following amendment—

9 After clause 4

Page 7, after line 8—

*insert—***'Part 3 Amendment of Liquor Act 1992****'5 Act amended**

'This part amends the *Liquor Act 1992*.

'6 Amendment of s 9 (Ordinary trading hours)

'(1) Section 9(5), 'subsection (2)'—

omit, insert—

'subsections (2) and (6)'.
'(2) Section 9—

insert—

'(6) Subject to subsection (2), if a sporting event is held at a major sports facility on Good Friday, the ordinary trading hours of licensed premises at the major sports facility on Good Friday are between 10a.m. and 12 midnight.'

'(3) Section 9—

insert—

'(14) In this section—

major sports facility see the *Major Sports Facilities Act 2001*, schedule 2.''.
Mr REEVES: I move the following amendment to the Minister's amendment—

omitting—

'10a.m.'

And inserting—

'12 noon'

As outlined in discussions we had with the shadow minister and as the minister said in his summing-up, it is appropriate to make this change. These legislative amendments are the only option to address the issue and ensure that the Good Friday game goes ahead as planned. The booking cannot be moved to Thursday because of Super Rugby bylaws. It cannot be moved to either Easter Saturday or Easter Sunday because of other bookings at Suncorp Stadium, such as the possible Roar semi-final. If the restriction on the sale of liquor is not relaxed, the match may be relocated interstate. Queensland is the events state and the champion state and we are not going to sit on our hands and see our home games moved to the other states. The Super Rugby competition regularly schedules games on Good Friday across Australia and New Zealand. Also, New South Wales has been hosting national Rugby League matches on Good Fridays since the mid-1990s. With this amendment it is proposed that the Queensland venues will be capable of competing directly with other states and territories and New Zealand for the right to host major sporting events on Good Friday.

In relation to comments by the member for Gympie, the issue of the caterers being unable to secure a liquor licence for a Good Friday event came to the attention of the government in late November 2011. There was no opportunity to obtain crown law advice about the consequences of that decision ahead of the final sitting of parliament last year. This year the government has been able to obtain that advice which has confirmed the only course of action available to government to ensure the Reds game scheduled for Good Friday is not moved interstate is to amend the Liquor Act. As members know, the government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in world-class sporting infrastructure because of the benefits it delivers to the Queensland economy. By bringing Queensland into line with other states and allowing alcohol to be sold at the major sporting events and Stadiums Queensland venues on Good Friday, we can get more bang for the taxpayers' money, which is good for sports fans and great for jobs. I thank the opposition for supporting this.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, we will be supporting this amendment. I thank the minister for agreeing to our amendment of his amendment with respect to midday instead of 10 am. That has been confirmed. This whole issue resulted from the government going to industry and not the sporting group, the Rugby Union, about this. I do not accept the proposition just put by the minister that in November 2011, some four months ago, the issue was raised and somehow it has taken crown law four months to get advice at the eleventh hour—


Mr Reeves: I did not say that.

Mr BLEIJIE: We have only heard about this today. If the government had the advice a few weeks ago and it wanted the bipartisan support that it sought today, it would have contacted us. I cannot imagine that it took crown law four months to get this advice. I make that point. Yes, we will support the amendment. Obviously we would never want to get to the situation where supporters of rugby union at the game could not enjoy a drink from midday on. However, if we had a competent government this issue would have been addressed some four months ago when it first came to the government's attention.

Amendment to the amendment agreed to.

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (9.58 pm): I move—


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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Mr LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State) (9.58 pm): I move the following amendment—

10 Long title

Long title, after '1999'—

insert—

'and the Liquor Act 1992'.

Amendment agreed to.

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


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. PT LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Acting Leader of the House) (9.59 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

SunWater, Fairbairn Dam


 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (9.59 pm): SunWater is trying to hand over responsibility for the provision of recreational facilities to someone else. This is at the Fairbairn Dam in Emerald, better known as Lake Maraboon recreation facility. Because the local council has refused responsibility, SunWater is running down both the facilities and also the number of visitors to this site. SunWater's latest trick was to install boom gates to prevent public access and to impound cars when their owners did not cease boating in time to remove them. Such is the community anger that SunWater has removed the boom gates, but the strategy to kill Lake Maraboon as a recreation haven on the Central Highlands is still in play.

Over 14 days in excess of 2,200 people signed a petition protesting SunWater's actions, and I tabled that petition in this House today. There were another 600 signatures which did not reach me in time. That is how passionate the people of the Central Highlands are about this matter. SunWater should remember some facts. This dam was built and fully paid for by the Queensland taxpayer some 40 years ago. That investment has been returned many times through SunWater's sale of publicly owned water to townships, irrigators and the mines. When the Queensland government resumed land to construct the dam it promised the people of the Central Highlands they would have free public access for recreational purposes. In its own submission to the Queensland Competition Authority on the price of that water, SunWater states that it has a statutory obligation to provide modern recreational facilities at its lakes and that many of its facilities do not meet modern standards. It argues that the price of its water sales has to incorporate the expense of providing for recreational visitors. It has no justification for not providing that access and those facilities or for trying to palm responsibility off to the local council.

In over 40 years SunWater has done nothing to develop a second income stream from the development and the leasing of tourist attractions at the lake. Lake Maraboon is Queensland's second largest lake and it should be a major drawcard for tourists. There are no houseboat rentals like there are on Lake Eildon in Victoria. SunWater could also investigate the development of marina berths which could also be sold off for the benefit of people who want to enter the tourist industry in the future. That would do away with the 'hoon' factor there, keeping the facilities secure and family friendly. That is not on according to SunWater.


It is about time that people realised that because this government is so broke it is taxing the people of the Central Highlands and their recreational facility. No doubt this government is against families. The people of the Central Highlands and Emerald are trying to enjoy a facility that SunWater now sees fit to charge for.

Education

 **Hon. D BOYLE** (Cairns—ALP) (10.03 pm): Last week I had the great pleasure to open a new kindergarten in Cairns. Operated by C&K, it is situated on land at Balaclava State School in Cairns. It is a beautiful, state-of-the-art, purpose built building. It already has one full class underway and I am sure it will not be long before the second class will be filled. It was so well led by the teaching staff. It was indeed a happy morning. It was a particularly pleasurable event for me as it will probably be my last official opening as the member for Cairns and the last plaque on which my name as member for Cairns will be printed. I am reminded of how fitting that is at the end of this career of mine as member for Cairns. In my years of growing up my mother was a very strong advocate of education for me and for my three brothers. She made that very plain at all of the schools that we attended, to all of the teachers who had us in their classes and to each of my brothers and to me every day of our lives. In fact, her catchcry, 'education will set you free', became a bit of a family joke. Whenever we wanted to whinge about having too much homework or her cracking the whip over our studies, with a wry smile we would always say, 'Yes, we know, Mum. Education will set you free.'

My mum passed on some years ago. But if it is possible that she could be looking down on me and on us then she would be proud indeed of the achievements of the Bligh government in education over these years—of Anna Bligh as education minister and the changes she made to introduce the prep year, of the further changes as Premier that she has made in preparing Queensland to move grade 7 into high school, of the Mines to Minds program that has been so well received in Cairns and the surrounding areas and of the rollout now of kindergartens with a target of 95 per cent of our young ones attending kindergartens before prep year. It is an excellent reform and improvement to the Queensland education system. I have been proud indeed as the member for Cairns to support all of those changes in education. I have no doubt that they will provide the kind of fillip to these young children's lives that education has made to mine and to my brothers. That education will, in fact, underlie a tremendous future for the children of Queensland.

Disaster Management

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (10.06 pm): I rise to say a few words about some of the disaster management that has occurred in the Lockyer Valley. I table some documents that I think are relevant to this matter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 February 2012, from Ms Carola Washbourne to Mr Ian Rickuss MP, regarding the flooding in the Lockyer Valley [\[6455\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 14 February 2012, from Mr Ian Rickuss MP to Ms Carola Washbourne, regarding the flooding in the Lockyer Valley [\[6454\]](#).


Tabled paper: Extract from web page of Mr Carl Reichelt [\[6456\]](#).

It is important to be able to provide the people of the Lockyer Valley and Queensland information gathered by such experts as Carola Washbourne, the disaster manager with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Carl Reichelt from the Disaster Management Branch. These people are experts in their field. There was also a member of the Cairns council who was a disaster management expert who came down to the Lockyer and helped us. These people are leaders in their field. It is important that we actually get reports from them and that these reports get to the flood commission and also to the Queensland community.

It is unfortunate that public servants want to keep this information secret. It is unfortunate that the CEOs of councils decide that the information is their property. I am sure most ratepayers and the public would want this information made public. I am an honest person and when people in positions of trust try to keep what should be a public document secret I wonder why. It has a tendency to make me suspicious when what should be used for the public good is kept secret. Why is this a problem? Let us have the information made public so that we can move on with knowledge. Murphys Creek and Postmans Ridge were two very badly affected communities that suffered badly in the floods. There was devastation and also loss of life. They were left to fend for themselves for several days until the Department of Communities and locals started to get involved. We also had a lot of volunteers from around South-East Queensland come to help. The Lockyer Valley Regional Council did not seem to realise the urgency in the area. That is why some of this information could be important. Let us have this information, let us see if it is relevant. Let us see if we can improve the situation if a flood like this happens again. If something or someone is being protected here, what is the problem?

I again call on the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and the Cairns Regional Council to provide the information and reports relevant to the disaster in the Lockyer to the Queensland flood commission and the public. Do the right thing by the council and the public and make this information public. It is important that this type of information is not stashed away because some CEO of some council decides that it is important for them to protect their own little fiefdom. It is important that this sort of information is made public. We have experts in their field—the disaster management people of the Cairns and Cassowary Coast who have a lot of expertise in these fields. Carl Reichelt of the Disaster Management Branch is also an expert in his field. Let us make sure that the information that they have collected is made public and sent to the flood commission.

Election Signage

 **Mrs SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.09 pm): On 16 November 2011 the Moreton Bay Regional Council sent all sitting MPs and candidates an information fact sheet detailing its election sign policy. In it the council clearly set out conditions for election signs including when signs could be erected, the maximum size of signs and locations that signs can and cannot be erected. The local LNP has already put up illegal signage in my electorate. The campaign has not even formally begun and the candidate is already breaking the rules. But we have come to expect this kind of blatant disregard for proper process from the LNP. It does not bode well for the future. If the LNP candidate is happy to break the rules to pursue her own interests as a candidate, what might she be willing to do if she actually became a member of parliament? What favours might she be willing to do for the developers who are helping raise funds for her campaign?

I table for the benefit of the House a flyer asking people to attend a \$50 fundraiser at the home of Annette Mengel, a senior management employee of Pacific Harbour estate developers.

Tabled paper: Copy of invitation for LNP fundraiser [6457].

Can I say at the outset that I have never asked or received any money from them and decisions that I make as a Labor MP are based on benefit to the general community not on how much money goes in someone's back pocket.


That is sort of muddy tactics the LNP are at home with. So far in Pumicestone the LNP members have spent thousands on their candidate but have not done any actual work in the community. They would be grateful that developers are picking up the funding shortfall. However, people's votes will not be bought; they have to be earned. So I will continue to work to provide even more infrastructure services and facilities like the brand-new Ningi Ambulance Station to service our growing population.

But there are more muddy tactics like the LNP bogging the 'Can-do' bus on a local footpath after driving over and smashing the actual ratepayer funded cement path. I wonder if the local LNP councillor Parsons has had anything to say about this. Surely he would be getting the council to send a bill to the LNP for the extensive damage caused to ratepayer funded infrastructure. Speaking of the local councillor, I would like to take this opportunity to say to Parsons that if he interferes in any way with my legal election signs like he did at the last election I will be calling in the police. I despise con artists, imposters and particularly thieves.

I have worked hard to protect the unique lifestyle we enjoy in Pumicestone. I am proud of the fact that 80 per cent of Bribie Island is protected, but that protection will all be lost if the LNP and their developer friends have their way. People have to decide if they want a Gold Coast in Pumicestone—no offence to my friends and members from the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is a wonderful place but on the Gold Coast, not on Bribie Island.

I want to place on record my heartfelt thanks to my volunteers who have worked so hard already in the campaign to win the seat of Pumicestone for Labor—my husband, Jon Sullivan, whom I have been married to for 31 years, Peter Boyd, our very best friend Jim Punchard, Yvonne and Brian Williams, Margaret and Roger Hunt, and Justin Foster to name a few. Hopefully I will get the opportunity to thank many more after the election.

Maryborough Electorate, Rural Fire Brigades

 **Mr FOLEY** (Maryborough—Ind) (10.11 pm): I would like to bring to the attention of the House the plight of rural fire volunteers in my electorate. I met with a group of them about a week and a half ago, and to say that they are quite unhappy would be the understatement of the year.


The rural fire brigades previously existed on a very meagre \$25 per property levy. This was to cover all of their training commitments, the weekends and nights they spend out fighting fires and being called on at any time to participate in strike teams intrastate and interstate. This \$25 levy has now been taken away from them. Despite the fire levy in the Dundowran-Toogoom areas rising from \$25 to \$81 and in the East Booral-Nikenbah area rising from \$25 to \$161, this whole levy is now going to be kept by the Queensland Fire Service and not paid to local volunteers, which is scandalous. This is clearly a case of the government having their cake and eating it too.

I call on the minister to immediately reverse this decision and restore a share of the funding so that rural fire brigades continue to receive the \$25 that they previously received per block. I have called on the minister in parliament before to fully fund the volunteer operations as Queensland is the only state that does not fully fund volunteer fire operations—and that sends a very bad message to people who give of their time selflessly to protect our community. In Queensland there are approximately 2,000 permanent firefighters and 2,500 auxiliaries, but there are 34,000 volunteers, plus about 2,000 fire wardens.

The government could simply not contain fires without the services of the volunteer fire brigade. So it raises the question as to why the Bligh government is robbing the volunteers that it so heavily relies on. Clearly the government needs to take stock of the way it is treating rural fires and give them a much greater degree of autonomy and include them in the planning process of firefighting in Queensland. Most people do not realise that urban firefighting units can only fight fires from designated sealed roads and cannot go off-road and therefore rely on the rural fire brigade to be able to use their off-road four-wheel drive capacity to attend these fires and also to back up the urban units when they are in an area where it is difficult to get water.

I find that the rural fires in my area are doing a brilliant job despite feeling very, very undervalued. I call on the government to redress this imbalance ASAP.

Springwood Electorate

 **Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.14 pm): It has been a busy time in the Springwood electorate, with the many community groups that service the area doing amazing work. I recently visited the Logan East SES and presented them with a new Queensland flag. There were a large number of volunteers there for a combined training evening. It was great to see the group has a large number of females and a variety of ages involved—all of them bringing a range of skills, knowledge and experience to the group. They have been very busy attending to those in need of assistance due to storm damage, looking for missing persons and of course undertaking their training sessions. It is comforting to know that we have these brave men and women ready to assist us when we need them. In Logan City we can be very proud of our 'Orange Angels'.

It is that time of year again when the wonderful schools in the Springwood electorate are holding school leaders ceremonies and Parents and Citizens Associations and Parents and Friends Associations are holding meetings and many of them are holding their AGMs. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all school leaders and wish all schools a successful 2012.

There are a number of projects happening in our schools thanks to the hard work of the P&Cs and P&Fs, and I congratulate those who received Gambling Community Benefit Fund grants. Just one example is Springwood Road State School, which received some money to instal a prep playground, which I am looking forward to seeing soon. P&Cs and P&Fs members work hard, and I wish them a successful 2012.

When I said it has been busy, I meant it. It has been planting 30,000 trees busy in fact. I am very pleased to inform the House that Daisy Hill Conservation Park has increased by 127 hectares. The Priestdale property which joins up with the park was purchased last year. Minister Vicky Darling and I—and I am pleased the minister is in the House tonight—had the pleasure of planting the last of the 30,000 trees.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms STONE: We did. We had a wonderful time.

Mr Foley: How did you go with the other 29,999?

Ms STONE: We had good officers to do that for us, and I am about to thank them because they did a whole lot of work. They removed around five kilometres of barbwire fencing and old sheds, and they cleaned up weeds. They certainly have made a big difference to that former farmland. In fact it certainly is a great milestone for delivering the necessary food and shelter for Queensland's vulnerable koala population.


Of course in the last few weeks there have been many busy sign-on days for our Springwood sports clubs. I also want to wish all the sporting clubs in the electorate a successful year. Without the hard work of volunteers they would not exist. Thanks to all those who put in many hours to ensure sport is available in our suburbs. We are extremely lucky to have a wide range of sports available in the Springwood electorate due to volunteers' hard work and commitment.

There will be a lot of pink at Homestead Park this weekend as the Springwood Suns Cricket Club participate in the McGrath Foundation Pink Stumps Day. I am looking forward to assisting the club in their fundraising and participating in the pink games that will be taking place.

Lastly I would like to thank Springwood Centro for their new Justice of the Peace booth. It is going to provide a better working area for our volunteer JPs, who are providing a service that is greatly appreciated by the community.

(Time expired)

Coomera Electorate, Australia Day Awards

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (10.17 pm): Australia Day always gives us the opportunity to recognise and show our appreciation to those individuals and groups who have made an outstanding contribution to our community—ordinary people doing extraordinary things. It was my pleasure recently to announce and present the Coomera electorate's very own 'dedicated commitment Australia Day awards 2012'.

Our senior citizen is Peter Opperman. The Twin Rivers Community Mallet Sports Club nominated Peter, the volunteer groundsman at the Oliver Sports Complex cricket oval. The oval is used by both Logan District Cricket Association and the Twin Rivers Community Mallet Sports Club. Peter has dedicated many hours over 25 years to the maintenance of the oval, including establishing four full-sized courts for the mallet sports club. He was also instrumental in building the clubhouse, fencing the oval and installing the sight boards. His dedication and commitment has ensured that the oval is maintained in outstanding condition at all times.


Our citizen is Norm Jessen. Norm has been an inspiration to others in our community and an inspirational leader, working tirelessly for the benefit of the community. In particular, Norm is president of the Ormeau Lions Club and has been the driving force behind the Ormeau Fair for the past five years. Norm led by example in his vision to bring the community together and gained the support of so many in the business community, schools and local community groups.

Our young citizen is Kelsie James. Kelsie's community spirit is shown through her tireless efforts volunteering her time for those in need—always above and beyond the call of duty. Kelsie is a good role model for all young people. Her leadership qualities and willingness to always lend a hand to those in need are recognised and commended by all who know her. Through Highway Christian Church Kelsie works with year 12 girls, mentoring them and helping them develop their full potential.

Our community group is the Lions Club of Ormeau. The award was accepted by Boyd Evans, the secretary. The Lions Club of Ormeau is a valued organisation. It continues to volunteer its members' time and energy to the local and wider community, providing support for the local community second to none. In particular, the members have worked tirelessly in their efforts over the past five years in the organisation of the Ormeau Fair. Ultimately, \$40,000 was donated to the community this year alone as a direct result of the efforts of the Ormeau Lions Club and those who support the fair. In addition, they have been instrumental in bringing the Ormeau community together.

Our business not-for-profit citizens award went to Twin Rivers Centre. Pastor Reuben Roos accepted the award on behalf of Twin Rivers Centre, which is a dedicated and passionate organisation that has helped many adults, youth and family in the community by offering hope, support and love. The services they provide and the help they give to their community on a day-to-day basis have made a difference to so many. Their vision to be a house of hope, providing support to the Eagleby community and beyond, has been evident for many, many years.

Fernvale

 **Mr WENDT** (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.21 pm): I want to take the opportunity tonight to thank the Premier, who on 14 January visited my electorate of Ipswich West and caught up with me and the federal member for Blair, Shayne Neumann, at the intersection of the Warrego Highway and the Brisbane Valley Highway. On the day we announced the calling of tenders for the Blacksoil interchange. For those who do not know, that is a famous intersection as you leave the Ipswich area going towards Toowoomba. You can turn right and go up to Fernvale and through the Brisbane Valley. This intersection has been the bane of many motorists' lives over the last 20 years particularly. I am pleased to announce that tenders were called on that day. Tenders have another couple of weeks to run yet. It was great to see the Premier up there.


While the Premier was in the area on that particular morning we took the opportunity to visit Fernvale, which 12 months previous had suffered significant damage due to the floods which occurred in January 2011. On that day, of course, a number of homes in the Fernvale and Lowood areas, as well as Wivenhoe Pocket, situated on the Brisbane River, suffered severe inundation due to waters flowing not only from Lockyer Creek but also from Wivenhoe Dam. The Premier spent over two hours at Fernvale meeting those locals who had been affected and also the volunteers who had helped during that particular period.

I note that the member for Albert is in the chamber tonight. She was also there on the day visiting the site and paying her respects to the people in the area. The people of Fernvale, Lowood and the Wivenhoe Pocket are a hardy bunch. When the Premier was there—as well as the councillors, federal member Shayne Neumann and I—the locals really appreciated the opportunity to see the Premier and thank her for the great work the state government had done during that particularly busy time.

I take the opportunity to thank a number of people who assisted on that day. Joan, Noeline, Suzy and many others organised the day and, more importantly, organised the community to come together and think about some of the things that transpired. I think it was actually a great cleansing exercise for local people.

After that particular event we visited the Fernvale bakery. Various other ministers who have been to my electorate have had the opportunity to stop at the Fernvale bakery. Paul Lucas is a particularly big fan of the Fernvale bakery. We made sure that we had a couple of pies over there. The Premier had the opportunity to go through and purchase some pies. After that we actually bought some buns and went out to another house that had been severely inundated by flood. We spent an hour at that particular house, talking to the locals there as well. I take the opportunity, on behalf of my communities in those areas, to thank the Premier wholeheartedly for her care and appreciation for what had occurred.

Supreme Caravans; Fair Trading

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (10.24 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House a matter that affects not only the constituents of my electorate but also very possibly others throughout Queensland and Australia. The matter to which I refer is the redress Queenslanders have through Fair Trading and QCAT, in this case for major problems with their caravans. What can Queenslanders do if they have bought a lemon? I am referring to \$60,000-plus caravans that are alleged to have many faults and the owners cannot get them fixed. It appears that Fair Trading is not able to enforce any actions against the supplier for the alleged faults or to have warranties honoured. In this state the option for these people is to go to QCAT, but QCAT will only hear civil matters worth up to about \$25,000. The repairs for these vans may run to much more than that. So in Queensland we have departments that are not able to act and a tribunal that cannot be used.

I know of issues with at least five caravans in Hervey Bay alone from the same manufacturer in Victoria—all large vans, around six metres in length. There are another two that we know of. One owner has had a nervous breakdown and just wants it all to go away. The other is a doctor who most probably will just trade the van in. The problems that these vans have include leaky showers, cupboards not closing, other leaky plumbing, buckling wall panels, shoddy attempts to repair, the manufacturers plate not matching actual weights and bent chassis—yes, bent chassis. This is a serious safety issue. An independent engineer's report confirms that the chassis are bent 20 millimetres and confirms that this may be a safety issue with these vans. I table the report from automotive engineering consultant Rodney Style and Associates.

Tabled paper: Report by Rodney Style and Associates, dated 29 July 2011, in relation to Supreme Caravans chassis fault [\[6458\]](#).

In conclusion the report states—


Each Supreme caravan I have reviewed had a measurable chassis bend.

The Supreme Caravan owners have not caused or contributed to the bent chassis that developed with their caravans.

In my opinion this is an untenable situation for the Supreme caravan owners, because there will be premature major repairs necessary outside the warranty period due to the bent chassis/frames that occurred during the warranty period.

It is a pretty serious matter.

The True Spirit of Cyclone Yasi

 **Ms JOHNSTONE** (Townsville—ALP) (10.27 pm): Last week I had the pleasure of attending the Townsville launch of the book *The True Spirit of Cyclone Yasi* by Bernadette Lawson. There is no doubt that, while much has been achieved in the past year, the recovery, in both a practical and an emotional sense, will take much longer. Sadly, for many people the trauma of Tropical Cyclone Yasi will stay with them for the rest of their lives and they will have to find ways to rebuild, cope and then hopefully thrive again. Hopefully this book will be part of that recovery.

Bernadette Lawson's *Life Love Laughter Ink* aims to reunite and reinspire the world, one book at a time. *The True Spirit of Cyclone Yasi* has pulled together 46 personal stories which cover the depth and breadth of those who experienced severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi—stories from Tully and Cardwell about the SES 'Orange Angels', of the mahogany gliders, of Ergon Energy, of Mission Beach, of storm surges and much, much more. At the Townsville launch last week Bernadette stated—

This book is 46 incredible people sharing their special stories. It will enrich our lives as we grow in their struggles and revel in their triumphs. These experiences shape our lives and make us the people we are today.

In Bern's own words, this book aims to further support the healing process to the authors and become their opportunity to inspire readers in understanding that with great devastation and despair arises equally great knowledge and insight into ourselves. She also says that these books become truthful personal accounts of how our communities and countries cope with some of the most extraordinary circumstances of our time and will then serve as guidance for our children in the future.

One of the contributors, Mr Warren Kelly, was in attendance and spoke at the Townsville launch. Warren is the deputy group officer of the Thuringowa rural fire brigade group and first officer of the Black River rural fire brigade. He has been a volunteer firefighter for over 30 years, participating in operations during the 1994 New South Wales and 2003 ACT bushfires and in the Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi disasters of 2011. Warren's chapter is titled 'Yasi—An Unwelcome Tourist'. His introduction is worth repeating here tonight—

The whole summer became like a huge campaign war and to effectively deal with such an influx of imagery, emotion, devastation, dedication, heartache and heroism means that one slips into a routine that blocks a lot out to focus on the important tasks at hand. It is a principle called lock on lock out.

I commend *The True Spirit of Cyclone Yasi* to all honourable members and let them know that I am donating this copy of the book to the Parliamentary Library. I encourage all members to borrow it and take the journey of severe Tropical Cyclone Yasi through the eyes of another.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.29 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Attwood, Bates, Bleijie, Bligh, Boyle, Choi, Crandon, Cripps, Croft, Cunningham, Darling, Davis, Dempsey, Dick, Dickson, Douglas, Dowling, Eimes, 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, Mickel, Miller, Moorhead, Mulherin, Nelson-Carr, Nicholls, Nolan, O'Brien, O'Neill, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pratt, Reeves, Rickuss, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Ryan, Scott, Seeney, Shine, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Spence, Springborg, Stevens, Stone, Struthers, Stuckey, Sullivan, van Litsenburg, Wallace, Watt, Wellington, Wells, Wendt, Wettenhall, Wilson