



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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TUESDAY, 29 MAY 2012

 The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

Madam Speaker (Hon. Fiona Simpson, Maroochydore) read prayers and took the chair.

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

ASSENT TO BILL

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

The Honourable F. Simpson, MP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of assent: 18 May 2012

“A Bill for An Act to amend the Constitution of Queensland 2001 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of other Acts as stated in the schedule”

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

18 May 2012

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 18 May 2012, from Her Excellency the Governor advising of assent to a bill [153].

REPORT

Auditor-General

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General a report titled *Report to parliament No. 2 for 2012—results of audits: local government financial statements for 2010-11*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General of Queensland: Report to Parliament No. 2 for 2012—Results of audits: local government financial statements for 2010-11 [154].

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Resignation of Member

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I advise that on 25 May 2012 I received the resignation of the member for Gladstone from the Ethics Committee in order to ensure the committee numbers are compliant with the act. I thank the member and table the member's resignation.

Tabled paper: Letter of resignation, dated 22 May 2012, from the member for Gladstone from the Ethics Committee [155].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Loan of Documents

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that, in accordance with standing order 19, I have given leave to allow the removal of an 1873 petition from certain inhabitants of Roma and Maranoa. The petition has been loaned to the Supreme Court Library for its inaugural exhibition of the Sir Harry Gibbs Legal Heritage Centre.

Leader of the Opposition, Reflections on the Chair

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report No. 90, the committee stated—

In Queensland, and in many other jurisdictions based on the Westminster system, it is a recognised principle of parliamentary privilege that the character or actions of the Chair (the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Acting Speakers) may not be criticised by any member except on a substantive motion. There are numerous authorities that support this principle. The principle is based on respect for the institution of Parliament—the Chair being the embodiment of the power, authority and integrity of the Parliament.

Reflections on the Chair may undermine the authority of Parliament by diminishing the respect due to the institution of Parliament. The United Kingdom House of Commons has traditionally regarded any reflections on the Speaker as a breach of privilege and contempt of Parliament.

The committee's report was dealing with an allegation that a member had reflected on the Speaker in media outside the Assembly. The committee unanimously found contempt against the member.

A statement by the Leader of the Opposition on ABC News last night has come to my attention. In the news report there was a clear inference from the Leader of the Opposition that the Speaker did not uphold order enough in the first sitting week. I wish to make it very clear to all members on both sides of the House that I am not going to allow the Speaker, or any member acting as Speaker, to be criticised either inside the Assembly or outside in the media. I endorse a comment made by Deputy Speaker English during a ruling on 28 February 2008 that—

Not every criticism will amount to a reflection. Not every reflection will warrant action. At the end of the day, it is a matter of balancing freedom of speech with the nature of the statements.

However, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition's comment is a reflection on the chair and I would ask her to apologise for those statements. If the Leader of the Opposition feels that she cannot apologise, I will have no choice but to refer the matter to the Ethics Committee.

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.36 am): Madam Speaker, there was no reflection on the chair at all and I apologise to the House.

Madam SPEAKER: I would ask that the Leader of the Opposition's comments are unqualified in that regard.

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are completely unqualified.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you.

PETITIONS

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

Nambour Hospital, Car Park

Mr Wellington, from 420 petitioners, requesting the House to build a multi-storey car parking facility for workers, patients, families of patients and visitors at the Nambour Hospital [\[156\]](#).

Dimbulah, Police Resources

Mr Knuth, from 161 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a greater police presence in the town of Dimbulah [\[157\]](#).

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, sponsored by the Clerk in accordance with Standing Order 119(3)—

Sandy Creek, Extractive Industry Development

Two petitions, from 373 petitioners, requesting the House to prevent the development of extractive industry at 96 McCauleys Land, Sandy Creek [\[158, 159\]](#).

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

Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, Mining applications

Ms Male, from 520 petitioners, requesting the House to ask the Minister for Mines and Energy to ensure that no mining applications are granted on any part of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve [\[160\]](#).

Fishing Industry, Carp

Mr Dick, from 67 petitioners, requesting the House to rescind all legislation which controls carp fishing in Queensland waterways and to allow non-invasive methods of fishing; and align the legislation with the legislation in New South Wales and Victoria [\[161\]](#).

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

Fishing Industry, Recreational; Moreton Bay Marine Park Zones

303 petitioners, requesting the House to note the continued reduction of access for professional fishermen to inshore fishing; to transfer Fisheries Queensland back to the Primary Industries portfolio; and to support a scientific review of the current Moreton Bay Marine Park zones [\[162\]](#).

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—

18 May 2012—

[137](#) Mental Health Review Tribunal—Annual Report 2010-11

[138](#) Director of Mental Health—Annual Report 2010-11

23 May 2012—

[139](#) University of Sunshine Coast—Annual Report 2011

[140](#) University of Sunshine Coast—Annual Report: Highlights 2011

[141](#) Central Queensland University—Annual Report 2011

[142](#) University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 2011

[143](#) University of Queensland—Annual Report 2011

[144](#) University of Queensland—Annual Report 2011: Appendices

[145](#) Queensland University of Technology—Annual Report 2011

[146](#) Griffith University—Annual Report 2011

[147](#) James Cook University—Annual Report 2011: Volume 1

[148](#) James Cook University—Annual Report 2011: Volume 2

[149](#) Queensland College of Teachers—Annual Report 2011

24 May 2012—

[150](#) Murray-Darling Basin Authority—Annual Report 2010-11

25 May 2012—

[151](#) Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 13—Oversight of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner 2011: Interim Government Response

28 May 2012—

[152](#) National Environment Protection Council—Annual Report 2010-11

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010—

[163](#) Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 55

Adult Proof of Age Card Act 2008, Tow Truck Act 1973, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995, Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010—

[164](#) Transport Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 55, Explanatory Notes

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[165](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Vehicle Registration) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 56

Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995—

[166](#) Transport Operations (Road Use Management-Vehicle Registration) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012, No. 56, Explanatory Notes

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

[167](#) Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 57

Industrial Relations Act 1999—

[168](#) Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 57, Explanatory Notes

Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2011—

[169](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 58

Business Names (Commonwealth Powers) Act 2011—

[170](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 58, Explanatory Notes

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009—

[171](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 59

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009—

[172](#) Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 59, Explanatory Notes

Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

[173](#) Uniform Civil Procedure Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 60

Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991—

[174](#) Uniform Civil Procedure Amendment Rule (No. 1) 2012, No. 60, Explanatory Notes

MEMBERS' PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Inala (Ms Palaszczuk)—

[175](#) Non-conforming petition regarding Vietnam Grace Church Brisbane Inc

Member for Broadwater (Ms Barton)—

[176](#) Non-conforming petition regarding Indigenous child safety

SPEAKER'S PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK—

The following Speaker's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Speaker of the Queensland Parliament (Ms Simpson)—

[177](#) Oaths or Affirmations of Allegiance taken by Members of the 54th Parliament

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

Office of the Former Leader of the Opposition

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.38 am): I table for the record of the House the public report of office expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 when I was opposition leader.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Office Expenses, Office of the Leader of the Opposition, for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 [[178](#)].

Ministerial Expenses

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.38 am): I lay upon the table of the House the public report of ministerial expenses for the former government for the period from 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011. The tabling of this report is a requirement of the Financial Accountability Act 2009. The act requires that the Premier table a report of expenses on a six-monthly basis. As the report was not tabled by the former Premier prior to parliament being dissolved in February 2012—my information is that she had received it—and the commencement of the caretaker period, I am now obliged to table that report.

Tabled paper: Public Report of Ministerial Expenses, Total for all Ministerial Portfolios for the period 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2011 [[179](#)].

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Government Administrative Precinct, Redevelopment

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.39 am): I am pleased to inform members of the House that this government is developing an exciting plan to renew the government administrative precinct. It is no secret that the building and construction industry is showing signs of stress. We know from figures released by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission on 10 February 2012 that Queensland's external administrations rose by 12.7 per cent based on the period from the December quarter 2010 to the December quarter 2011. Consistent with this trend, six building contractors registered on the government's prequalification system have failed in the current financial year to date, eclipsing the number for each of the previous four financial years.

The renewal we are proposing involves the implementation of a five-year precinct master plan developed by the Department of Housing and Public Works' Accommodation Office. It will reinvigorate the government administrative precinct as well as provide a catalyst for new building activity in the construction industry in what will become a mixed-use precinct. Importantly, this precinct plan will provide around 18,000 jobs over five years and will be delivered at no additional cost to Queensland taxpayers. In fact, in the longer term it will save recurrent expenditure through the consolidation of CBD office space requirements.

The Queensland government administrative precinct area stretches from Queen Street to the Botanic Gardens and from the river's edge to Albert Street. The last documented plan for the administrative precinct was in 1974 and this area offers significant potential for revitalisation. This potential could be further enhanced when combined with the opportunity to develop the underutilised area underneath the South East Freeway. It is also an ideal time to work with the council to improve traffic flow around this precinct.

To kick-start this revitalisation, the Department of Housing and Public Works will this week seek registrations of interest in state and national media for the procurement of a new office building of up to 60,000 square metres at 1 William Street to replace the existing government CBD office space around the local area. The vacant site at 1 William Street is a strategic government holding due to its proximity to the state parliamentary complex and has been designated for government office development since 1974. It is intended that the cost of the new mixed-use building at 1 William Street and associated infrastructure will be met through the rationalisation of redundant properties. The private sector will be putting the capital up and it is proposed that the government rents the property. It means effectively that this will be done at no cost to the Queensland taxpayer.

For the government, the building industry, the private sector and Queensland taxpayers, everybody comes out a winner. The prospect of increased private sector development in the William and George streets precinct is a tantalising one. Mixed-use development may incorporate uses for office, retail, hotel, open spaces, residential and entertainment areas. The master plan will turn largely inactive areas into a unique urban precinct that protects and commemorates the existing heritage buildings and transforms the area into one which hums with activity day and night. This will not be the only place where that is going on. It will also celebrate the river by maintaining and promoting connections into and throughout the area.

Madam Speaker, I am sure that you will agree that this is an exciting time for the city and the people of Queensland. The implementation of this master plan, which will be done fully with the Brisbane City Council under the auspices of their existing CBD master plan and utilising the Urban Futures Brisbane committee that they have under the leadership of Bevan Lynch, will strengthen this precinct's identity as the heart of the Queensland government, reinvigorate the area, preserve the historical streets and buildings in this area and reconnect the precinct with the people of Queensland.

Alpha Coal Project

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.44 am): Queensland's Galilee Basin contains major untapped reserves of thermal coal that have the potential to bring huge economic benefits not only to our state but also to the nation as a whole. Today, I want to report to the House that the Coordinator-General has provided conditional approval for Hancock Coal's Alpha Coal Project in the Galilee Basin. This is the first approval for a mine in the Galilee Basin, which, when developed, will be one of the biggest in Australia.

It comes after a four-year process involving an environmental impact statement examining all of the anticipated impacts of the project and it comes with conditions to ensure that those impacts are minimised and mitigated. The GVK-Hancock venture will spend almost \$6½ billion to develop the mine and its associated infrastructure. Once operational, the mine expects to export 30 million tonnes of coal annually. It will generate 3,600 construction jobs and almost 1,000 permanent operational jobs.

The predicted flow-on benefits to the state, the nation and to every Queenslanders are immense. Over the projected 30-year life of the mine, an estimated \$83 billion in exports—around \$3 billion annually—will be earned; during the construction phase, there will be an estimated \$11 billion stimulation of the state economy, with 80 per cent of that benefit being retained in Queensland; and, during the operations phase, spending of \$190 million a year should bring an annual benefit for the economy of more than \$1 billion. This is a project that will have a profound effect on the Queensland economy and on the economic future of every Queenslanders for generations to come.

All of those factors highlight why projects like this are so important for the future of Queensland and why we are so determined to deliver them for the future of Queensland. Unlike the last government, we will ensure that these major projects are processed in an efficient manner, that they are dealt with in shorter time frames, that decisions are taken rather than deferred, that decisions are taken rather than dodged, or dumped in the too-hard basket. This project has passed a rigorous assessment, with the Coordinator-General providing a 383-page report, imposing 128 conditions on the proponents to mitigate the anticipated impacts. Those conditions and the other recommendations will ensure that those impacts are mitigated and properly managed as the project proceeds.

The Coordinator-General's report also approves Hancock Coal's proposed rail line from the mine to Abbot Point. The government has made it clear that we intend to facilitate and coordinate the development of transport infrastructure—and, indeed, all infrastructure in the Galilee Basin. Therefore, the government considers it critical for the development of the Galilee Basin that we provide certainty to all stakeholders. This means identifying preferred corridors which provide short-term staging options for railways as well as high-capacity transport solutions for the future. The Coordinator-General's approval today will bring those decisions into sharper focus.

The company plans to start work on the Alpha project and the necessary infrastructure next year and for it to become operational in 2016. Our government will work with them and the other proponents in the Galilee Basin to ensure that the benefits that can be derived from that great natural resource flow to all Queenslanders for generations to come.

Commission of Audit

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.47 am): As detailed in the LNP's 100-day action plan, one of our priorities in our first week of government was to establish an independent commission of audit to assess the state's finances and provide advice to help reverse the state's inexorable slide under Labor into a financial abyss after two decades of mismanagement—an abyss of deficits and debt under Labor. An independent audit is just that: independent, free from intervention from the Treasurer and working at arm's length to produce a report that is truthful, detailed and based on all the facts. The commission of audit has the ability to request documents, information and consult with government departments and officials as it sees fit.

In keeping with our election commitment, on 29 March 2012 I announced that the Hon. Peter Costello AC had been chosen to head the commission of audit. I also announced that Mr Costello would be assisted by the soon-to-be former Queensland Investment Corporation chief executive, Dr Doug McTaggart, and James Cook University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sandra Harding. I have every confidence that these people are the right people to provide independent, frank and honest advice to enable the government to deliver the best outcome for Queenslanders.

In conjunction with the Premier, I have asked the commission to review Queensland's current and forecast financial position and to make recommendations on three matters: strengthening the Queensland economy; improving the state's financial position, including regaining the AAA credit rating, which was lost under Labor; and cutting government waste and ensuring value for money in the delivery of front-line services.

I reiterate that this is about creating a long-term agenda for the future of Queensland, not just a three-year election cycle. It is about identifying the problems and the reasons we are in the fiscal mess we are in, while providing the public with the confidence that the numbers presented have been robustly tested. Unlike those opposite, this government will always make decisions that are in the best interests of all Queenslanders.

The commission will report back to the Premier and myself with its recommendations on the following dates: on 15 June 2012 we expect to receive the first interim report; on 30 November 2012 we will receive interim recommendations; and on 28 February 2013 we will receive the final report of the commission. The commission is being supported by a chief executive officer, Mr Mark Gray, and a small team of primarily public servants. It will be funded from within Queensland Treasury and Trade's existing budget by reprioritising and reallocating existing resources.

The Newman government is determined once again to get Queensland back on track. Every government should live within its means, a fact the former Labor government never realised, leaving us with ballooning debt and no plan to get the Queensland economy back on track. We remain committed to delivering outcomes for Queenslanders and once again making this state the engine room of the Australian economy.

Advice from the commission of audit will also inform preparations of the state budget for 2012-13. The budget will be delivered on 11 September as previously advised. I look forward to receiving the first instalment of the commission's work and reporting to the people of Queensland on its contents. As I said in the last sitting week, every day that Peter Costello is working on that commission of audit is a good day for the people of Queensland.

Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (9.51 am): Madam Speaker, may I add my congratulations to you as Queensland's first female Speaker. I am very pleased to inform the House that the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games board met for the first time last week. The opening ceremony for the games is less than six years away and time is of the essence. This is a landmark project that will transform the Gold Coast, create tens of thousands of jobs and deliver immense benefits for all Queensland. The eight member games board was chosen for its skill base and expertise and its ability to analyse and act on the large amount of data and reports that will shape this huge event.

This government is determined to deliver these games on time and on budget, and we have the team with the dedication and drive to do just that. At their meeting the board assessed reports and submissions surrounding the location of the games village. After careful consideration the board, in a unanimous vote, has recommended Parklands at Southport as the games village site. Parklands was identified in Queensland's official bid documents for the games as the preferred village location and I am satisfied the board has made the right decision in settling on the Parklands site. It is a decision that puts to rest the rumour and speculation about the location of the village and it will now allow the board to get on with the job of delivering the best Commonwealth Games for Queensland and the world. There is little doubt that the Parklands venue, which is the home of the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct, was head and shoulders over other identified sites for the games village. A number of criteria were evaluated by the games board, including the high standards of security and the challenges of

housing, feeding and transporting competitors and support staff. Construction of the village is a major undertaking and work needs to commence as soon as possible to ensure that it is completed on time. We must get this right and we must ensure that we are delivering the best possible return for taxpayers' investment.

I have a great deal of confidence in the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Board and I believe its recommendations on the site of the village will have widespread community support. It already has the support of the mayor of the Gold Coast City Council. The council is a key partner in delivering the games. Queensland has a very proud sporting heritage and a great record in supporting and delivering world-class events. I urge all members of parliament to give their full support to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

National Sorry Day

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.53 am): At this time of the year there are three significant events for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike: National Sorry Day, which was held last Saturday; Reconciliation Week, which runs until 3 June; and Mabo Day, which is also celebrated on 3 June. National Sorry Day on 26 May was a time when all Australians and Queenslanders were able to take time out and reflect on the hurt and suffering endured by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who formed the stolen generations and their descendants. It is important for all of us to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and to commemorate those who endured suffering and hurt as a result of those wrongs.

Since I have taken on my new portfolio responsibilities I have become increasingly aware of significant issues affecting Indigenous people and have come to recognise that National Sorry Day is a significant day for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians alike. For Australians and Queenslanders it is important to acknowledge the wrongs of the past and to commemorate those who have endured suffering and hurt as a result of those wrongs. As painful as past events have been, as we reflect on that past we should also reflect on our responsibilities for the future and how, through positive actions, we can ensure such wrongs never happen again. My commitment is to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to secure their futures. That includes providing for homeownership, improving health outcomes and increasing successful participation in schooling.

In Queensland, National Sorry Day was marked by events across the state, including concerts and barbecues, flag raising events, morning teas and lunches. In Brisbane, for example, remembrance ceremonies were held at The Gap, Sherwood and West End for the Stolen Generation Alliance and other groups. As happens each year, Sorry Day traditionally is held in the lead up to Reconciliation Week which, of course, is on now and concludes on 3 June. Reconciliation Week is an opportunity for Queenslanders to be actively involved in the reconciliation process by considering what they could do to improve the employment, health and education opportunities for the state's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous peoples. We are making real progress with reconciliation, but the focus must remain on practical measures to improve the lives of Indigenous Queenslanders.

While recognising the achievements and successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it does not change the fact that many of them remain economically and socially disadvantaged. We all need to contribute in practical ways, working together to enable changes in people's lives for the better. The Newman government is certainly committed to ensuring that Indigenous Queenslanders have access to the same opportunities and choices available to non-Indigenous Queenslanders. It requires everyone to play a part in opening up these opportunities for jobs, access to adequate health services, schools and housing.

Reconciliation Week is being marked by a variety of events across Queensland. At Townsville a reconciliation festival will be held this weekend at the Strand Water Park; in Gladstone children from the Clinton State School will tackle a drawing and writing competition based on what reconciliation means to them; and, of course, amongst the many Brisbane events, a concert for young people was held at the State Library at South Bank last Sunday. I encourage individuals, businesses, organisations and schools to think about what reconciliation means and how they can be involved in an active and united effort to bring it into reality.

It is particularly significant this year that the last day of Reconciliation Week is also Mabo Day. In the lead-up to Mabo Day on 3 June the Queensland government has reconfirmed its commitment to removing barriers to sustainable ownership on Indigenous land in Queensland. This commitment is one of the Queensland government's pre-election policies. We have taken early steps in working with relevant parties, traditional owners of the land, individual community members and other stakeholders to remove these barriers. We have identified that we need to address land tenure issues, which include ensuring traditional owners and Indigenous councils have the capacity to undertake land administration activities and resolving outstanding issues with legislation.

The government will continue to work with communities and community leaders who have been advocating for homeownership over recent years. Mabo Day 2012 is particularly notable in that it is the 20th anniversary of the High Court of Australia's 1992 judgement in the Mabo case which recognised that Indigenous people's rights to land and sea have not automatically been extinguished by the arrival of white Australians. Mabo Day will always be one of the most significant days on our national calendar. This decision to overturn the legal myth of terra nullius, which means land which belongs to no-one, became the cornerstone of the government's push for reconciliation. It recognised that Indigenous Australians may continue to hold rights over their land and their sea. I commend all of these events to the House and to all Queenslanders.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I acknowledge the schools that are visiting today: Humpybong State School, represented by the member for Redcliffe, and Villanova College, Coorparoo, represented by the member for South Brisbane.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.59 am): I rise to offer a personal explanation. I wish to apologise for possibly misleading the House during the debate that took place in this chamber on 17 May 2012. If so, this was done inadvertently and unintentionally. During the course of the debate it was alleged that I mislead the House by denying that I said 'aye' during a division. Hansard does not record my denying that I said 'aye', but rather records that I stated twice that my recollection was that I had said the word 'divide'.

Since then I have had a chance to further review the *Record of Proceedings* and I accept that my statement about what I recollected saying should have also included that I said 'aye' in error before saying 'divide'. I then proceeded to make my position clear by calling together with other opposition members for a division. I want to emphasise that I had no intention of misleading the House nor did I have any intention of changing my vote. What occurred was simply a human error on my part and for that I apologise to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.00 am): I rise on a matter suddenly arising. I hear the Leader of the Opposition's apology for the inconsistency in her memory in the last sitting week.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr STEVENS: It is not a point of order, but a matter suddenly arising. Standing order 107(4) clearly states that if a member contravenes standing order 107(3), which deals with the matter that the Leader of the Opposition has just raised, 'the Speaker, on being informed'—and I am rising to inform you, Madam Speaker—'shall order the tellers list to be corrected' to, in fact, reflect the proper voting pattern that the Leader of the Opposition should have complied with in voting with the government on that matter.

Madam SPEAKER: I will take that matter under advisement.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Mungkan Kandju National Park

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.01 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

- Recognises the handing back of Mungkan Kandju National Park to its traditional owners (the Wik Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu People).
- Welcomes the transfer of an additional 75,074 hectares of freehold land previously revoked from the Archer Bend section of the park to the Oyala Thumotang Land Trust.
- Acknowledges that the return of this freehold land serves in part to rectify a past injustice whereby Wik Mungkan People were prevented from purchasing the Archer Bend Pastoral Holding as a pastoral lease.
- Recognises that with the return of this land, the State Government is closing a chapter of history and building a joint approach to conservation, as well as forming a strong working relationship with traditional owners.

Madam SPEAKER: Question time will go until 11.02 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ministerial Accountability

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.02 am): My question without notice is to the Premier. Will the Premier ban his ministers and assistant ministers from attending cash-for-access events and, if he is unwilling to do this, will he commit to releasing full details of who attends those events and how much is charged for access to LNP ministers?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her question. Firstly, I should say that I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition would ask this question, because it exposes the hypocrisy of the Labor Party during the recent campaign. Members will recall that the previous Premier, Anna Bligh, said that they did not do cash-for-access events anymore, but we know that they did, in fact, conduct those sorts of events. That is documented in the media. Also, I recall that they were touting the federal Treasurer and saying, 'Come and see him' at a waterfront restaurant on the Brisbane River in the last 12 months. It was issued from ALP headquarters at Peel Street by Mr Anthony Chisholm. It is a matter of fact.

Let us be very clear: last year in this parliament they introduced legislation that was designed to empower the union movement to spend a bucket load of money. The union movement was given special designation and exemptions so they could spend half a million dollars each, but of course this side of politics—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise in the chamber.

Mr NEWMAN: We know they created legislation to essentially try to rig the playing field when it came to raising money for elections. Today I say that we will review that legislation. It will be reviewed. I think it would be a very good job for one of the portfolio committees. They should go around Queensland and conduct an inquiry into what the unions put into various campaigns across the state. That would be very interesting.

At the moment at the federal level we are seeing the totally disgraceful situation with the Health Services Union and allegations about the misuse of hardworking union members' funds on, shall we say, inappropriate expenditure. We have seen that. In Queensland there are many hardworking union members who would want to know how their money was spent during the recent election campaign. We know that in the seat of Ashgrove hundreds of thousands of dollars was taken out of the pockets of low-paid workers. We also know—I have been given a bit of paper here—that a lobbyist who spoke on the condition of anonymity said that the \$4,500 paid by corporate observers to attend the ALP state conference in June would usually be fired up with contact with senior members of Ms Bligh's staff.

(Time expired)

Public Service, Jobs

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question without notice is again to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's announcement that his highest infrastructure priority is a new office in the CBD for himself and his ministers. As the Premier is able to estimate the project will create 18,000 jobs, will he now be upfront and reveal how many government workers will lose their jobs as part of the LNP's jobs purge?

Mr NEWMAN: Where do I start? Perhaps I should start with the words of the Leader of the Opposition, spoken on the radio this morning. We know the Leader of the Opposition is already supportive. The Leader of the Opposition has said that this is a great project. She said, yes, there will be lots of jobs. That is what we heard from the Leader of the Opposition. Some other positive comments were also made about the whole thing. The project will create jobs. It is believed that it will create 18,000 jobs over the next five years. What else is it about?

Currently, we have about 420,000 square metres of CBD office accommodation, either owned or leased. The program we are contemplating will see this reduced to 320,000 to accommodate the same number of government workers. How can that be the case? It is because for years the people opposite me ran this government into the ground and provided their staff with appalling, non-productive conditions. We will create a change that will give people decent accommodation, such as at the Brisbane City Council where open-plan office accommodation means workers can be more productive. We will save 100,000 square metres of office space. Do members know what the recurrent expenditure of that is? CBD office space costs about \$550 per square metre per annum and then, of course, there are the outgoings. We will save \$60 million in recurrent savings through the consolidation of our office space requirements in the Brisbane CBD.

Look at them! They cannot get it. The Labor Party are economic illiterates. They do not understand that we can do this and we can do it over the next few years in a carefully considered manner. I have said that we will do this in cooperation with the Brisbane City Council. I have spoken previously to the Lord Mayor about this. He is very excited about our plan to revitalise this parliamentary precinct. We are creating jobs, we are revitalising the precinct, we are saving \$60 million a year in recurrent expenditure and we are providing decent accommodation for our hardworking public servants.

Unemployment

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the honourable the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House about any recent events which have assisted the Queensland government with its plan to lower unemployment to four per cent over six years and get Queensland back on track?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Gregory for this question. I am delighted to take the opportunity to update the House on our commitment to reduce unemployment to four per cent over the next six years. We have a plan to transform Queensland into the engine room of Australia's economy. The aviation sector is a very important part of that plan to grow our four-pillar economy and get the state back on track. Aviation is particularly important to this geographically diverse state given the need to support agriculture, regional communities and, of course, the mining and gas sector. We welcome, therefore, the decision by Qantas to consolidate its heavy maintenance facilities here in Brisbane. During the last election period we promised to work every single day to reduce unemployment in Queensland, and Qantas's decision has already played a key part in this plan. It is a great decision by the airline to consolidate those heavy engineering and maintenance operations here. It demonstrates and reinforces its already considerable commitment to the state of Queensland which, of course, is its birthplace.

Back in 2009 Qantas opened the heavy maintenance, repair and overhaul facility at Brisbane Airport, which is guaranteed to employ over 500 Queenslanders at least until 2014. Qantas currently employs around 5,650 staff in the state, with 600 based at the MRO operations here in Brisbane. With this decision, hundreds of new jobs will be coming here to Brisbane. If you want to get the actual figure, go to Qantas. We know, for example, that it talked about hundreds of workers and their families in Melbourne being offered relocation packages to come to Queensland. I want to stress that we did not put any money on the table.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I hear the Leader of the Opposition interjecting. I will take that. Do you know what members opposite did? They went around Queensland, scattering money like confetti. That is how the Labor Party creates jobs: subsidy. They think that putting money on the table—corporate welfare—is the way to create jobs. That is not the way to create jobs.

Ms Trad: CityCycle.

Mr NEWMAN: Now we have the member for South Brisbane interjecting. She is another person on that side who has not ever had a job in the private sector. How would she know? 'Money comes down from the union members; they pay the fees; I take the pay packet. Now I am on the government teat and I will just take the money.'

We welcome the decision which will result in hundreds of new jobs in Queensland and we welcome the support for the aviation sector in this state. No doubt other spin-off opportunities will arise from this important decision. I thank the head of Qantas, Mr Joyce.

Deputy Premier, Office

Mr MULHERIN: My question without notice is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier tell the taxpayers who approved his move to exclude the public from the Bernays Room and commandeer it as his private office? What costs were involved?

Madam SPEAKER: I will allow the Deputy Premier to answer this question as he sees fit, but I remind the House that there are responsibilities in respect of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. I refer to standing order 113 that questions put to a minister must relate to public affairs with which the minister is officially connected or to any matter of administration for which the minister is responsible.

Mr SEENEY: For almost two months now we have struggled to come to grips with the extent of the failure of the previous government. The waste of money—the waste of public money—has been one of the highlights of the former failed Labor government and that waste reaches heights that are difficult to comprehend. When we think of the money that was wasted by the former Labor government we wonder why the members of the opposition would come in here and ask a question such as this. We think about the nurses payroll, which my colleague will tell the House was a waste of some \$300 million, \$400 million—now almost \$500 million. Last week in this chamber I talked about the debacle in the Mary Valley created by the former Labor government of which the member who asked this question was a

part. That government wasted some \$250 million and we have not cleaned up the mess yet. The member who asked the question was a minister who was associated with that debacle—\$250 million. Add that to the nurses health payroll. We can go down the list: the hundreds of millions of dollars that were wasted on the water grid, the \$3 billion that was wasted on wastewater treatment plants—it is easy to say. That is \$3,000 million that was wasted on rusted desalination plants, on pipes that are carrying nothing, on wastewater plants.

Then there is the Traveston Dam debacle. The list is endless—hundreds of millions of dollars—and the member who asked the question sat around the cabinet table and made those decisions that wasted billions and billions and billions of dollars. Yet he comes in here today and asks a question. I think that is a well-recognised response from people who are completely out of their depth in any situation. What they do is focus on the minutiae. When you cannot handle the size of the problem they focus on the minutiae, and so it has been for the opposition for the past two months. They have been totally fixated on where their offices are, on where they sit, on how many staff and on who gets what. They have not come to terms with the extent of the legacy that they have left for the people of Queensland. They have not come into this parliament and apologised for the mess they have made of the Queensland economy. They have not come into this parliament and apologised for the election campaign they ran because they want to focus on this minutiae.

For the record, the allocation of office space in this building was done as a result of an examination carried out by the Parliamentary Service—independent of anyone. They recommended the use of that space. It cost nothing.

Galilee Basin; Abbot Point

Mrs MENKENS: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House about the Newman government's position on mining and development in the Galilee Basin and the development of port facilities at Abbot Point?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Burdekin for the question because it is an important question. It goes to the heart of the issues that we have to deal with if we are ever going to address the terrible legacy that was left to us by the Bligh Labor government. It goes to the heart of the issue of how we are going to earn the money to pay off the \$85 billion worth of debt that was left to us and to generations of Queenslanders to come and how we are going to overcome that terrible legacy. It is about developing Queensland's comparative advantage. It is about developing the income-earning potential that will earn the income for generations of Queenslanders to pay for the schools, the roads, the hospitals and the services that state governments should provide. When we look at the performance of the former Labor government in respect of the Galilee Basin, it too ranks right up there with the water grid, the Traveston Dam and the Mary Valley in terms of mismanagement and incompetence. The former government made an absolute hash of the development of the Galilee Basin and it has brought about a situation which we must now try to unwind. We must now try to bring about some sense in the future planning of the port facilities at Abbot Point.

I know the member for Burdekin has taken a close interest in this in recent weeks, and so she should be the local member representing that area and understanding how important that development is not just to Queensland, not just to regional Queensland, but to the people who live in communities like Bowen. So this morning's announcement that the Coordinator-General has approved the first major mine in the Galilee Basin—the GVK-Hancock mine—will bring into sharp focus the efforts that we have been making over the last two months to unwind the mess that the former Labor government made of the planning of that whole new coal province and the infrastructure required.

We have returned the powers of the Coordinator-General. We have made the Coordinator-General worthy of his name. He is not called the Coordinator-General for nothing. His role is to coordinate, and we have ensured that he will coordinate the provision of infrastructure for the Galilee Basin.

We have moved to take off the table the ridiculous T4 to T9, the multi-cargo facility—the great undeliverable nonsense that the previous government had planned for Abbot Point. We will develop Abbot Point in a measured, balanced, professional way that will ensure that the export capacity is developed in conjunction with the development of the mines to serve those export terminals. We have ensured that the approvals process is a professional, efficient one that looks at the evidence, that looks at the facts, and makes decisions based on science, based on fact, based on evidence, not based on emotional and political philosophy as we saw from the previous government. We have a responsibility to do this for generations of Queenslanders who will depend on the income that can be earned from the great resources industry that will forever be Queensland's comparative advantage in the world economy.

Infrastructure Spending

Mr PITT: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Will the Treasurer please outline the current estimated government infrastructure spend for 2011-12, list the major projects currently under construction across Queensland and provide an estimate of the number of jobs created by this expenditure?

Mr NICHOLLS: The member I think must have an extraordinarily short memory of being a member of a government who sat around a table and put the last budget up and put the last midyear economic forecast up, who sat around the cabinet table—presumably he had some role and was not asleep with his head on the table like someone on a lazy afternoon in a lecture theatre late in the day—and paid some attention to what was being done and what was being said as they put out their midyear economic forecast.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on my immediate left. There is too much noise in the chamber. I call the Treasurer.

Mr NICHOLLS: Having assumed—and I know it is a big assumption—that he applied himself to the numbers that were being put forward by the then Treasurer, having assumed that he actually took some role in the debate—again another assumption—he would have had some input into the decision-making process and he would have asked questions of his then colleagues—and there were 18 of them around the table; the glorious days when there were 18 of them. He would have been there saying, ‘What about some more projects for my electorate in North Queensland? How about making sure—I’m going to build the Bruce Highway.’ You think he might have had a look at the Bruce Highway and said, ‘What are we going to be doing to match that great plan that the LNP have put forward?’

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I asked a very straightforward question and it is about whether the Treasurer knows the answer to that question. I do not think there is anything political about that question.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PITT: I seek a ruling on relevance.

Madam SPEAKER: There is a point of order with regard to relevance. I ask the Treasurer to address the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was answering the question in terms of the infrastructure spend, which I understood the member to ask about. If he has changed his mind about the question he has asked, like the Leader of the Opposition changed her mind about the answer she gave, he is welcome to do that of course. Nonetheless, when he talks about infrastructure spending, he may have considered the funds that were going to be put forward to deliver that great eastern arterial for Queensland that the Labor Party so shamelessly ignored over its term in government. Every time a strong mist rolled in across the sea all they did was wring their hands and cry poor to their friends in Canberra. What they said is, ‘Oh, help us. We have no funds.’

What did we do? We said, ‘We need to fix up the Bruce Highway.’ We said, ‘This is something that has been ignored for far too long by this lazy, incompetent Labor government.’ This is a problem you have ignored for too long. The Deputy Premier now chairs a Bruce Highway working group and has put that together in accordance with our commitment to the people of Queensland to work out where and how it needs to be done.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members. There is too much noise in the chamber and too many interjections. I call the Treasurer.

Mr NICHOLLS: We have put \$100 million on the table each and every year for the next 10 years to upgrade the Bruce Highway in accordance with the plan being put together by the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Transport. When it comes to delivering on infrastructure, the people of Queensland can have faith in the LNP government.

Federal Budget

Mr MALONE: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer inform the House of the impacts of the recent federal budget on the Queensland economy and on Queenslanders in general?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for his question. The member is right to ask if we can have an understanding of what in fact the federal budget held for the people of Queensland. It is indeed pertinent given the question we have just had from the Manager of Opposition Business, who has failed—I note ‘failed’—to say one word about the impact of the federal budget on the people of Queensland.

We have just been talking about the Bruce Highway. Members will not be surprised to know that the federal budget does not allocate one extra cent for the Bruce Highway, not one extra cent for the Bruce Highway. So for this critical eastern arterial that I mentioned in answer to the last question—this thing that in the term of the last Labor government was of such importance to them—not one cent from the federal government is going into the Bruce Highway. I say quite clearly to the Leader of the Opposition, because I think the federal Treasurer is in the same faction—who can work it out these days, but I think the federal Treasurer, who is a constituent of mine, is in the same faction—why don't you speak to the federal Treasurer and say—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Will you address your comments through the chair and not use the word 'you'.

Mr NICHOLLS: Indeed. I apologise, Madam Speaker. I say to the Leader of the Opposition that she should approach her colleague the federal Treasurer and ask him to put his money on the table and deliver to the people of Queensland on the Bruce Highway.

We all remember the promise of the mineral resources rent tax and how one-third of that money was to come back to Queensland. In the budget this year, not one extra cent of mineral resources rent tax has been delivered back to the people of Queensland. So the state that, along with Western Australia, is delivering the economic boom that the federal Treasurer is relying on to deliver his surplus is not receiving one cent in order to deliver the infrastructure to get the mineral resources to port.

The budget also makes an announcement about—and this is a cruel scheme—the NDIS, the National Disability Insurance Scheme. This is probably the greatest and cruellest hoax of all on people because it makes an announcement in contradiction of the Productivity Commission report and provides no guaranteed long-term funding source and, of the money that it does provide, over two-thirds of it goes to administration. The federal budget delivers nothing for Queensland.

Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mrs MILLER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. What costs have been incurred in establishing the extra government department required for the minister's new portfolio?

Ms BATES: I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. As the member would be aware, my department is a very new department so we are still working on issues like that. I am advised that there have been some contractors et cetera in all of the different sections of my department who have been engaged. I am looking to determine how many are in front-line services et cetera. The Labor Party does not care about the staff in my department. You have—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I ask you to direct your comments through the chair and refrain from using the term 'you'.

Ms BATES: I apologise, Madam Speaker. I am happy to tell the member about what we are doing in my department. We have amalgamated science, information technology and the arts. We are working closely with Communities on that and—

Mrs MILLER: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask you to rule in relation to relevance. I asked particularly in relation to the costs that have been incurred, not for the minister to plagiarise some response—

Madam SPEAKER: I have heard your point of order. We will not debate the point. I will ask the minister to address the question.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on my left and on my right. There are too many interjections. I call the minister.

Ms BATES: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We, unlike the previous Labor government, are working towards recovering the debt in this department. There has been waste. Obviously we will have to look at all of the IT blow-outs, thanks to the inefficiencies and the unaccountability of the previous government. We are looking to make sure that we recover as many costs as we can. We are looking at—

Ms Trad: So what is the cost?

Ms BATES: I take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane. This member has been here for only two minutes and obviously does not understand the process of parliament. Only last week, as a newbie, she called 'divide' on an amendment to the motion establishing committees. Don't you want committees to be part of the process? The Leader of the Opposition ended up red faced over all of this—

Madam SPEAKER: I remind the minister to refrain from using the term 'you' and to address her comments through the chair.

Ms BATES: The other night the member for South Brisbane called for a division and embarrassed the Leader of the Opposition so much that she had to get up—

Mrs MILLER: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order, again in relation to relevance. I asked a specific question in relation to the costs that have been incurred in establishing this department and the minister has failed to answer the question. I ask for you to rule on relevance.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I ask you to address the question.

Ms BATES: My department is looking at its front-line services, and for us on this side of the House that means delivery. That includes the employees who provide direct and critical services to the people of Queensland. I am not going to accept the definitions of front-line service in my department that the previous government left us with. We can tell the difference between backroom bureaucracy and front-line services. I look forward to working closely with my department to deliver on behalf of the Queensland public.

Government Administrative Precinct, Redevelopment

Mr SYMES: My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. My question relates to the positive announcement on building and construction outlined earlier by the Premier in this House. What role will the proposed redevelopment of the lower George Street government precinct play in creating jobs and providing new opportunities for Brisbane's CBD?

Dr FLEGG: I thank the member for Lytton for the question and congratulate him on his maiden speech, which has now enabled him to ask this question and show his passion for taking Queensland forward with our government. One only has to walk outside this building to see what a dead end of Brisbane this is—a completely neglected and unloved riverbank, one of the key riverfront sites that has sat as an unloved car park since 1974. From the previous government we have inherited office accommodation that can be best described as a basket case. We currently have dozens of old buildings that are highly inefficient, and the Queensland government today is paying \$300 million a year in leases of various buildings around the place. In the CBD it is characterised by waste. We see individual departments occupying up to a dozen leased buildings across the CBD.

Here is a wonderful opportunity to open this long-ignored part of the Brisbane CBD to the public of Queensland—to finally see that riverbank valued and used, to finally see open space, to finally see private sector initiative that will deliver an entertainment and retail precinct. Importantly, in a time of great economic stress for jobs and the construction industry in this state and particularly in this city, we have an opportunity to create thousands of new jobs as we deliver a result that will open this area to the people of Queensland and save the government millions of dollars.

The previous government wanted to build high-rise towers in the middle of the Brisbane River and block off the views to the most wonderful heritage precinct that we have in Brisbane. This government will protect our heritage, create jobs, deliver an area to the CBD that should for years have belonged to the people of Queensland and see valuable real estate, that is currently ignored and wasted, used for the benefit of Queenslanders.

Parliamentary Precinct

Mr BYRNE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Public Works and Housing. How many rooms in the parliamentary precinct have been renovated by Public Works staff since the 2012 state election and what extra costs have been incurred?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I will allow the question to the Minister for Public Works and Housing.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order in relation to that question. I did not want to interrupt your conversation with the Clerk. Standing order 115(e) states—

Questions shall not refer to, or require the disclosure of, proceedings of a committee not yet reported to the House.

This clearly is a matter that will go to the CLA and will be reported to this House at an appropriate time, when the CLA has dealt with the matter.

Madam SPEAKER: There are no proceedings of the committee. I call the minister to answer the question as it relates to his staff as the Minister for Public Works.

Dr FLEGG: I thank the member for the question. The member is new in this place but I am sure that, even as a new member, he is aware that the parliamentary precinct is not run by the Department of Public Works; it is run by the parliament and the CLA. The Department of Public Works does do some

work if that particular client requests that work of us, and Q-Build is more than happy to assist the parliament when it is called upon. Any information in relation to the costing of that would rightly belong to the parliament and not to the Minister for Public Works.

I say to the member that we have inherited a system of offices that is a basket case—that is inefficient, that is wasteful, that is at the end of its life and that does not provide decent workplaces for our Queensland public sector workers. Rather than just—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! There are too many interjections on my left and on my right. I call the minister.

Dr FLEGG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rather than running around like headless chooks signing random leases here and there until we end up with one department in 12 different buildings in the CBD, we will actually show a bit of leadership here. We will actually ensure that there is proper accommodation, and in the process save tens of millions of dollars for the taxpayers of Queensland. With these plans to make sensible, efficient and money-saving decisions in the area of office accommodation, I will ensure and undertake to the member, and I have done this already, that proposals that come rightly through the Department of Housing and Public Works—and I am not talking about Parliament House here—will ensure that we do not renovate buildings that we are about to vacate. We will make sure that we do not renovate buildings that are going to be demolished, sold or redeveloped. We will make sure that, unlike the previous government, we are not a government that is characterised by waste by our right hand not knowing what our left hand is doing and by a sequence of embarrassing and enormously costly and wasteful decisions such as that that we saw from the previous government. To a very large extent, the early weeks of this government have been about sorting out so many wasteful basket-case situations that those opposite left us with, not the least of which is the ridiculous state of antiquated office accommodation that we intend to fix.

Flying Foxes

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Can the minister outline the government's plans to help landholders with the serious issue of flying fox populations?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question and for her interest in this matter. I also commend the member on her maiden speech, allowing her to ask this question this morning. I also commend the member on her very proactive and positive approach around this issue. The constituents of Mount Ommaney can rest assured that the member for Mount Ommaney takes this issue very seriously—so much so that she has on a number of occasions already had conversations with me regarding a particular situation pertaining to flying foxes in an urban environment in her electorate. I look forward to working with the member for Mount Ommaney in addressing that particular issue over the coming months and years.

I wish I could commend all members in this House for a similarly positive and proactive approach around addressing the issue of flying fox populations in urban environments and also in agricultural settings. Unfortunately I cannot. There is at least one member in this House who continues to want to play politics over this issue rather than sitting down and addressing it. It is a significant issue given that the electorate of the member in question has for 20 years been tackling this issue in consultation with the then Labor government—a Labor government at the state level and a Labor government at the federal level. It was only the LNP that took an election commitment that would address this member's issues. So it is surprising that this member, the member for Dalrymple, has chosen to continue to be drip-fed things by the federal government rather than work positively and proactively with myself and my department. Obviously he has mates in federal Labor and feels that they will be the ones who will address the flying fox issue in Charters Towers.

He is continuing to play politics. I understand that, given his interviews in the media throughout last week, he intends to bring forward legislation on this. That is purely about political stunts and political gain for him as a member, not about addressing the issue. We in the LNP do take this matter very seriously. It is why we took a policy to the last election—a balanced policy that is about conserving flying fox populations while also addressing human health issues and agricultural productivity. The Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is working to ensure that we can achieve that policy—that is, where a flying fox population in an urban environment is causing human health issues, we will assist the councils in moving that flying fox community on by giving that council, wherever possible, fast approvals and longer approvals. We have also undertaken to work with landholders in agricultural production to ensure that they have all of the means necessary to continue their vital economic contribution to this state.

Gladstone Hospital

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Minister, decisions made by Rockhampton continue to disadvantage Gladstone Hospital and the people of Gladstone. The latest decision results in a regular public haematology service ceasing and a more ad hoc service from Royal Women's proposed. Will the minister give an undertaking to the people of my electorate that focus will be given to enhance specialist services at the Gladstone Base Hospital given the population growth and industry mix?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Gladstone for her question. I have previously met with the member for Gladstone, who outlined to me a number of very legitimate issues with regard to staffing at the Gladstone Hospital and also issues with regard to the recruitment of staff at that hospital. This is one of the broader issues that we have in health care across Queensland, particularly in rural and regional areas across this state, when it comes to attracting and retaining staff in certain areas. I also say to the honourable member that I similarly have some concerns with regard to the way that decisions have been made previously in terms of the centralisation of services out of areas such as Gladstone and into larger district areas, and I would be very pleased to work with the member for Gladstone and anyone else to address this.

Madam Speaker, as you and other members of this parliament would be aware, we currently have a process to establish local hospital networks across Queensland. However, that depends of course upon a further legislative change and then they will become hospital boards. I envisage, honourable member for Gladstone, that once that process starts on 1 July there will be far greater autonomy and capacity to be able to plan and also direct these sorts of services into the more outlying hospitals within districts. Indeed, that is a message that I am going to be clearly giving to the hospital board chairs when I meet with them later today. My view and my vision for Queensland Health is devolution beyond the central office and devolution beyond the established districts so that areas such as Gladstone will have far greater autonomy in the future.

I can assure the member for Gladstone that I will work with her on this particular issue. A very clear indication from me to the new networks or boards, depending upon the passage of that legislation, is that they must do everything they possibly can to rebuild capacity in rural and regional hospitals around Queensland. Indeed, there is a significant advantage that will come from being able to reinstate those services in places such as Gladstone. We are very much aware of the impact of the resources boom in that area and the impact that that is having on housing and the impact that that is having on a whole range of services. We are also very much aware that in the honourable member's community there is a significant reliance—an overreliance—on locums. We are aware that there are medical staff positions that have been unfilled for a significant period of time, and that is one of the major policy issues that I intend to address following the establishment of the boards in Queensland. We need a breakdown of Queensland Health so that there can be more delivery of services such as haematology, urology, cancer services and a whole range of other areas across Queensland, including Gladstone.

Toowoomba, Education

Mr HOPPER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Will the minister please inform the House of the Newman government's commitment to improving the standard of education in Toowoomba?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question and congratulate him on being returned to this parliament with such an increased majority. The member would be aware that we have made announcements to produce a Schools Plan Commission which will properly plan throughout growth corridors around the state to coordinate the state, Catholic and independent sectors so that we have a better planning process for schools. I know that many new members have come to me already with ideas about places where they would like to see new schools. That is exactly what this Schools Plan Commission is going to be tasked with and we will ensure that all MPs in this House have their considerations taken into account by this plan commission, and I will make further announcements about that in the future.

When it comes to the Toowoomba area specifically, I know that during the election campaign we announced a new high school at Highfields, which is not necessarily in the member for Condamine's electorate. We have had significant representation by the new member for Toowoomba North and the new member for Nanango and their communities, who worked together very hard to ask for a new high school in a very important part of the state where there is significant choice for people. Toowoomba has a number of independent schools and a number of Catholic schools. I know that the former member for Toowoomba South was very proud of the educational reputation of Toowoomba, including that of the state sector of which, of course, the government and I are strong supporters.

That is why it is with great pleasure that we announce that we will keep our commitments—unlike the previous Labor government—after an election to make sure that we plan for this new high school at Highfields that will be built by 2015. The important thing is that we will have more facilities for those local communities. If that local community comes to their new school with the same gusto and appreciation that they showed in getting the plans okayed and getting the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Nanango to advocate for that school, then I am sure that that school is going to be a great success.

There is no doubt that, had we not inherited the budgetary situation that we have from the previous Labor government, we would be able to build more classrooms, we would be able to build more facilities and we would be able to support schools in a much better way than we have found ourselves. But because of the economic mismanagement of the Labor government, we inherited such a poor budgetary situation. Once again, I look forward to announcing further plans about the school at Highfields and congratulate those new members of parliament, who I know are yet to make their maiden speeches but I look forward to their contributions. We will work with all three sectors to make sure that our education systems in Queensland are the best they can be, because that is the most important aspect of life in Queensland for our children, who are the next generation of leaders.

Sale of Public Assets

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. On 21 February this year in the *Australian Financial Review* the Treasurer was quoted as saying—

We won't be selling any real estate without putting it forward to get a mandate from the people.

Will the Treasurer commit to honouring this pre-election commitment?

Mr NICHOLLS: It has not taken long. The member for South Brisbane has picked up all the old habits that used to reside in the government when they were sitting on this side of the House. The member for South Brisbane, straight out of Trades Hall, straight out of authorising some of the most vile advertising ever seen in an election campaign in Queensland, proudly standing up—

Ms TRAD: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is no relevance. I ask him to address his question.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer and ask him to answer the question.

Mr NICHOLLS: After being responsible and proudly putting her name as the authorising officer of one of the most vile campaigns ever seen—ever seen—in Queensland's history and still having failed to apologise for having put the people of Queensland through such a campaign, although the people of Queensland said, 'We don't need your apology'—

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer is not answering the question. I ask for a ruling on relevance.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the Treasurer to answer the question but also, in regard to the time that is on the clock, ask for relevance to the question. I also say to members on both sides that there are too many interjections in this parliament and that, where there are provocative statements made, you will also receive a response. I ask people to please retain the order of the House.

Mr NICHOLLS: Madam Speaker, thank you for that. I was just reflecting that it does not take long for the member for South Brisbane to adopt the habits of her predecessors in this place and that is, obviously, to quote selectively. When you look at the article in the *Australian Financial Review* by Mark Ludlow and Matthew Cranston of 21 February 2012—and we talked about it—I do say 'We won't be selling the real estate without putting it forward' but—

Mr Nicholls said, 'There would be further property sales if there was a relocation of government departments.'

As I say, how long did it take for the member for South Brisbane to get caught out again? Like the leader in front of her—and is she not strategically placed right behind the Leader of the Opposition! I hear that the word over at Peel Street is not that good. I hear that over at South Brisbane the boys in the smoky back room are saying, 'Hang on a second, this worked well for us down in Canberra, why don't we have a crack at it up here?' I can hear the old Tammany Hall knife fight. They are sharpening them up down there at the back of the room. They are getting ready to go. So on only her second appearance today here in the House of Parliament the member for South Brisbane has been caught out adopting the same old Labor Party politics that got them such a bad result at the last election.

It is a great decision. Nothing that Labor says can destroy the decision and the wisdom of the decision made by the Premier and the Minister for Housing and Public Works.

Local Government

Mr HOBBS: I have a question without notice to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister inform the House what the Newman government is doing to strengthen and rebuild the relationship with local government?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Can I start by acknowledging the member for Warrego for his question and say that I am truly honoured that it has come from the member for Warrego, because it was the member for Warrego who stood side by side with local government in its darkest hour. It was the member for Warrego who stood side by side when they were put to the sword by the former government, when they were told that they were doing such a great job in the Size, Shape and Sustainability process and then taken out to the middle of the field and shot.

The question is: what do I intend to do to rebuild the relationship? I will tell members what I intend to do. I intend to get out of the ivory tower in Brisbane and head out to the regions and talk to those communities. I intend to tell them—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the members on my left. There are too many interjections. I want to hear the minister's answer.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I intend to tell those councils that they, in fact, matter, that it is a level of government that we believe in and that we will empower them. I have to say that I start from a reasonably good position, because my predecessor the former member for Lytton did not understand local government and he did not love local government. In fact, I might say that the closest he came to a councillor was a visit to Lifeline and he thought alderman was a former Australian swing bowler. This was a government that hated local government. But the real enemy was, in fact, the former member for Mount Coot-tha. I would like to table an article from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 14 August 2007. This issue made the news in New South Wales as bad government policy at a time when Morris Iemma was the Premier. Obviously, it was something bad. I will quote the former minister—

Any council that moves to conduct a referendum or contacts the AEC to have a referendum on this issue will face the ultimate sanction under the—

local government—

act.

So because they wanted to ask their people whether or not they should conduct a referendum on whether they should be amalgamated, he wanted them sacked. I table that article.

Tabled paper: Online article from AAP, dated 14 August 2007, entitled 'Councils spared from sack' [\[180\]](#).

The reason for my visits is twofold: the first is to tell local communities and local councils that they matter and that it will be a relationship that is based on equals; but the second is to make changes to the Local Government Act to put mayors and councillors back in charge, to ensure that local communities control their own destiny, to tell them that this is not going to be a centrist government that believes that all decisions have to be made in Brisbane. I look forward to getting to these communities across the state with people like the member for Southern Downs, the member for Callide, the member for Toowoomba North, the member for Toowoomba South and the member for Gregory but, above all, I look forward to standing side by side with the member for Warrego.

Parliamentary Appointments, Costings

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier identify the total cost and source of funding for the additional minister, four extra assistant ministers and 14 extra committee positions created by the LNP government so far?

Mr NEWMAN: I would be delighted to get that information for the member. The member has been here for some years now and would know that the appropriate way to get detailed precise information that does not mislead the House is to put it on notice. I would encourage all members in this chamber, when they want that sort of detail, to put it on notice.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I have warned members and I will shortly start using other standing orders. I ask for people to cease interjecting in the chamber.

Mr NEWMAN: One of our commitments was to restore a very important provision in the Criminal Code which makes it against the law to lie to parliament—section 57 of the Criminal Code. That will be coming in in the not too distant future. What that means is that the things that we say in this chamber will matter again. I say today to all members that I will not stand up here and give detailed answers to questions like that unless I can be 100 per cent confident that the information I provide is 100 per cent correct. That is what the principle is. So put them on notice.

In relation to the principle, I can confidently tell the members opposite, indeed the entire House, this: this government has already saved over \$100 million since we came to office over nine weeks ago—over \$100 million—cutting out the waste and inefficiency of the economic illiterates of the ne'er-do-wells across the chamber from me. One hundred million dollars net at least! We have had to make changes to the way government operates in Queensland; it is about accountability, it is about good government, it is about ensuring that ministers are in charge of line departments and it is about actually having the Westminster system restored in Queensland. That is what it is all about.

We make no apologies for spending a bit of money in the scheme of things when ultimately we have saved over \$100 million—and it is more than that; \$100 million net—that those lazy people opposite could never find because they would not work hard enough for the hardworking families of Queensland. What did they do because they would not work hard enough? That is right, they put up water prices. What else did they do? They put up electricity prices. The Leader of the Opposition put up motor vehicle registration costs by—what was it?—at least 30 per cent. Do we have a fuel subsidy any more? No, we do not. Those opposite misled the people at the last election. They put stamp duty up; an extra \$7,000 on the family home. They do not like it one little bit, especially when I remind them, before I sit down, that they raised public transport fares by 15 per cent in year 1, year 2, year 3 and it would have been year 4 and year 5.

Madam SPEAKER: The time for questions has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Deputy Premier, Office

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.03 am), by leave: There has been something of an unhealthy focus in question time this morning on the minutiae surrounding the office space here in Parliament House. For the benefit of anybody who might have an interest in that issue, given the other major financial issues that face the state—which people, I would suggest, would be relatively few—and for the benefit of the House I table a number of documents. I table a page from the Strategic Review of the Parliamentary Precinct 2010 which recommended changes in use of a number of offices, including C.04, the subject of questions this morning. I also table a copy of some preliminary costings for some of the relocation work done on offices in the weeks leading up to today which show that the cost for that particular office was—wait for it—\$1,460.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Strategic Review of Parliamentary Precinct 2010: Table Options for Improving Fitness for Purpose of Ministerial Offices in Parliament House [181].

Tabled paper: Preliminary costings on recent minor works on the Parliamentary Precinct [182].

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. Just very quickly, that is a contradiction of the Deputy Premier's earlier statement where he said it cost nothing.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order with regard to the standing orders?

Mr PITT: I will be writing to you about an issue of potentially misleading the House.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Newman Government

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.05 am): Once again during question time what has been demonstrated is that not one minister was able to answer any question put by the opposition. This government has failed to answer questions. The Premier has set high standards. He has said that his ministers would be accountable, that they would come into this House and answer questions. What we saw today was far from that. The plans for the new Executive Building show that this government is simply not listening and has twisted priorities. Just two months after taking office the centrepiece of the government's first major capital works project turns out to be—wait for it!—new offices for the Premier and his ministers. While the government cheerfully sacks its own workers, it does not hesitate to look after itself.

This new Executive Building is unnecessary. It is no secret that the previous government examined a similar idea but rejected it because it had higher priorities, including the decentralisation of government staff to Bowen Hills and Ipswich. It is also no secret that when a new government comes in public servants put new ideas up to it. What has happened here is very clear. Essentially they have actually passed up an old idea and the government has taken it hook, line and sinker and said it is its own idea. We should also remember that some of the first people through the door of the new government are from the development industry and they are asking it to sell off its property holdings, especially valuable CBD buildings.

I welcome projects that generate jobs in the building industry, but so far this government's plan for selling state assets has not created a single new job. We also heard in the House today a question asked of the Treasurer in relation to a statement he made on 21 February this year to the *Financial Review* in which he said—and I quote for the benefit of the House—

We won't be selling any real estate without putting it forward to get a mandate from the people.

That is what Mr Nicholls told the Australian *Financial Review*. That is what he said. That was his pre-election commitment.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order. I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition is deliberately misleading the parliament by not completing the quote. The Treasurer made it very clear to the parliament that that was a selective quote and quoted the full quote. I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition is deliberately misleading the parliament and unless she withdraws I will refer her to the committee accordingly.

Madam SPEAKER: That is a matter for the Deputy Premier to follow if he believes that the Leader of the Opposition is misleading the House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: What we saw yesterday was the Newman government sack 170 of its own IT staff as part of its purge of government workers. The Premier keeps talking about the cost of living. In fact, the first bill that we will be debating this week is the cost of living bill. All this government is concerned about is itself and a brand new office tower for the Premier and his ministers. That shows that this government has its priorities completely wrong.

Whilst this government is focused on the CBD, it is neglecting the people living in Cairns, the people living in Townsville, the people living in Toowoomba, the people living in Mount Isa. What message is it sending to those regional communities by focusing on the inner city? The Premier promised his government would be characterised by grace, humility and dignity, but after only two months in office, arrogance, self-indulgence and broken promises have become its hallmark. Just two months after the state election, this government has stopped listening to the community. It has cut funds to front-line community groups without listening to them. Sisters Inside and the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities are just the first to suffer that fate. As the Treasurer indicated last week, more front-line community groups will be denied funding. No doubt they too will not be given a fair hearing before being stripped of funds. This government refuses to listen to independent bodies such as the Sentencing Advisory Council. It abolishes the council and wastes the time and effort of all the community, legal and government representatives the previous government engaged to deliver independent analysis and advice to the judiciary on sentencing to help meet community expectations.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn members on my right: there are too many interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is especially puzzling because the LNP supported the Sentencing Advisory Council in 2005 through a private member's bill from, if I recall correctly, the member for Southern Downs and again in 2010 when the previous government set up the now scrapped council. This government has stopped listening by wilfully bypassing parliamentary committees that are specifically designed to give members of the public, community groups and others a say in the legislative process.

This know-it-all government has simply stopped listening, but it has not stopped putting itself at the top of its list of priorities. We have seen that in this House with the Deputy Premier's move to evict the public from the Bernays Room and grab it for himself. We have seen it by the Deputy Premier's refusal to detail the cost of commandeering one of the showcase public spaces of this House for his own personal office use. The Premier, the Deputy Premier and others arrogantly—

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, resume your seat. I warn the minister in regard to interjections, particularly those that do not refer to a member by his or her appropriate title, and to cease using the term 'you'.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Premier, the Deputy Premier and others arrogantly fail to acknowledge that this House belongs to the people of Queensland, not the LNP. In fact, the Deputy Premier dismisses legitimate questions about wasteful and extravagant moves simply as 'silly stuff'. The last time the House sat, the Newman government was unable or unwilling to answer any questions about government job cuts. Today we saw its refusal to tell taxpayers the truth about the costs it is incurring because of its own extravagances. We still do not know how much the government's extra minister is costing taxpayers, nor do we know how much it is costing taxpayers to set up a whole new department just to keep the extra 19th minister busy. We still do not know how much the extra four assistant ministers, their staffing and accommodation costs are costing taxpayers.

We see a wasteful audit of public finances headed by their political mate, Peter Costello. No doubt it will have a well-worn and predictable outcome: blaming the previous government for all the world's ills. No doubt this government will use it as a cover story for more cuts to government jobs and services, just as they have used commissions of audit in New South Wales and Victoria. In fact, last week the Premier admitted he was wasting \$3,300 a day on Peter Costello, while his own workers face the sack. The Premier pre-empted the contents of the audit by saying, '... we will hear some things that are some very unpalatable truths.' Just like his political hero, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, this Premier does not establish an inquiry unless he has already decided its final outcome. It is a pity that the other well credentialed members of the audit team have been put in that position.

Today in the House I heard the most remarkable answer ever given to a question. The shadow Treasurer asked the Treasurer to detail the funding of the infrastructure projects over the financial year and to name some of the significant projects that are under way in Queensland. I find it absolutely absurd that the Treasurer of this state could not name a single project currently under construction in this state. Let me give a few examples for members who are new to the House: the Gold Coast rapid transit project, creating jobs; the Darra to Springfield railway line, creating jobs; the construction of the hospital, creating jobs. There are projects right across this state—

A government member: What's it called?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Mackay Base Hospital, the expansion of the Cairns Base Hospital—but the Treasurer of this state could not name a single infrastructure project that is under way; nor could he say how many people were employed as part of this project.

Clearly, arrogance, self-indulgence and broken promises have replaced grace, humility and dignity. The know-it-all Newman government has stopped listening, but it has not stopped breaking the promises it made to those who voted for it. The last time this House sat, the Premier and ministers were unable to explain why they breached their pre-election commitment to their very own employees. A year ago, as reported in the *Courier-Mail*, the LNP leader and now Premier clearly ruled our government job cuts. He said, 'I do not believe any cutbacks are required.' However, now we see a public sector in turmoil. I am appalled to hear that some government workers have been reduced to tears as they worry about their future. No employee should be treated like this. No employee should have to go through such hurt and unknowing. The Premier talks about the cost of living and he went to the election talking about the cost of living, but it is incredibly hard to pay the bills, it is incredibly hard to provide for your family and it is incredibly hard to pay the mortgage if you do not have a job. Telling people on a Friday afternoon that they are dismissed and should not come to work on Monday is a shameful way to treat employees. This week the same thing will happen to the IT section in the Education Department. One hundred and eighty jobs are gone and those people will only find out when they turn up to work. We need to restore decency and dignity and treat people with respect. I will always stand up for the workers in this state.

(Time expired)

Caloundra Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (11.17 am): It is a pleasure to follow the Leader of the Opposition, who spoke about infrastructure. Of course, on the Sunshine Coast we know very clearly what she means by infrastructure. The Sunshine Coast university hospital has not been built but has been delayed for a period of four years, because the previous government could not get its act together and it could not get the funds together to make it happen. Therefore, when the Leader of the Opposition stands in this House and talks about infrastructure, she had better be certain of her facts and look into the background of the Labor government that delayed for four years the construction of that very important hospital. I can guarantee that under my colleague the Minister for Health that situation will not continue. He will have his hands on the tiller and he will make sure that it is built on time and opened on time to provide all the services needed by the people of the Sunshine Coast for many years to come.

In the past in this place I have spoken about the Caloundra aerodrome and how important it is to Sunshine Coast residents, particularly Caloundra residents. The aerodrome sits in my electorate and employs some 140 people. It has been under a pseudo death sentence for 10 to 12 years. In about September or December 2009, the then Premier stood in this House and said that the aerodrome would stay. That appeared to secure the tenure of all aerodrome employers and their employees for many years to come. However, if their leases are to be extended without going to tender, application needs to be made by the local council, that is, the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, to the Minister for Local Government. Roughly three years have now transpired and that application has not been made. That is hanging people, including employees, out to dry and that can no longer be tolerated. It is very important that the Sunshine Coast Regional Council moves on this. Although documentation was forwarded to lessees at the end of last year, the situation has not progressed any further. It is absolutely vital that, if

we are going to retain and expand jobs in this precinct to provide greater incentives and outcomes for the people of Caloundra, this must be undertaken forthwith. I urge the council to take on board that issue and move with it quickly.

The second point I intend to take forward in greater earnest this sitting is the Landsborough Railway Station car park. I have raised this issue in the past. There is a necessity to understand that that car park is the central hub of the southern end of the Sunshine Coast for the bulk of rail transport. Hundreds of vehicles use the car park that is available there on a daily basis, spilling out across the roadways and, indeed, blocking access to shops and businesses. That is deterring people from coming to Landsborough and using that excellent facility to acquire their goods and obtain the services required to operate their own businesses. At this point there is land readily available on the other side of the railway car park that could be used. I started negotiations with the local community. In fact, I met with Jason Coultis on Friday of last week to again begin the process of ensuring we get an outcome for this in the near future. Without such an outcome, the congestion around the car park and railway station will increase as time goes by. That is simply not good for the people who work there, not good for the people who park there and not good for the economy. Understanding the growth on the Sunshine Coast and the expected growth in the usage of this car park is very critical to understanding the need to expand the car park and make it more viable.

Those two issues are very important for my electorate. Again, I will work with the relevant ministers to ensure we get proper outcomes. I make this one point. Under this government the Sunshine Coast will no longer be neglected, as it was for many, many years under the rule of Premier Bligh and Premier Beattie. For too long the Sunshine Coast was ignored to the detriment of the people who work there and for the aspirations of those people, their children and their grandchildren as well. The tide has now changed and we on the Sunshine Coast intend to put our case strongly and effectively to the government to ensure we do obtain what is needed to grow the region in the time to come. Our population will increase significantly over the next five to 10 years and it is most important that we achieve the outcome and services we need to grow those services to meet those needs.

Flood Insurance

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (11.21 am): I rise to speak today on a very contentious issue which affects the Central Highlands, particularly the people of Emerald, and also the people of Roma in the electorate of my colleague the member for Warrego. These people have been absolutely kicked in the guts by the greatest leveller of below-the-belt tactics that you have ever seen in your life. Suncorp Insurance is now saying it will not insure homes in the flood-prone areas of Emerald in the Central Highlands Regional Council area and Roma in the Maranoa Regional Council area. I wish to quote from Mr Marcus Taylor, Suncorp Affairs Manager. He stated in an article that Emerald had a long history of frequent flooding, but records showed the 2008 and 2010-11 floods to be the latest since 1990. It might have a record, but a lot of other places also have a record. We can go back to the Brisbane flood in 1974 and also the recent flood. Has Suncorp pulled the insurance policies and increased the premiums for those people? No, I do not think so! I say to Suncorp today that I represent Emerald, which has been one of the wealth generators in Queensland in recent years—and the same goes for Roma in the my colleague's electorate of Warrego. Suncorp has turned its back on the wealth-generating capacity of Queensland. It should be ashamed of the policy statement it has made and I ask it to reverse it immediately.

The policy premium of one constituent in Emerald has gone from \$1,500 a year to \$7,500 a year. That equates to \$650 a month. That \$650 a month would keep the tucker on the table for a family. What is this decision going to do? It is going to drive more people out of this great area. I find it absolutely laughable that Suncorp seeks to blame the Central Highlands Regional Council for not taking enough flood mitigation measures. That council has worked its hardest in the last four years, since 2008, to put in place flood mitigation measures. I have written to the Deputy Premier asking him to convene a meeting between myself, the member for Warrego, Suncorp and other players in the insurance industry to address the unfair anomalies that this company has levelled on the people of Emerald and Roma by taking advantage of their insurance premiums.

I say here today that other companies such as CGU, NRMA and Allianz will not offer any flood coverage at all in Emerald—including renewal for existing policies. RACQ and QBE do not have a flood product. Suncorp, Vero, AMP, GIO, APIA and AAMI—all owned by Suncorp—are not offering flood cover for new policies in Emerald, although they will renew existing policies. As my constituent now has to pay \$7,500, I say here today that this is unfair coming from one of Queensland's icons, Suncorp. I am ashamed to stand here today and outline this below-the-belt policy that Suncorp has delivered. I say to Marcus Taylor and all other players in Suncorp: please revisit this policy announcement straight away and show some compassion, some care and some understanding to these people who have been driven nearly to oblivion by something they could not themselves predict.

The Central Highlands Regional Council and the Maranoa Regional Council cannot predict the weather. They do not know what is going to happen when it comes to flooding. There is one thing for certain: people who take out policies in good faith should be given the courtesy of having those policies honoured in good faith. They are the ones who make the payments. Therefore Suncorp, or whichever other insurance company as the case may be, should honour those policy agreements and pay up. In Queensland we are now seeing people being driven to destruction, marriages are breaking up and families are disintegrating because of corporate players who are more interested in the bottom line, the shared basis of their competitiveness and their shareholders. I ask that the Deputy Premier take control of this agenda.

(Time expired)

Newman Government, Funding

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.26 am): It is only a little over two months since the state election and yet we have seen repeated actions by this government to abolish or cut funding to organisations that might have espoused views that they do not like or simply because they were the ideas of the previous government. First we saw the funding cut to Sisters Inside. Then the Workplace Rights Ombudsman's role was abolished. He may have made statements protecting the rights of Queensland workers, particularly public servants who have arbitrarily been sacked or not had their contracts renewed. Then the Sentencing Advisory Council was unilaterally closed down without any notice to staff. In fact, a poster on a website said they were told about this on Friday, 18 March. Then they were given two days to pack up the offices. Some who were offered public sector jobs—in this poster's case at two salary levels below their current position—were told they had to start in their new position on Wednesday.

The Sentencing Advisory Council was established by our government in 2010. It was largely based on the Victorian council, and has undertaken a number of very important projects. There were three terms of reference by the then Attorneys-General. The first, on standard non-parole periods, was completed and involved very complex and challenging concepts. There was extensive community consultation at 14 centres around the state, and legislation was introduced adopting all but one of the council's recommendations. The second, also completed, related to the sentencing of persons convicted of sex offences against children. The final report recommended a number of key changes to the Penalties and Sentences Act. The final outstanding report was in relation to sentencing for armed robbery. I understand this report has been completed and was ready for release in mid-April. I call on the Attorney-General to publish this report forthwith.

Some other very useful information and research was also being conducted by the council. The council was conducting research on a sentencing profile series and had already published the first profile of Queensland court outcomes. I also understand that the profiles on murder and manslaughter are finalised and ready for publication. I also call on the Attorney-General to publish that information forthwith, so that the results of important research are not lost to the people of Queensland.

An extensive body of research work was being undertaken by the council, probably the most significant of which was in relation to the involvement of victims in the criminal justice system and ways in which their participation could be enhanced. Stage 1, the research paper looking at current victim involvement, was almost completed. The chair of the council has said she hopes that the work that was being undertaken will be continued by another agency. I call on the Attorney-General to advise the House whether he has directed any of his other agencies, or his department, to complete the work already started.

We have seen that this government does not like consultation with the people of Queensland. Last sitting week two bills were introduced and then declared urgent so as not to be referred to the relevant committees. This means that there can be no community consultation, stakeholder input or public hearings on either of these bills. In keeping with this anticonsultation philosophy, the body that has the potential to provide the greatest opportunity for feedback and consultation on sentencing has been abolished. The public consultation role was considered very important by the member for Caloundra in 2010 when he made his contribution to the debate on the bill establishing the council. He said—

Without a doubt the bill, if it is passed today—and it certainly will be—will provide an avenue for the people of Queensland to have a more direct say on the sentencing regime under which they live.

The establishment of the Sentencing Advisory Council had widespread support. In fact on 27 February 2009 the *Courier-Mail* reported that the Queensland Law Society had written to the state government asking it to establish a sentencing council to advise on sentencing policy. In a letter to the then Attorney-General, Kerry Shine, the Law Society president, now member for Ipswich, Ian Berry, said that there was a 'disconnection between what people might consider appropriate sentences for crimes

... and what sentences are imposed'. As well, he said that a Sentencing Advisory Council could put an end to the 'cynical' law and order debate that politicians engaged in in the lead-up to the election. The Attorney-General said when in opposition when the bill was debated—

... the current Attorney-General recognises the value of what the LNP has previously proposed and continues to support. I just say to the Attorney-General that I guess it is better late than never.

I wonder what has changed between 27 October 2010 and now to make the Attorney-General abolish the council. The abolition of this body is an outrage, and the Attorney-General should advise exactly how he will ensure that this important work is going to be continued.

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (11.31 am): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on a matter of public interest.

Mr Hobbs: It's not madam.

Mr RICKUSS: Sorry, Mark. You're so good looking! I rise to speak on a matter of public interest. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the teachers and leaders from Lockyer District State High School in the gallery: year 12 teachers Jann Roehm and Zoe Anderson; school captains, Claire Nolan and Daniel Exelby; vice captains, Rowie Banff and Daniel Horrocks; and two other senior leaders, Kam Jeffrey and Courtney Dolan.

What I would really like to highlight today is that this is an important time for Queensland. We have to get this state back on track, and that is what I intend to do as Chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. This is an important time to get this committee looking at issues that are important and of relevance to Queensland.

We have a well-balanced membership on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: I am the chair and we have members from regional areas across the state and we also have city members. It will be a great committee that will look at the important issues for Queensland. These are issues that must be examined—issues such as the Surat Basin water impact report that has recently been released. Those are the sorts of issues that this committee must look at and examine fully so that the Queensland public can have confidence in the legislation that we are putting through the House.

If you look at the list of the portfolio areas that this committee will examine, you will see Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. The agricultural college is important, as I am sure the honourable member for Toowoomba South, the Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh, will acknowledge. I think you are still a student at Gatton campus, aren't you, John?

Mr McVeigh: Yes.

Mr RICKUSS: It is an important area that needs to be looked at and examined closely. Animal welfare and biosecurity is another area. I spoke to some legal studies students here yesterday and one of the issues that they continued to raise in their speeches was about animal welfare. These are the sorts of things that Queenslanders, and particularly young Queenslanders, are concerned about.

Fisheries is another area. We have a northern member on the committee who is very concerned about fisheries and fishery stocks. So these are important issues that we will be looking at. The Strategic Cropping Land Mitigation Fund is also something that we have to examine and examine properly so that the people of Queensland can have confidence in the legislation going through the House.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection spoke in the House about the flying fox issue. That issue is very important but so is contaminated land, environmental planning and cultural heritage. They are the issues that this committee, with the diverse range of MPs who are on it, will be able to examine and ensure are well looked after.

I see the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines sitting here in the chamber. Mining is one of the industries that is going to keep Queensland going for the next 20 to 100 years. Mining and agriculture have always worked in cooperation with each other. Let's ensure that we tick the right boxes so that they can continue to work in cooperation with each other so that the whole process works and so that Queensland benefits as a whole and not just in some of the mining areas. The whole of Queensland should benefit from this process, and that is what we want to happen. Management of strategic cropping land is also important, and that is also under the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines' portfolio. They are some of the issues that this committee will be looking at and looking at thoroughly.

Not only do we have to have people out there working in these areas, but we need proper federal funding for our roads and infrastructure to get people out there. The Warrego Highway is an absolute disgrace. It is a federally funded road. Let's ensure that we get the appropriate federal funding for that highway so that people can get to their workplaces safely. It is imperative that we do this to make sure that the economy of Queensland, the state of Queensland, continues to prosper.

Newman Government

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.36 am): What we are seeing in the early days of the Newman government is what we have seen from nearly every conservative government in Australia over the past two decades. Since the election, their moves have been straight out of the mythical tory playbook, which goes a little something like this. They establish a commission of audit. This will provide the cover for the hardline economic rationalist agenda that the LNP tried to hide but that is ever so quickly rearing its head.

Even better, bring in Peter Costello—the go-to guy who was responsible during the Howard years for the attacks on the rights and jobs of working people. What better way to justify slashing and burning across government. Axe so-called ‘non-essential’ programs like the Premier’s Literary Awards and make token cuts to smaller things like tea and coffee to let people know that they mean business.

The next stage is to throw their hands up in the air and cry poor, blame the former government for everything and blame the federal government for everything else. Note that the playbook says this works even better when it is a federal Labor government. Then, lo and behold, they start slashing services and they start sacking workers. We saw it in Victoria with Kennett. Costello used the same method in Canberra when the Howard government came into power. Borbidge established the commission of audit in Queensland in 1996. We have seen it under Barry O’Farrell in New South Wales and Ted Baillieu in Victoria. They used their audits as a cloak to sack 5,000 public servants and 3,600 public servants respectively.

And now here in Queensland we have a new conservative government and what do they throw up? Another commission of audit. This new dog is unfortunately up to the same old tricks. They have gone back in time to 1993 for the Kennett audit, pulled out the leather bound tory playbook, passed down from generation to generation, wiped off the dust and slapped a big ‘can-do’ sticker on the cover.

But serving the people of Queensland demands more than this. Leadership requires more than a slogan. Legislating needs more than governing by media release. And last week we saw the Premier give the game plan away. He forgot that you are supposed to pretend not to know that the predictable audit will bring in its recommendations that will gut public sector jobs and public services. The Premier said—

I’m very sure that when you hear the initial report of the Costello review that we will hear some things that are some very unpalatable truths.

This is a clear admission from the Premier that the LNP government has already decided what will come out of the audit. Can I say to the Premier and Treasurer that, if they are going to rely on the tory playbook, they really need to be a little less obvious about it. It is like reading a suspense novel and you already know how it ends. It is not very satisfying, particularly to the people who will be on the receiving end of the cuts.

The question the LNP government cannot answer is: why are taxpayers forking out \$3,300 a day that will simply roll out the same predictable outcomes that we have seen from new conservative governments in Queensland and other states? The LNP cannot even answer simple questions like: how many days has Mr Costello spent in Queensland for his \$3,300-a-day job? The real question is: what could \$3,300 a day buy you with a truly independent, internationally regarded consultancy firm when compared to Peter Costello? This approach by the conservatives is so tired and so see-through that we do not even need to yell, ‘The emperor has no clothes.’ The LNP is not even pretending to hide the nature and purpose of this predictable audit.

We have all heard of the thousands of public sector workers who face the axe. The vast majority of these are people on temporary contracts. Agencies like Health, Disability Services and Communities have been asked to find up to 30 per cent savings in jobs. I guess this is what Tim Nicholls and Campbell Newman were thinking when they talked about ‘natural attrition’ and ‘no forced redundancies’ in the Public Service. Not renewing temporary contracts is not natural attrition; it is the equivalent of sacking someone. Temporary contracts exist for many reasons in the public sector and the people in those jobs do not consider themselves to be optional extras.

The Newman government says that it understands cost of living, but it is pretty hard to pay bills without a job. It is trying to create the false impression that Queensland has no choice about the future ahead. According to the LNP, Queensland can be saved from imagined economic destruction on one hand or have literary awards on the other. It can be about utter ruin on one hand or sacking workers on the other. But the truth about governing and the truth about managing a budget is that it is all about choices—not false contradictions set up to promote extreme conservative ideology but, rather, real choices about the priorities for the state.

The LNP government has shown its absolute hypocrisy on this issue. It is risking the livelihood of thousands of temporary workers, but it has had no problem finding the money for an extra minister; it has found money to give every LNP backbencher a pay rise, on top of the MP salary, by expanding government positions on committees; it has found the money to build the Premier his ‘tower of power’; and it has found the money to pay Peter Costello \$3,300 a day.

The LNP government's position completely lacks credibility. The Costello audit is nothing more than an obvious game being played by the LNP, and the losers will be workers in the Queensland public sector and the services enjoyed by our local communities. The LNP is wasting \$3,300 a day on a report that will simply recycle the same old conservative dogma we see time and time again: set up an audit, appoint your mates, cry poor then slash and burn. Quite simply, the LNP government will use the commission of audit to back away from and squirm out of election commitments.

Mining Industry

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (11.41 am): Last week, along with the member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington, I met with the Oakey Coal Action Alliance in Dalby about Acland stage 3 and its impact on the town of Oakey. The Acland mine was in my electorate for three terms until a redistribution and it is now in the electorate of Nanango; however, the mine impacts on a lot of people within my electorate. The action alliance was very concerned about the LNP's promise that Acland stage 3 would not go ahead under an LNP government. Today is the first day that parliament has sat since that meeting and the first opportunity I have had to address the group's concerns—to ask the minister a question on notice and to make this speech. Hopefully today the concerns of this group can be addressed.

This matters of public interest debate is my first opportunity to speak and to put a question on notice to the member for Callide and Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. The minister is a man I have known for four or five terms now, and I know that when he says something he means it. I had the pleasure of touring this area with the minister before the election, and the minister made the announcement back then that Acland stage 3 would not go ahead under an LNP government. I know that the minister will answer the question put to him by me this morning. This will hopefully put to bed some of the concerns of the action group.

Stage 3 was going to affect the people of Oakey in a big way. It was going to come right in to the side of Oakey. A whole heap of prime agricultural land there would have been dug up and totally destroyed. Land can never be restored to the standard that existed before mining takes place. There is no doubt about that.

Under our new strategic plan the LNP will map Queensland. We have heard the Premier announce that we plan to double the state's food production by 2040. Maps always cause trouble—there are lines on maps, and everyone who owns a block of dirt thinks their block of dirt is the best in Queensland—but the mapping will be carried out properly so that farmers will know where they can farm and mining companies will know where they can mine. This should have been done 20 years ago. In its last two terms in government Labor tossed this problem backwards and forwards. I had many meetings with previous ministers for natural resources and primary industries in an attempt to have planning put in place. They dillydallied. We in the LNP will do this properly so that people in Queensland will know where they are going.

I refer to the Felton mine. The people of Felton are of the same understanding as the people of Oakey. They also heard the promise made by the Deputy Premier that the Felton mine will not go ahead under an LNP government. Ambre Energy are occupying an office in Pittsworth, but they can pack their bags and move out because they will not mine Felton. It is as simple as that.

Tomorrow I will ask the Deputy Premier a question on notice about Felton. There is no better way to confirm things than to put it in *Hansard*. The minister will confirm in *Hansard* that no mine will go ahead at Felton. People will have that in writing from the Deputy Premier and can rest assured that Ambre Energy can pack their bags and move out.

I recently attended the Felton Food Festival with the Minister for Agriculture. That food festival has the potential to be another Woodford or Gympie. It really was amazing. They put on a festival just to show the produce from that valley. It was an exciting day. We had people come from the Gold Coast and Brisbane. I congratulate the people of Felton on their stance.

On Thursday I will ask the Deputy Premier a question about Gowrie Junction. Exploration permit No. 1972 was issued about two years ago. The then Labor government caused a lot of people a lot of heartache by not squashing that immediately. The then member for Toowoomba North, Kerry Shine, ran with his tail between his legs. On this issue I faced two public meetings and received 1,400 letters, which I tabled in parliament, and now our minister will put in writing, in answer to my question, that we will not mine that area around Gowrie Junction. Those people will see for themselves that this will not happen. Their homes will be protected and the future of their children will be protected under an LNP government.

Newman Government

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.46 am): Just two months after the March election, this LNP government has stopped listening to Queenslanders. The decision against continuing funding for the Queensland Association for Healthy Communities is a case in point. It underscores the fact that this know-it-all and smug Newman government is not listening to the community. It got elected and it put its earmuffs on straightaway. It is not listening at all. Despite its public statements, the government's funding cuts are affecting front-line services. Any reasonable person would consider the QAHC to be a front-line service, yet slashing front-line services and terminating jobs has quickly become the defining characteristic of this LNP government.

Campbell Newman is now known in the Public Service as 'the terminator'. He is the terminator of Public Service jobs. Public servants who voted LNP have told me and colleagues on this side of the House that they did not realise that when they voted LNP they voted to get themselves sacked. So voting L-N-P means S-A-C-K-E-D. It means they got themselves sacked or are about to get themselves sacked—40,000 of them down the gurgler. That is 40,000 families in turmoil, 40,000 families facing breakdown, 40,000 families looking at putting their houses on the market, 40,000 families looking at cars being sold from under them, 40,000 families looking at going to banks and telling them that they cannot make the mortgage payments. I tell you what: I bet those public servants will never vote LNP again because the LNP has its priorities all wrong.

Premier Campbell Newman has said that old Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, that corrupt man, is his political hero. Premier Newman's government has cleared that low bar set by Bjelke-Petersen by showing zero interest in listening to others.

The LNP in opposition promised so much but is delivering so little. It is delivering plenty of sackings—40,000 of them—but how disgraceful is that! It has shown a clear pattern of behaviour of cutting funding to organisations that help and represent some of the most vulnerable in our community, including the QAHC and Sisters Inside. The Premier says that he is going to make great savings, but they are all at the cost of workers and cutting these great community organisations. Let us again reflect on the Bjelke-Petersen approach. Any Queenslanders who adhere to the ideas of equality and fairness—and that is most of us, let us face it—are rightly alarmed by this Newman government's approach. This government is displaying a definite ideological slant in decision making. Like the Bjelke-Petersen approach in the 1980s, it is putting its personal and political prejudices above objective decision making.

I turn now to the cut in QAHC's funding being the LNP template for ideologically driven decisions under this Premier. Today we saw just how smug this government is. Queensland is once again the laughing-stock of the rest of Australia. The Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts—also known as the 'minister for plagiarism'—could not answer a simple question in this House today. It was clear that the Premier was pretty fast in necking the member for Gympie when he was sacked as the Minister for Police. Who is going to be the second one? How many times will these ministers come in here and not answer a single question? It is an absolute disgrace. When is the Committee of the Legislative Assembly supposed to meet? The government has had a couple of months and yet the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has not met. Back to the days of Bjelke-Petersen: sackings, sackings, sackings. S-A-C-K-E-D—sacked!

Sarina Men's Shed; Newman Government; Mining Industry

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (11.51 am): After all of the whingeing and whining from the other side of the House, I am here to tell a great story about how privileged and proud I was to open the Men's Shed in Sarina last Saturday. The Men's Shed organisation throughout Australia now has hundreds of sheds and thousands of members who go to a Men's Shed to enjoy the companionship and the goodwill that, quite frankly, men previously had to go to the pub to enjoy. It is not about building things; it is about enjoying companionship, having a cup of coffee and doing all of those things that unfortunately men in later years of life miss out on. The Men's Shed in Sarina is located in a shed donated by Les Leggett. It is temporary accommodation until the group can get together and build a permanent shed, but it is a very generous donation by Les. It is quite large. It has a kitchen and a stove so that men can learn to cook, if necessary. It has a large work area and the whole area is air conditioned. It is a very good legacy that Les has given to the group. The RSL has donated a fridge. As members can see, it has been supported by the whole community.

The Sarina Men's Shed group came into being through the Sarina Rural Skills Centre that I was involved in building. It is something that I have spoken about in the parliament before, and I obviously will educate new members about it. The Sarina Rural Skills Centre Community Board sponsored the Men's Shed and organised its incorporation et cetera, and I must congratulate the board for doing that. The Men's Shed group consists of Jon Eaton as chair, Dick Whittington as secretary and Les Leggett as treasurer. I had the fortunate opportunity to take the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through the Sarina Rural Skills Centre last Friday. With the agricultural side of that skills centre

incorporating the Sarina High School, that will give us the opportunity to train young people, not necessarily those connected with agriculture, in all avenues of agriculture—from horticulture to aquaculture to raising cattle, goats and chickens and most importantly raising fish in the same water that then goes on to red claw that eventually grows vegetables and eventually comes back into the fish pond as clean water. That is a great project. I look forward to the support of the minister in making this dream come alive.

Last week we were also fortunate to be visited by the Attorney-General when he said that no longer will Queenslanders have to worry about hoons on our streets. If people hoon on our streets, they can be assured that sooner or later their cars will be crushed and they will not have a car. That is a clear message for the communities throughout Queensland that the LNP government means business. We are not going to back off. The next step is that we will be sending a clear message to all of those juveniles who are out of reach of the justice system. Their turn is coming. We are talking boot camps, tough TLC and tough legislation to ensure that those kids get back in line, get a job and contribute to their communities. We need to ensure that Queensland raises young people who can hold their heads up high and be part of our community so that at the end of their time on this earth they have contributed to the economy of Queensland and have had a good life.

It is disappointing that in my electorate there are hundreds and possibly even thousands of workers on strike at the mines inland from Mackay under the auspices of the CFMEU. The number of union members is quite low compared to the number of people working in the mines. Contractors have had to down their tools, and that is affecting a large number of families right throughout Queensland. It is about time that the CFMEU sat down with the BMA to sort this out before they all go broke.

Warrego Electorate, CSG Industry



Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (11.56 am): The coal seam gas industry is a major industry in my electorate and I want to inform members of some of the major issues that have evolved and are evolving around that industry. It is a multibillion-dollar industry that basically grew without adequate legislative support by the previous state government. Members may not be aware, but there was a report done by Matrix in 2007 that in fact identified all of the issues that we are finding now in relation to the CSG industry in terms of access to land, impact on water and all of the sorts of things that these companies as well as the state government and landholders were trying to grapple with then. This report was done and nothing happened. It was given to an incompetent government which ran the CSG industry the same way it ran Queensland Health, which was hopeless. For example, prime agricultural land should have been excluded from use. In terms of residential land, companies should not have been allowed to go in and develop, mine and do CSG development in some of those close residential areas. There should also have been better land access processes. The industry was running on patched-up legislation that was happening after the event. We can see why the issues were difficult out there for not just the companies and the landholders but everyone concerned. It was just one hell of a mess that the government was trying to come to grips with but was always behind.

The companies were generally complying. However, they had a lack of skills as well. They were growing and they were trying to find people with the skills to talk to landholders and they could not always find those people. Some of the more established, older companies were good, particularly the ones further out west that had experience in the oil and gas industries in the past. They had a much better regime in place. They were able to manage things better and therefore it was a more smooth operation. However, it needs to be understood by everybody the impact on the tenure holders. For over 100 years existing land tenure holders operated their farming or grazing enterprise and then suddenly there is basically another tenure holder who wants to operate on the same land. This would not be dissimilar to somebody buying their dream home with a big backyard and then one day someone walks in with a wheelbarrow and the next week people start walking into their backyard with wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow. Those people with the wheelbarrows are entitled to do that under these rules and then eventually they would be entitled to put a steel post in the middle of the backyard where they play with the kids—that is, a well.

Or there would be a road that he would put in somewhere. Then he would get a little motor and he would have it running over on the boundary and it will run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They will say to you, 'That's okay. Don't worry about it. We'll just double glaze your windows.' But one day you have to go outside. Or on the weekend you would be having a barbecue or on a Sunday afternoon you would be soaking up some sun and four or five blokes would go past with wheelbarrows. That is exactly the same thing that is happening to landholders, where suddenly this second tenure has taken effect.

So, yes, there are a lot of issues that we have to try to manage. There is going to be conflict unless sound planning is done and cooperative arrangements are made. There has to be a partnership so that the CSG industry and farming can both operate—a partnership that works in practical terms and in financial terms. There are places where no mining or CSG should occur and no compensation could ever be paid to cover the amount of money that these people would need, because in some of those areas those activities are just not suitable, particularly in those very good farming areas. That activity should not occur there and, under our policy, it will not occur.

The key is to operate under a very good partnership. A kid in their first year out of school earns more money in a year than what some of those farmers will earn from the gas industry. Yet they have to put up with all the roads, the wells, the dust, the camps across the road and everything else that goes with it. There has to be a far better working relationship—a partnership, a team. If we have that, we will have a better arrangement. The LNP has a good policy on CSG. It is setting up the gas fields commission and it will be building a framework around that policy. So I ask landholders to be patient while we commence the implementation of that policy. It will take some time, but we will do a good job and we will make sure that we have a good partnership.

Dalrymple Electorate

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.01 pm): This morning, I tabled a petition from Dimbulah residents who are seriously concerned about the growing incidence of youth crime in their community. The financial strain from the increase in the incidence of break and enters, theft and vandalism is threatening local businesses and could result in a loss of services to the community. That is unacceptable to Dimbulah residents. Although young offenders have been charged with these offences, the penalties are not decreasing the crime rate. That situation is unacceptable. The current penalties are no deterrent for young people who commit crimes in rural communities. The police are working their guts out within our communities to get better outcomes for young people, only to see them get a slap on the wrist or, worse still, for them to be sent to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

Many young people are using crime as a passage to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The truth is that more money goes towards turning corrective facilities into holiday homes. For many, the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre provides young people with an opportunity to get away from home, to catch up with friends around a swimming pool, to play Xbox and to muck around in recording studios. The penalties must fit the crime. I will write to the minister to request a tour through the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to see firsthand what these young people are being provided. A greater punishment regime must be put in place that includes community service, the clean-up of graffiti and boot camps.

The petition calls for a greater police presence in the town of Dimbulah and requests urgent action by the government to support tougher penalties such as curfews for perpetrators, compensation for victims and the other measures that I have mentioned. If these young offenders are made financially responsible for the damage they cause and personally accountable to the community so they realise the damage they are causing to families and business owners, there is a greater opportunity for reconciliation between the perpetrators and the community.

Dimbulah residents are not the only ones who are concerned about the incidence of crime on the Tablelands. Residents of the southern Tablelands are concerned that there is not a police officer 24/7 to service the communities of Ravenshoe, Malanda and Atherton. Call-outs to those towns are dispatched from Mareeba, which is over an hour and a half drive away and there are numerous incidents.

However, this morning we saw the government continue with Premier Beattie's North Bank plan in Brisbane, while the rest of the infrastructure in the state continues to rot, as it did under the previous government. The Premier stated that this development will not cost taxpayers anything, yet the plans involve the sale of government owned—that is public—land to create an ivory palace for politicians and their friends. This is a matter of major public concern, because the government made a commitment to my electorate and to many others in rural Queensland that it would not focus on the south-east corner but would invest in infrastructure development in regional Queensland—infrastructure such as the upgrade of the Bruce Highway and inland highways such as the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road.

If buildings have to be sold, then the money from that should be used in areas that have been neglected. That will generate an income for the state. The Tablelands alone generates over half a billion dollars for the state. Money could be better invested to make southern markets more accessible for northern producers. The Bruce Highway has been closed numerous times in three years. I cannot see how a massive expansion of the Brisbane CBD can be seen as a cost-effective use of income in the light of huge revenue losses every time the Bruce Highway is closed off, thereby cutting off northern producers from the southern markets. Usually, when the Bruce Highway is closed, a convoy of vehicles use the inland highways. It would be better to upgrade the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Developmental Road so that people can access the Tablelands and northern producers can access the southern markets when the Bruce Highway is closed.

There are also areas like Shovel Creek and Gardner Creek that are cut off during a flood. We can spend money on those areas. During the election campaign we had LNP politicians continually coming to Charters Towers to say that they support the building of a recreational lake. They did that in the hope that they could unseat me. We want money to build that lake as it will bring great benefits to Charters Towers. It will breathe life into that town. It will create an atmosphere so that people will invest in the region.

We could also upgrade the road network in the Tablelands. As I said, half a billion dollars in gross revenue comes out of that region and what do the people in that area get? The crumbs off Brisbane's table. Now we see a \$2 billion asset and an area that produces half a billion dollars gets nothing.

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

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.06 pm): I present a bill for an act to adopt the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cwlth) and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 (Cwlth), and to refer certain matters relating to the regulation of vocational education and training to the Parliament of the Commonwealth, for the purposes of section 51(xxxvii) of the Commonwealth Constitution, and to make amendments of the Building Act 1975, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Liquor Act 1992 and the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000, for particular purposes, and consequential amendments to the acts mentioned in the schedule. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education and Innovation Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill [183].

Tabled paper: Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill, explanatory notes [184].

I am pleased to introduce to the House the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2012. This bill will refer legislative power to regulate registered training organisations—or RTOs—and vocational education and training, known as VET, courses to the Commonwealth parliament. The bill will also abolish the current Queensland VET regulator, the Training and Employment Recognition Council—TERC—and transfer remaining functions, mostly associated with apprenticeships and traineeships, to Skills Queensland. Referring power to the Commonwealth will ensure that Queensland continues to deliver and maintain the highest of quality standards and further supports this government's commitment to reducing regulatory burden on business.

An earlier version of this bill was introduced in the previous parliament. The bill lapsed when parliament was dissolved for a general election. Before the bill lapsed, the former Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee issued its final report on the bill on 23 December 2011. The committee unanimously recommended that the bill proceed subject to one amendment, that is, to require amendments to the Commonwealth legislation to be tabled in this parliament. The committee requested that copies of the national VET legislation be tabled in parliament and also raised one issue in relation to the impact of the bill on school based RTOs. I now table a copy of the national VET legislation: the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011.

Tabled paper: National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 [185].

Tabled paper: National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 [186].

This government is pleased to support the referral of power and to introduce the bill in this 54th Parliament. This version of the bill responds to recommendation 2 of the committee's report to include a clause requiring any amendments to the national VET legislation to be tabled before this parliament.

The bill refers power to the Commonwealth parliament in two ways. Firstly, it adopts the national VET legislation—the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011. The adoption of the national VET legislation refers Queensland's legislative power based on the provisions of the national VET legislation. Secondly, it includes an amendment referral, which allows the Commonwealth parliament to amend the national VET legislation with respect to prescribed VET matters in clause 4 of the bill. The prescribed matters are:

- (a) the registration and regulation of VET organisations;
- (b) the accreditation or other recognition of VET courses or programs;
- (c) the issue and cancellation of VET qualifications or statements of attainment;
- (d) the standards to be complied with by the VET regulator;
- (e) the collection, publication, provision and sharing of information about VET; and
- (f) investigative powers, sanctions and enforcement in relation to these matters.

The bill clarifies the scope of the amendment referral in clause 4(2). That clause provides that the Commonwealth cannot make a law that excludes or limits the operation of a state law to the extent that the state law makes provision in relation to:

- (a) primary or secondary education, including the education of children subject to compulsory school education;

- (b) tertiary education that is recognised as higher education and not VET;
- (c) the rights and obligations of persons providing or undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships;
- (d) the qualifications or other requirements to undertake or carry out any business, occupation or other work, other than that of a VET organisation;
- (e) the funding by the state of VET; or
- (f) the establishment or management of any agency of the state that provides VET.

This provision will ensure that the scope of the referral is limited to the regulation of RTOs and accreditation of VET courses. The requirements to enter trades and occupations through apprenticeships and traineeships will remain a state responsibility. If Queensland wishes to withdraw from the national scheme, clause 7 provides for the termination of the amendment reference or the adoption. The termination is achieved by the Governor proclaiming by notice published in the *Government Gazette* that the amendment reference and/or adoption of the amendment reference are terminated. The power to terminate the amendment reference or adoption would not be used lightly. However, if Queensland decided that it was appropriate to terminate the referral, the bill allows for that action to be taken quickly and effectively. In addition to referring power, the bill provides for the abolition of the TERC and the transfer of its remaining functions to Skills Queensland and makes amendments to the Building Act 1975, the Liquor Act 1992, the Gaming Machine Act 1991 and other legislation to remove the potential for an inconsistency between these acts and the national VET legislation after the referral of power.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is working in close consultation with the national regulator—the Australian Skills Quality Authority, ASQA—to ensure a smooth transition from state to national regulation. When the committee considered an earlier version of this bill it requested advice about what Queensland could do to support schools to minimise the impact of registered training organisation fees and to ensure that vocational education and training services in the school sector are not adversely affected. I can assure the honourable members of this House that the Newman government will ensure that schools are not adversely affected by the move to national regulation of VET. This government is committed to ensuring that Queensland school students continue to have access to high-quality vocational education and training.

Currently, school RTOs have their RTO registration managed by the Queensland Studies Authority, QSA, through a delegation from the TERC under the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000. This delegation means that effectively school RTOs do not pay RTO registration fees. ASQA will, after the Queensland parliament refers its power to the Commonwealth, issue a similar delegation, which will remain in force for at least 12 months. During this time school RTOs will not pay RTO fees. ASQA will review the delegation during the 12-month period to determine whether it will continue. During the 12-month delegation, the department will work with schools to develop strategies to minimise the impact of fees if the delegation is terminated. Firstly, the department will review existing funding arrangements for the delivery of VET in schools to ensure that schools receive sufficient funding to meet the cost of RTO fees. Secondly, the department will work with school sectors to develop alternative registration models that reduce the RTO fees payable to ASQA. These strategies can then be implemented if ASQA does not continue the delegation to the QSA.

Referring power to the Commonwealth to regulate Queensland RTOs will ensure that Queensland continues to maintain its reputation as a high-quality provider of training and will deliver substantial benefits to the training industry, including the very tangible benefits associated with a reduction of regulatory burden on business.

First Reading

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.15 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.

Referral to the Education and Innovation Committee

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education and Innovation Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREENTAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.15 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability Act 2011, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [187].

Tabled paper: Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [188].

The green-tape reduction project commenced in 2010 with the aim to reform the licensing application and assessment processes under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to reduce costs for industry and government while upholding environmental standards for the community. The project rebuilds the approval processes for environmental licensing under the act to reduce costs, improve business investment certainty and allow front-line environmental regulation to be delivered more efficiently. It is a coordinated package of legislation, business processes and information systems reform that has been developed in close consultation with industry. The changes proposed in this bill will reduce the burden in Queensland of slow approvals for industry and government and bring the environmental approvals process in line with international best practice.

I am very pleased to put on record that the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 offers a substantial contribution to the LNP government's commitment to cut red tape and regulation by 20 per cent. The bill redrafts the provisions of the act that relate to licensing environmentally relevant activities, making it easier and cheaper for businesses to obtain certain environmental approvals, and will save Queensland businesses an estimated \$11.7 million each year. By deleting the three repetitive chapters that currently deal with licensing environmental authorities and replacing them with a single process, 90 pages of regulation—more than 12 per cent—of the Environmental Protection Act will be removed. The main objective of the bill is to introduce a transparent and simplified regulatory system focused on four major areas of reform: a licensing approach that is proportionate to the environmental risk; streamlined approvals for resource activities; flexible operational processes and approvals; and streamlined information requirements for numerous environmental approvals.

One of the features of the bill is a licensing system that is proportionate to risk. Quite simply, we will introduce a standard application process for lower risk businesses. Under this initiative, lower risk environmentally relevant activities that meet set eligibility criteria will be automatically approved to operate under a set of standard conditions. Small and medium size businesses will receive the most benefit, with approximately 50 per cent of all applications proposed to become standard, that is, around 410 per year. This will save each applicant an impressive \$20,000 on average in preparation costs, 150 pages in avoided application materials and 68 days in processing time. This can-do government will introduce a bill that reduces red tape in Queensland by approximately 62,000 pages per year.

This initiative goes a long way to reducing green tape on small businesses, but it is only the first step in reducing the regulatory burden for environmental approvals in Queensland. To take this further, I have asked my department to review the list of environmentally relevant activities in the Environmental Protection Regulation 2008 to identify opportunities to deregulate small businesses that are not licensed in other states. This reform will support the government's aim of building a four-pillar economy and accords with our blueprint for small business. The introduction of flexible operational approvals takes the best features of the integrated development assessment system under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and combines them with the flexibility of the environmental authority system under the Environmental Protection Act.

This bill provides for a single licence type for all environmentally relevant activities—the environmental authority. Where there is also a need for a development approval, the environmental authority will be approved through the planning framework, the same as it is now. However, at the end of the process, the operator will be issued with a flexible environmental authority that will make the ongoing operations of the business much more responsive by simplifying the process to change an approval as the business grows. One example of the benefits of the flexible environmental authority is the introduction of the amalgamated authority. Operators of more than one site will be able to

amalgamate all their environmental authorities to allow multiple sites to be managed as a whole and reduce the number of conditions and the administrative costs of multiple reporting requirements. For the first time, resources companies will be able to combine resources and non-resources approvals into a single authority. For example, a company operating a mining site and associated power station can amalgamate the two approvals into a single environmental authority and avoid conflicting conditions and reporting requirements and reduce administrative costs.

The bill further streamlines the approvals process for resources activities by replacing the current confusing process with a clear modular process with application, information, public notification and decision stages. Within this there are a number of other benefits for the industry. These include the removal of the requirement for an environmental management plan, replacing it with a clear list of application requirements; removal of the need to transfer the environmental authority when the tenure is transferred, meaning over 250 transfer applications a year will no longer be required; and allowing public notification to occur earlier in the process, reducing assessment time frames by around three months.

As an example of this can-do government's election commitment of reducing red tape by 20 per cent, I am pleased to inform the House that this bill will delete the requirement for plans of operations for small miners. This will remove a 15-page administrative requirement from around 2,400 operators in Queensland, a further reduction of 36,000 pages of green tape overall. That is 36,000 pages of green tape that does not have to be filled in, completed and checked by operators in Queensland and then approved by government.

I am pleased to inform the House that the reforms that will be achieved by the bill will be supported by changes to the Environmental Protection Regulation and to business processes and guidance materials. The list of matters that a decision maker must consider in the regulation will be reviewed and streamlined to ensure they support good environmental outcomes rather than bureaucratic, prescriptive requirements. This government's commitment to focus on outcomes rather than unnecessary administration is demonstrated in the development of a manual to support applicants and departmental officers. This will include information on the department's outcomes focused approach to environmental conditioning, which will improve consistency between approvals and the quality of environmental conditions. I have instructed my department to produce clear, simple English guidance materials to improve the quality of applications. This will result in fewer information requests, again helping to reduce delays in the assessment process.

Key industry, community and government stakeholders have been extensively consulted at all stages of the green-tape project and this bill. These initiatives were identified as priorities by industry associations with extensive operational experience. As recently as May 2012, leading stakeholder groups and associations such as the Queensland Resources Council, the Cement Concrete and Aggregates Association and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland have all publicly indicated their strong support to this government's approach in finalising the green-tape reduction project.

The green-tape reduction project reforms the Environmental Protection Act in line with our election commitment to reduce regulation and red tape by 20 per cent. Under the previous government this project stalled, but I am pleased to inform the House that this can-do government has done and will continue to do what is best for all Queenslanders. We have delivered this project as a priority, as a first step in our relentless pursuit of a reduction in unnecessary green tape in Queensland.

Quite simply, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill ensures the objective of the Environmental Protection Act to protect our environment is met, while offering clearer and simpler approval processes to operate for a wide range of business in Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (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.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from 17 May (see p. 106).

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Before calling the member for Redcliffe, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and as such the member shall be heard in silence.

Mr DRISCOLL (Redcliffe—LNP) (12.27 pm): I rise for the first time in this place to deliver my maiden speech following my election by the people of Redcliffe to represent them in this Queensland parliament. I pledge my firm and true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia, and to all her heirs and successors. To represent my home town of Redcliffe, where I was born and bred, is a great honour indeed. It is my first priority to represent the local people of Redcliffe in this parliament and, for so long as I am in this place, that will never change.

Today I wish to dedicate my efforts and whatever good outcomes I may play some part in delivering in this place for Queenslanders to the memory of my late grandfather, Ernest Nicolaus, a great man who was my role model and my mentor. My grandfather dedicated his life to educating Queensland children, retiring after 16 years from his final post as headmaster of the Scarborough State School, in Redcliffe. My grandfather instilled in me a strong sense of community. He also taught me humility and, very importantly, he taught me to always give of my best and to never give up. It is his strength and his values, which he passed on to me, that are most responsible for why I am here today and why I have been given this rare opportunity to represent in this place my home town and my community of Redcliffe.

I pledge to all of my fellow Redcliffe locals that I will work tirelessly and to the best of my ability to make Redcliffe and Queensland a better place in which to live and to work. I will always give of my best. Before my election to parliament those in my community were my equals, but today I am their servant. This is a distinction that I recognise and embrace.

Over the course of what was a very long election campaign, starting for me and my team in November 2010 when I was preselected, I have listened to thousands and thousands of people across Redcliffe in one-on-one conversations. I spoke to ladies on the age pension who would sit home alone in the dark at night because they feared the next electricity bill. I spoke to mums who had to go without to provide for their kids because there just was not enough money left after the ever-bulging car rego bill arrived. I spoke to small family owned local business operators who had struggled and failed to make ends meet after their utility bills went through the roof and at the same time consumers were experiencing a severe crisis of confidence due to horrific policies of the former Queensland Labor government.

It was not my original intention or desire to utter the name of that former Labor government, but following that 20-year regime of lies, ineptitude and dirty deeds I feel left with no option. Those lies, that ineptitude and those dirty deeds were not only the hallmarks of over 20 years of that Labor government in Queensland but were also the hallmarks of what has gone down as the crudest and least successful election campaign in Australian political history. Mr Deputy Speaker, those remaining seven Labor MPs or, more appropriately in my view, the seven stars of the Big Dipper constellation who occupy the corner appropriately to your far left, owe their position here to a campaign of utter lies and filth that reached into the family homes of many of us in this new government in ways that were judged by most Queenslanders as reprehensible. They will continue to reap what they sow. It is worth noting that the Big Dipper constellation is in fact sometimes known in places like Northern England as the butcher's cleaver. I am sure that we will witness that butcher's cleaver being wielded soon enough when the member for South Brisbane sits down and quietly discusses the Labor leadership with the member for Inala. Of far greater importance than what is now the contemporary Queensland Labor Party, I wish to talk more about Redcliffe and the wonderful people who call it home, as I do.

Redcliffe holds the distinction of being the site of the first European settlement in Queensland, first visited by Matthew Flinders on 17 July 1799. Explorer John Oxley recommended that Redcliffe Point be named after the red coloured cliffs that were viewed from Moreton Bay. He recommended this to the then Governor, Thomas Brisbane, for the new colony, reporting that ships could land on any tide and easily get close to the shore. The first settlers arrived in Redcliffe on 13 September 1824 under the command of Lieutenant Henry Miller with 14 soldiers, some with their wives and children, and 29 convicts. Redcliffe was proclaimed a city in 1959 when Princess Alexandra visited with a royal charter from Queen Elizabeth II. Redcliffe's status as a unique and independent city in its own right was then destroyed by the Queensland Labor government in 2007 when, without consultation or our permission, the Queensland government forced council amalgamations on what were once proud municipalities like Redcliffe right around the great state of Queensland.

I am humbled by the trust that Redcliffe people have put in me and the overall trust Queenslanders have given our Liberal National Party government. With that trust comes a responsibility that weighs on me, as I know it does on all LNP members here. In feeling that sense of responsibility, I

accept it with humility and grace and I will never take it for granted. I wish to make special mention also and thank sincerely all of my fellow members of the Liberal National Party in Redcliffe. Their confidence in me at my preselection in 2010 was the start of a long road and a campaign that has forged strong friendships from out of that fire.

I deliver this speech in the address-in-reply in the House with the wonderful LNP members and supporters who helped us in Redcliffe firmly in my mind. Their efforts and spirit as members of our LNP in Redcliffe mean that this Queensland LNP government is here and that I am a proud member of it, ready to serve Queenslanders. To my Redcliffe LNP campaign strategy committee, I have come to call you all great mates and the friendship we share I value immensely. I thank each of them sincerely for their dedication to our cause and our Redcliffe LNP campaign that stretched out across a disciplined and very hard fought 18 months. To my campaign treasurer, Geoff Jamieson, who is here today, your knowledge and counsel throughout this period was invaluable as was your friendship and support. I look forward to your ongoing contribution to community service and to working closely with you for Redcliffe. I just say Geoff, do not forget that I won that bet regarding the election date and I look forward to that dinner on you soon.

To my campaign chairman, Buck Rogers, formerly known by call sign 'niner two' when on the battlefield while serving Australia in various theatres of war and who is now also a selfless volunteer for the great cause of Legacy, I say to you that you were the rock and the foundation that this campaign was able to be built on. It was a privilege to serve with you in this campaign for Redcliffe. To Brian and Gerald Roselt, who are also here, and to Chris Clarke, you are great mates and the best sign site coordinators and operators any would-be political candidate could ask for. Week in, week out, over months and months, you attended campaign strategy meetings and also organised our constant physical presence on the streets of Redcliffe. You continued relentlessly to do this during times of personal challenge for yourselves and your respective families. Your commitment and ongoing friendship will be forever valued and cherished by me.

To Tony Mayfield, Don Lewis and Waldo Hayes, your work each week for months on end to bring about this great result was fantastic. Thank you for your commitment and also your friendship. To Bruce Mills, who is also present here today, your unwavering friendship and support throughout the campaign was amazing. You know only too well the sort of gutter tactic campaigning that Labor and their cronies dish out when given the chance, but you put mateship and the Redcliffe community before your own interests and redoubled your efforts when the going got tough. The strong friendship I enjoy with both you and your wife, Leesa, is something I value greatly.

I turn to Ben Scott, my campaign director. While working full-time he managed to run a full-time election campaign that saw a massive grassroots result in which he has a huge share. I thank you, Ben, for your dedication, your belief in our cause and your staunch and unwavering loyalty to me. I look forward to your close ongoing support as part of my team as we work to deliver the best possible outcomes for Redcliffe.

To both my mother and my wife, your collective patience and tolerance was and is greatly appreciated. I offer this thanks and acknowledgement now also in advance for all the times I know in the future I will test you in my pursuit of best representing Redcliffe. To my gorgeous daughter, Charlee, having you around is always very special. Your spirit and your smile are always just amazing.

I am a proud sixth generation Queenslander. My family came to Queensland in the 1870s as farmers on the Darling Downs, first settling in Glencoe just outside Toowoomba and then at Peranga, just outside Oakey. Since being elected to this Queensland parliament on 24 March 2012, I attended a family reunion at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church hall in Glencoe. With family members around me, one who could fortunately translate German read to us the messages on the headstones of my great-great-grandparents' graves. They were, surprisingly, messages to us—their family and descendents—rather than being an overview of those who had passed. The messages were clear and typical of the early Queensland pioneer families. In essence, they implored us to keep our faith in God and to keep going from where they have left off. As these sentiments were translated from German to English, I looked across the track to the now quite unkempt 100-acre block of land that these two Queensland farming pioneers settled on and gave my family the start and foundation we had in Queensland. I take nothing for granted and know that nothing worthwhile comes without hard work.

In the same way my pioneering family members got up every day thankful for the new opportunity they had been given in Queensland, I now do the same as the member for Redcliffe. With the same dedication and work ethic, I will keep my faith in God and keep on going, now as the humble servant of the wonderful people of Redcliffe. I take my election to this place as the will of my Redcliffe community, my people and my home town. It is the people of Redcliffe whom I serve in this place and it is their voice I will always carry. I wish to congratulate and thank sincerely the new Premier of Queensland, Campbell Newman, for his dedication and his leadership. These are hallmarks of the campaign and are clearly already hallmarks of our new LNP government. Campbell's ability, grace and courage while under heavy fire is now etched into the history books of Queensland politics forever.

I also congratulate and thank the new Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, who has spent years in this place holding the former government to account for its very many sins. Jeff played an integral part in the electoral success of the LNP, and his role as parliamentary opposition leader in the run-up to the election was performed with amazing effect.

I also wish to congratulate and thank the new Treasurer of Queensland, Tim Nicholls. Throughout the campaign, as part of the leadership team, Tim always portrayed a consummate image of calm and control to the rest of us. His discipline when considering the finances of Queensland meant that we all knew that, if elected, our government could and would deliver on our promises designed to get Queensland back on track.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as a child I was introduced to a poem by my grandfather that has always resonated with me and could very much be seen as somewhat of a metaphor for political service. That poem is called *If* by Rudyard Kipling. It reads—

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken,
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings,
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

When I look to the future of Redcliffe I see us turning a corner. I see the people of Redcliffe having the opportunity to rise up and claim the mantle of being an economic powerhouse once again, as we were closer towards the time of settlement. I will work to ensure that we deliver more local jobs by fighting for local family owned businesses, who are the biggest employers in our area. I look forward to working with local Redcliffe small business support groups like Commerce and Industry Redcliffe Peninsula, whose president, Mr Nick Tzimas, is here today. I acknowledge his contribution throughout many years in the Redcliffe area.

I relish the opportunity of working with local Redcliffe schools, their students, teachers and principals, along with their P&Cs and P&F groups. Indeed, I was very pleased to note that Humpybong State School has several groups visiting this place today. I embrace the chance to work for and stand shoulder to shoulder with our Redcliffe community and services groups, associations and clubs.

Following my recent election, I have met with and listened to front-line service staff who dedicate their careers and their lives to our Redcliffe community. Some of those front-line workers have included local police, teachers, doctors and nurses, along with ambulance officers and firefighters. These people are part of the fabric of Redcliffe and I value their great work and I offer them my full support in the work they do for us all.

In closing, I look forward to working with the Premier and every member of our LNP government here to get our great state of Queensland back on track.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Before I call the member for Broadwater, I need to mention a couple of things. One is that mobile phones should always be turned off in the chamber at all times. It was unacceptable that a phone rang, particularly in the middle of a maiden speech, in my opinion. If it happens again, I will seek to identify the phone and the phone will be removed from the chamber. The second thing for the benefit of all members is that the term 'lie' or 'lying' is generally considered unparliamentary. It should not appear in any speeches in the chamber and especially should never be applied to any individual member of the parliament.

Before calling the member for Broadwater, I also take a moment to acknowledge in the House a former member for the seat of Kurilpa, Clive Hughes, who is in the gallery and who is the grandfather of the member for Broadwater.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Again, before calling the member, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and as such the member shall be heard in silence. I call the member for Broadwater.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (12.45 pm): It is indeed a great honour to rise as the member for Broadwater for the first time in this hallowed place. From the Jabiru Island Bridge in the north, to Loders Creek in the south, west to the Coombabah reserve, east to the magnificent South Stradbroke Island and all in between, it is a community that I am proud to be a member of and even prouder to be a voice for and serve. I have long been of the belief, Mr Deputy Speaker, that after military service there is no greater way that one can serve their community and their country than to represent them in the parliament, and it truly is a great privilege to be here.

I am very proud to be a third generation member of the Liberal National Party and its predecessor, the Liberal Party. I am a proud conservative and a proud constitutional monarchist. Indeed, it is on a pedestal that I place Sir Robert Menzies, Baroness Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the Hon. John Winston Howard as the key political influences in my life. It is their writings and their words that have shaped my political philosophy and shaped the beliefs that I am proud to hold today.

I joined the Liberal Party at the age of 17 because I believe in the rights and freedoms of all, because I believe that it is the individuals and businesses of this great state and country who are the true creators of wealth and opportunity. I am a member because I believe in free enterprise and in offering incentives for positive action rather than punishment for inaction. I joined because I do not believe that governments can tax their people into prosperity. I am a member because I believe in smaller government. As 'the Gipper' himself once said, 'The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: "I'm from the government and I'm here to help."' And it is with this mantra in mind that I can honestly say that I truly hope that when I leave this place our government is smaller and its interventions in our lives less.

My political philosophy is also shaped and guided by my Catholic faith and my belief in God. In times of trouble and discomfort I know that I can seek solace in His wisdom and His guidance. It is my faith and my association with the Society of St Vincent de Paul which has helped shape and guide my belief that we should always offer a hand up not a handout to those who are truly in need and who are unable to help themselves. I believe that we, as individual members of our communities and society, have a duty to help those suffering and struggling the most, for it is as the Chinese proverb declares: if you give a man a fish you feed him for a day; teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

As a conservative, I believe in strong families and the sanctity of marriage—two great institutions that have stood the test of time. I believe in families who work together for the greater good of all and I believe that we have a responsibility to support those families. Australia rode to prosperity on the sheep's back and it continues to grow today and will grow well into the future on the back of strong, hardworking Australian and Queensland families.

Not only am I a strong supporter of families; I am also a constitutional monarchist and an ardent supporter of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Australia. As I proudly stood by the banks of the Brisbane River in October last year, waving my little Australian flag, the words of Elizabethan poet Thomas Ford came immediately to mind—

I did but see her passing by

And yet I love her till I die.

Our constitutional monarchy is a system that works. It is a system that works to ensure democratic mandates are protected and the people's choice honoured. Republicans oft cite the proposition that an Australian republic is an inevitability and that we should not fight to protect the sacrosanctity of the system of which we should be so proud. To those I say: not only is that argument flawed but it is akin to saying that death is inevitable so why should one bother living? I am proud to be steadfast in my beliefs, and if you will indulge me and allow me to borrow some words from the great 'iron lady' herself, this lady is not for turning.

It is the people of my community who make it so incredibly special. I have long had an association with the area, and I made the decision nearly 10 years ago that it was the Broadwater area where I wanted to live and where I one day hope to raise a family. I have some incredibly fond memories of my school holidays spent at my grandparents' place at Paradise Point. I remember getting very excited when I was first able to swim from one side of the canal to the other, I remember long walks through the park to the Sovereign Island bridge and back, and I remember being a precocious little girl as I popped into the O'Callaghan's chemist just to say hello.

That said, however, I also have some not-so-fond memories that include the ritual dumping by waves on the other side of South Stradbroke Island and getting caught by one of the many sandbanks at low tide when fishing or crabbing on the Broadwater with my grandfather—though at the time, of course, I was completely unaware and thought it was all part of his grand plan to get the best yabbies for yet another few hours of tranquillity as we sat side by side, lines in, looking out to the Broadwater as he indulged my incredibly juvenile and innocent dreams that I might just snag a six-foot barramundi. That said, my memories are mostly fond and they are very good and they are what have influenced my love of the area.

It is the needs and the concerns of my community that will drive me and to which I will respond. And that is why I am proud to be the member for Broadwater at a time when we will see the re-establishment of an independent Broadwater management authority, an authority which will seek to ensure the future and health of our beautiful namesake. It is an authority that will plan dredging with the interests of recreational boaters, fishermen and the marine life paramount in its focus. And it is also why I will be fighting to see the removal of transit lanes in Labrador so we can ease the growing traffic congestion and why I will fight to see the installation of flashing lights at all schools in the area for the safety of everyone.

I would also like to acknowledge the former honourable members for Broadwater, Mr Allan Grice and Ms Peta-Kaye Croft, and recognise in this House and at this time their service to our community.

I believe that we need strong communities, and that is why I will be fighting for more police in our community and why I will be working with groups like the Runaway Bay RSL Sub Branch, the Coombabah Neighbourhood Watch groups and the Paradise Point Progress Association. It is also why I will work tirelessly to ensure not only that the Labrador Men's Shed, an establishment which grows rapidly every single day, has the ability to grow so that it can continue to be the social hub that our local men need and where they can relate their life experiences, trials and tribulations with their fellow shed members, but also that the great men there can continue the prodigious and phenomenal mentoring work they do with Labrador State School.

My belief in strong communities is why I will always be a strong advocate for the networks that Coombabah State High School has made with local businesses as part of the beacon program, a program which seeks to ensure that our local high school students fully appreciate the breadth of opportunities they have in their futures. The children of today are our leaders of tomorrow, and that is why I will be a resolute supporter of the leadership programs at Coombabah State School and Coombabah State High and why I will work to forge strong relationships with Biggera Waters State School and St Francis Xavier school in Runaway Bay. It is my hope that I can use my relationships with these schools to encourage in the young and youth of today a love of reading, a thirst for knowledge and an indomitable sense of the need to understand what governments do and current local, national and world events.

When I was in kindergarten and preschool a love of reading was inspired in me. Over the years I have gained and derived much pleasure from the many tomes, and it has driven my thirst for knowledge. I honestly believe that if you give a child the gift of reading the opportunities and experiences for them that you create are endless.

Our community has many assets of which it can be exceedingly proud, be it the Labrador Tigers AFL club, the Runaway Bay Cricket Club, the soccer club or the rugby league club. And let us not forget the Labrador scouts club, still in its original den down on Turpin Road, which provides mentoring and life skills to the boys and girls of our community as they grow into remarkable young men and women. We should also be very proud of the Runaway Bay Sports Super Centre for it is a rare institution indeed. Not only does the centre provide excellent, world-class facilities for students on school camps and visiting athletes from all around the world; it continues to do so as a government owned entity that does not seek to rely on taxpayer dollars for day-to-day operational costs. Rather, it has a business plan and runs itself like any private entity.

We should also be very proud of the multicultural nature of our community. I have had the great pleasure of congratulating Australians on the attainment of their new citizenship and welcoming refugees into the school community at Labrador. One of the things that makes Australia, Queensland and all of our communities so great is the extent of cultural diversity to which we are all exposed on a day-to-day basis. When I went to primary school we had the motto 'we all smile in the one language', and as an adult who appreciates Australia's cultural diversity I now, more than ever, fully appreciate how true a statement that is. One of the lasting memories that I will have for the rest of my life is the look on

the face of an Ethiopian refugee as he thanked me for the opportunity that his children will have, not only for a better life but also for a better education. It made me incredibly proud to be a part of a community that he wants to be a member of and that is welcoming him with open arms. I will also never forget the smiles on the faces of a Guatemalan migrant and his wife as they recited the oath as they became Australian citizens. Our diversity means that our communities can learn and share much with each other, all while smiling in the same language.

We should be incredibly proud of our way of life as we remember that people the world over strive to have the same opportunities that we do and that good men and women fight to ensure that people the world over have the same freedoms that we have and that we often take for granted.

As a society we do a fantastic job of recognising people's sporting abilities and prowess and we offer them the opportunities that they need to excel. This is something that we should continue to do now and into the future. However, we should never neglect those whose endeavours towards excellence are cultural in nature, be it dance, theatre, film, art or music. It is my hope that over coming years the Gold Coast community will be able to provide a public hub for those who strive towards cultural excellence and need our community's support.

I would not be here today if it were not for the trust and faith that the great people of Broadwater have placed in me. There have been moments when it has been incredibly overwhelming, but it is also a remarkable honour. Someone wise once told me that I should always remember that when people come to our door as their representatives they are at their darkest and their problems are at their worst and it is our duty to do our utmost to help remedy and relieve their problems, regardless of how little it may seem that we can do. Indeed, as Edmund Burke himself once said, 'the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'. To the people of Broadwater, I make this pledge to you: I will honour the trust and faith that you have placed in me and I will reward you with my heart and with my soul.

I am incredibly gratified to stand in this place knowing that I am the youngest woman ever elected in the great state of Queensland. This achievement is all the more rewarding knowing that it is the conservatives in Queensland who have always selected and chosen women for public office on the basis of their merit and their ability, not because of the antiquated and, quite frankly, simply offensive concept that is a quota system and affirmative action. I hope that this achievement, along with that of the honourable member for Maroochydore as Queensland's first female Speaker, serves as proof to all women, to somewhat blasphemously paraphrase the great Annie Lennox and the even greater Aretha Franklin, that sisters really can do it for themselves.

As I look around this chamber I am delighted to see a broad range of people from a broad range of backgrounds. I have long been of the view that our parliaments need to be representative of our demographics, and I am proud to be a member of this 54th Parliament because it does just that.

There were some very special people who helped me reach my dream of being a voice for my community who I would like to acknowledge publicly today. And whilst it would be impossible for me to name them all, I would like to particularly mention the Premier, the Hon. Campbell Newman; the President of the LNP, Bruce McIver; Bernard Ponting; Bruce Duncan; Betty and Laurie Robinson; Paul Donovan; Peter Campbell; Blair Shapland; Kyle Shapland; Julian Leembruggen; the Gold Coast Young LNP and the Young LNP at large; Nan Rogers; Ross Tregida; Pat Crotty; Richard Towson; Stuart Robert MP; David Callard; Robert Knight; Kerry Knight; Phil Hunniford; Mitchell Redford; all my volunteers; and last but certainly not least, my campaign director, John Clarke.

Finally, there are some very special people who have helped me achieve great things in my life and who have contributed to where and who I am today. I would like to especially mention and acknowledge the Sisters of Mercy, particularly Sister Mary Pescott RSM; Senator the Hon. George Brandis SC; Liam Brennan; Ryan Murphy; Kate Pasfield; Amy Schloss; Malcolm Hughes; Christopher Hughes; Jackie Hughes; Clive Hughes Jr; my grandfather and former member for Kurilpa, Clive Melwyn Hughes; and my mother, the incredibly perspicacious Janet Barton, to whom today I dedicate this maiden speech. I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today if it were not for the love that she showered upon me, the upbringing that she gave me and the grounding in faith that she provided me and her constant reminders to behave impeccably at all times. The sacrifices that my mother has made to give me the opportunities that I have had in my life and my education will never be forgotten. In my life I have always striven to one thing and acted to ensure it, and that is that my mother is proud of me. And I hope that today the woman I have become, who stands before you all, is one she can be immensely proud of, take credit for and take pride in. My Uncle Clive, my grandfather and my mother are the guiding lights of my life who inspire me to shine and for whom I hope to shine brighter and brighter every single day of my life.

Sitting suspended from 1.02 pm to 2.30 pm.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before calling the member for Keppel, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and, as such, the member shall be heard in silence. I call the member for Keppel.

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (2.31 pm): I pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I also acknowledge all serving members, past and present, of Australia's armed services, with special mention to those who serve in the Queensland police force. The honourable member for Bundaberg may note that I have stated 'police force', not service. I also want to mention Detective Senior Sergeant Terry Hanly, who recently retired from the force. Terry had a long and distinguished career with the police force.

I was born in Mount Morgan—a birthplace I share with the honourable member for Buderim. There is no doubt that if one were to look into our lineage we could even be related! Prior to achievements in modern mining, I could safely say that I was born in the greatest hole on earth. I left Mount Morgan at an early age and carried out all of my education in Rockhampton. We had a small farm on a lovely creek and my working life started as a station hand, working for legendary bushman Bill Scantleberry in the Dawson Valley. The property 'Mapala' was well known for its rough horses and, after being thrown one day, Bill commented, 'Use your teeth, boy, if you think it'll help.' I later went on to work for Stanbroke Pastoral Co. in North Queensland. I had decided to further my studies at the Emerald Pastoral College when my father lined me up a job as a heavy equipment diesel fitter. The trade was relatively new and I went to Brisbane for college. At college my friendship extended to apprentices from all over Queensland. I still have friends who worked at Weipa and MKU, Mary Kathleen Uranium.

As a child I can only say that I had a very pleasant and happy family life. I came from a family of all boys and now have a family of all girls. Quite a contrast! My dad was a copper and would take us boys to remote locations on the coast for holidays. The locations were usually the scene of a death or a police investigation. At a later date Dad would take us there, partly to get away and partly to give Mum a break. We would take some guns, some fishing gear, rice, flour and very little else. Dad would go for long walks on the beach—a beachcomber in the true sense of the word. Dad had seen the pointy end of humanity and was very happy to be at peace. He would throw himself down on an old blanket on the sand and fall asleep almost immediately. The rest of us would spend the rest of the night keeping the fires going so the mozzies did not carry us away.

I was raised on a stable diet of *Time* magazines and at primary school, when students would stand up in front of the class, I would belt out some rebellion in some far-flung country talking about the democratic liberation freedom movement, all of which went over the heads of my fellow students and also the teacher. Later in life at school trivia nights I impressed all by naming all of the countries in Africa. Dad had a large office underneath his house where he housed—you guessed it—50 years of *Time* magazines. My father would spend many hours in his office, working late into the night typing out police reports.

I later worked for BHP-Utah in mining and married along the way and had three beautiful little girls. I loved working for BHP-Utah and they loved me. Back then we worked a three-shift panel—day, afternoon and night shift. When scrub-pulling teams were in the area, I would often get to repair bulldozers. We had some old LandCruisers set up with tools and we would work night shift at the mine, travel to the site, work all day and then work night shift that night. Needless to say, you slept well the next day. I was always studying and taught the apprentices at the mine. I did many post trade courses for tradespersons at the mine through TAFE and I also did lots of equipment training courses—namely, Caterpillar et cetera. Dysart was a very stable and enjoyable mining community, very similar to that of Mount Morgan in the early days. There was no crime. If someone was to face the Magistrates Court, he then had to face the ridicule of walking past the many mine staff on his way to work. Sons of miners were often warned about someone else's failings and the embarrassment that it had brought to the family. The various unions had ways of punishing people who engaged in antisocial behaviour.

All of this came to an end when we purchased a medical business in Yeppoon. My wife, a GP, was offered a medical practice in Yeppoon and we acquired two very old weatherboard houses as part of the deal. We now have 12 doctors, about 50 staff and three surgeries along the Capricorn Coast. I became the equipment manager for Carpentaria, the parent company for QRX, NQX and about a dozen other transport firms. Believe me, mining and transport are poles apart. At the mine if a D10 dozer had died, someone would two-way the workshop office and we would advise that we would attend to it whenever. However, in the road transport industry, someone's freight is on that truck and they want it now. Carpentaria was owned by three brothers who controlled 52 per cent. The other 48 per cent was controlled by TNT or, back then, Thomas National Transport. I applied the same principles of equipment management from BHP-Utah to the transport industry. Although I looked after the central division of Queensland, we had equipment all over Australia. Three people managed the equipment in Queensland. I was the guy in CQ. I looked after plant, workshops, staff, terminals and we had a large transport company in Moranbah where there were 40 road trains in that one operation.

At a conference I got to know then mayor of Gladstone, Col Brown, an immensely likeable chap who was at peace with himself. Col said that Rockhampton would never go ahead because of its politics and the fact that it could and would be cut off by flooding. This was in 1993, after the big flood of 1991. Col was an old Labor boy who forged a healthy relationship with Joh Bjelke-Petersen. His pragmatic thinking was the start of Gladstone's success. I admired his quiet style of leadership. Although he was small in stature, his wisdom was respected. The recent media in Gladstone reflects the poor engineering decisions combined with a government that had clearly—and I say clearly—lost its way. Had the wisdom of Joh Bjelke-Petersen been called upon, a bridge to Curtis Island would have been placed below Graham Creek and the dredge spoil used for land reclamation, which we now know was the case with Reg Tanna coal terminal.

Monumental mistakes have been made in the Gladstone region. The complete lack of forward planning, especially in housing, will now prove to be one of our biggest challenges. I commend the member for Gladstone for her efforts to bring this matter to the table. I wish to assure the member for Gladstone that we are listening now.

However, Rockhampton is a completely different story. This once vibrant city, boasted to be the second capital of Queensland, with two meatworks, a large railway repair facility and the largest cattle saleyard in Australia, sadly, has fallen to be the poor cousin of Gladstone, Mackay and even Emerald. Fellow members of the House, there is a cyclone out there in Central Queensland. Everything is going at 100 miles an hour and stuck in the eye of that cyclone is Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast, standing still. We need the leadership and capital of our former mayor Rex Pilbeam. 'Sexy Remy', as he was affectionately known, was the last bastion of leaders Rockhampton has seen. His achievements are still talked about today. The barrage on the Fitzroy River—his greatest achievement—displayed the foresight of his leadership. The barrage is Rockhampton's greatest asset, with water from the mighty Fitzroy now heading to the Capricorn Coast and eventually Gladstone and beyond. Rex Pilbeam sealed most roads, created kerbing and channelling in Rockhampton and completed the sewerage system.

As a young man, I spent some time in Papua New Guinea. Now, I travel widely up and down the coast. When returning to Rockhampton, flying low over the Yeppen crossing I said to myself, 'I am back in Port Moresby.' That is sad but true. Rockhampton has missed out on being the centre of the mining boom. Under three levels of Labor government, Rockhampton missed out on critical levels of funding and planning. Our federal member has been the biggest disappointment. She presides over a history of inaction, acknowledged widely, to the detriment of the people of Rockhampton and its surrounds. She had an opportunity to lead this great area but, sadly, has failed. I worked on the first Yeppen crossing to Egans Hill. I have no doubt that if Joh Bjelke-Petersen was still with us this second flood-proof crossing would now be completed. The cost of the 2011 flood event by far outweighed the cost of flood-proofing the Bruce Highway at Rockhampton. Did any studies look into the cost of providing hospital services such as dialysis and the cost of transport of patients by rotary wing aircraft to Rockhampton? No, they did not. Did any studies look into the road damage caused by heavy haulage vehicles that had to bypass Rockhampton via Emerald and Barcaldine to take freight to North Queensland? No, they did not. The only studies were carried out by Central Queensland University. The cost of the 2011 flood event to Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast was calculated to be \$85 million. The true cost of this flood event, which cut this great state in half for 13 days, will never be known.

I first became a public voice in the early 2000s when we purchased a lovely property on Waterpark Creek. The former Livingstone shire council extracted water upstream from our property. This was the only water supply for the rapidly growing Capricorn Coast. The council had plans to extract water from another small creek. They were rapidly pumping one creek dry and were now looking to do the same at another location. What started as a small meeting on the edge of the creek turned into years of argument, scientific studies, reference groups, countless government meetings and filing cabinets full of correspondence. My argument was always to head to the secure source of the Fitzroy River. The \$50 million in funding finally came when a severe drought forced the government's hand and it relented at one meeting when the Capricorn Coast had 100 days of water left—something that is not widely known. The Livingstone shire was now—and I say 'now'—very much onside and came up with one-third of the funding. Another third came from the state government and the remainder came from the federal government under the National Water Initiative.

I went on to fight other poor decisions by local and state governments, such as the Rockhampton Regional Council's superdump. The superdump to service the greater Rockhampton region, which had a life of 40 years and which was to take in excess of 100,000 tonnes of rubbish per year, was to be located on Hedlow Creek 25 kilometres from the Fitzroy River, the water source of Rockhampton and now the Capricorn Coast. What were they thinking? As I stated before, the greatest asset Rockhampton has is the water that sits behind our barrage. This water, which is now under threat from the growth of mining in the Fitzroy Basin, is something that the Newman government will have to manage extremely well. We have 42 coalmines in the basin and 45 more on the drawing board.

The result of the election held on 24 March was a clear indication that the people of Queensland wanted to get back to a stable and productive government to provide front-line services and to get the state's finances back on track. We will not fail them. I would like to thank my campaign team, who

worked tirelessly: Don and Ngaire Kane, my campaign manager; Sandy Bredhauer, who phoned at daylight every morning and who proved to be a loyal and very hard worker; Neville and Gail Jones; Jack and Ray Cowie; Michelle Landry and family; John Arnold; Ray Thompson; and Michael Evans, who proved to be a wealth of knowledge. I would also like to acknowledge James McGrath, the campaign director, who received a stinging phone call from me early one morning about a poor decision. However, that will not diminish the respect I have for him. The campaign was going well when the 'hand of God' touched Bruce Young. The New South Wales Nationals, under the leadership of the state director, Ben Franklin, decided to take holidays and help me for the last five weeks of the campaign. Nathan Quigley, Ross Cadell, Douglas Martin, William Coates, Thomas Aubert and Anthony Sarks became our extended family and we worked seven days a week into the election. These young men will no doubt become the leaders of tomorrow and I am forever in their debt.

My wife, Geraldine, and three daughters, Megan, Katherine and Bridget, were always there to support me in the campaign, which, looking back, was a lot of hard work but a pleasurable and memorable experience. I had made a great big trailer sign which travelled widely throughout the campaign. That campaign sign had two faces: Bruce Young and Campbell Newman. On one occasion out on the highway two old farmers stopped for a yarn and after some small talk one of the old chaps pointed to Campbell and asked, 'Bruce, what's the story about your younger brother? Is he into politics, too?' I would like to thank the people of Keppel who placed their trust in me. I will work hard to represent them. Thank you.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! I call the member for Ipswich West. Prior to hearing the member, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and, as such, the member shall be heard in silence.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (2.48 pm): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. May I congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker. It is well deserved and I know that you are a very well-respected member of this parliament.

I feel such privilege to stand here today to deliver my maiden speech as the member for Ipswich West. I sincerely thank the people from my community who have put their faith in me so that I may be their voice in this parliament. I say to all of the people of Ipswich West: I will not let you down, I will not forget where I came from and I will fight for you to make sure you get your fair share.

I believe that the people of my region are the forgotten people. They were so overlooked by the previous government in so many ways. It is the people of my community who are at the coalface of the growth of South-East Queensland and their needs are just as important as those of the wider community. I will represent my people fiercely and make certain that they are provided with the opportunities that I know this new government and this great state will provide.

This government is about Queenslanders powering Queensland and I look forward to engaging with people on their ideas for a better community. The people of Ipswich West will see that I have a different idea about consultation than what they are used to. As their member I will ask, I will listen and I will act. People will have the opportunity to be heard and to make a contribution.

Let me talk now about Ipswich West. It comprises districts within the Brisbane Valley and Bremer Valley as well as suburbs of Ipswich. Its boundaries fall within the federal seat of Blair and it is represented by the Ipswich City Council and the Somerset Regional Council. I look forward to building a strong working relationship with my local councillors and mayors as together there is much we can achieve. I will also put politics aside to work with my current federal Labor MP in the interests of the people. I like to think that in some ways Ipswich West is like Manhattan Island—it is bustling, vibrant and surrounded by water.

Quite seriously, I represent an area where small businesses are many, providing jobs and a dynamic local economy that is diverse and innovative, with everything from web development to sand and gravel extraction and primary production to light aircraft design and manufacture. There are few electorates that can boast such business diversity. The proximity of the major centres of Brisbane and Ipswich provides great opportunities. However, the lack of quality roads infrastructure is a constant challenge for residents and I look forward to working as part of a government that will deliver the roads and bridges we need so badly.

I am very optimistic about the prospects for the people of Ipswich West. The next few years will see a transformation of the tired old Ipswich CBD into a vibrant commercial hub providing thousands of local jobs and a large regional centre for business, retail, leisure and culture. Likewise, I see opportunities for other parts of the electorate with centres like Rosewood, Fernvale, Lowood, Marburg and Minden set to grow and share in the benefits of the changing western corridor. There is much to do to provide for the development of these areas, and I am pleased the Newman government has got to work right away to remove the red and green tape which is strangling businesses and stifling investment. I look forward to seeing councils' powers restored to ensure that growth and development is managed locally and in the interests of local communities.

My electorate is made up of hardworking people from households who are now, more than ever, struggling to make ends meet. I say to them that relief is on the way. Legislative change will move quickly through this parliament as we deliver on our promises in the quickest possible time frames. People tell me every day that they are living from week to week and they dread opening their mail for fear of that nasty car registration notice and those crippling power and water bills. I am determined to work in this 54th Parliament to lower the cost of living, to cut government waste and to deliver better front-line services supporting strong, safe local communities.

To provide my people with the type of community they want, there is much work to be done. There are two issues which are key concerns throughout Ipswich West—these being transport and law and order. These two areas must be addressed urgently so that we can prepare for the expected growth and investment in the region. Over the years Ipswich West has been starved of police resources and roads funding, with these areas lagging well behind the requirements for the rate of urban development. People rightly expect that their taxes will be spent providing them with a safe and secure community.

The most important of our local roads projects is the Blacksoil interchange. This is the intersection where the Warrego Highway and the Brisbane Valley Highway meet. There is no doubt that this is the most critical and strategic road infrastructure project between the Bremer River and the Toowoomba range crossing. We must get it right. I understand that Queensland finds itself in a difficult financial situation and that the funds required to address past neglect and build the infrastructure we need for our future will be hard to come by. I am confident that, with sound economic management by our new Treasurer and his team, we will soon have the capacity to provide projects which will create jobs and underpin our economic growth.

Law and order is central to our society and it saddens me to hear from people every day about being too afraid to walk our streets. The problem in Ipswich West is getting out of control, with nuisance crimes and antisocial behaviour escalating in our once quiet communities. The unruly and unacceptable behaviour of some individuals is of great concern to the vast majority in the community and we must act to reduce crime on people and property. I have small business people, like Hong who runs a small mixed business in Tivoli and Emily who has a similar store in Lowood, who wonder whether tonight will be the next time their business is ransacked or if they will arrive for work tomorrow morning to find their shopfronts vandalised. I say to the business owners, residents and our police in Ipswich West: I share your frustration, I know your pain and your fear and I am going to do something about it. I also say to those who think they can run amuck on our streets destroying property and creating fear—look out! Our new government is coming for you.

There is not one 24-hour police station in the entire Ipswich West electorate and that has to change. I hold the utmost admiration for our police and they will have no greater ally than their new state member. Together we will take back the streets for our community in every sense of the phrase. I am very pleased to have been appointed to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I will work hard in this capacity to deliver positive outcomes for Queensland.

There is much opportunity for Ipswich West in non-traditional areas of commerce. Our natural environment and heritage offer much by way of a future destination for tourism and hospitality. I will work to bring these new industries into our region as we have much to offer both local and international visitors. I mentioned that Ipswich West is surrounded by water, with the Brisbane River to its north, the Bremer River to its south and the Lockyer Creek to its west. Add to this our nearby dams and the electorate is blessed with water which brings life, prosperity and much potential. There is so much potential to use this water as a drawcard for our region. These assets are key to the growth of our local economy. I will strongly support those who use this water for business and primary production and defend their rights to secure access and fair charging arrangements.

I am pleased to see that the new government values agriculture and will be a great support to the primary producers of Ipswich West. These businesspeople are doing it exceptionally tough and I look forward to the role they will play in rebuilding a strong agricultural sector in our state. Just as water brings life, it can also bring disaster. We are all well aware of the devastation and loss experienced during the 2011 floods. There is arguably no electorate in Queensland that was affected as broadly as Ipswich West. Those days of the floods and the many months of recovery that followed changed many of us forever. I am so proud of the way our community has worked together to rebuild and I know we will continue that work.

There are many heroes in Queensland born of the floods and many of them live in my community. They should be so proud of what they have done and continue to do. I know there is still some unfinished business with regard to the floods and I will work with the community and the government to ensure we deal with that in a fair and timely manner and that ultimately more is done in future to prevent such disasters.

It took a great deal of effort for me to reach this office. Like all of us in this parliament, I did not get here on my own. As I mentioned before, it was the people of Ipswich West who put me here and I will work hard to gain their trust and respect. So many of them encouraged me along the way and made my

campaign such a great pleasure. The people I am most grateful to are, of course, my family who worked with me and have sacrificed a lot for me to be here. That is the biggest cost in political life—the time away from loved ones.

My darling wife, Nicky, has stood by me and without her patience and support this day would not have come. My children, Charlotte, Benjamin and Eloise, have sacrificed much so that Dad can work for the community. I am truly blessed by God to have such a wonderful and dedicated wife and such beautiful and understanding children.

I thank my extended family, too, for their faith and encouragement: my mother, Marie; parents-in-law, Roy and Patricia, who support my family unconditionally; my siblings, Darren, Lauren, Murray and Shari, who taught me how to negotiate and compromise as a child in a busy household. To my sisters and brothers-in-law and others in our very large family, I say thank you.

There are regrets for me, of course, as my dad, Murray, is not here to share this day and my good friend the late Max Weier of Laidley is no longer here to offer his advice and wicked sense of humour. My deceased grandmother, Elsie Middleton, I know would be thrilled, as would my late nana-in-law, Irene. All of those people believed in me and they will be with me as I come to this place and as I work in my electorate. As candidate I was part of a team. I thank my campaign director, Warwick Milner, for his hard work, determination and faith in me. I thank my campaign workers—there are many of them—Scott, Matthew, Alan, Terry, Les and Marion, James, Liz, Stu, Jess, Tim, Mary-Ann, Ben, Bob, Rachael, Tony, Edwina and Gary, Anna, Ken and Carolyn, Mark and Cathy, Heather and Norm, Trevor and Lynne, Neil, Judy and many, many more. And to Shirley McDonald, thanks for your support—I know you will keep me on my toes!

Into this place we all carry our political beliefs. I am so proud to be a member of the LNP and to have been involved with the formation of the party in 2008. Without the LNP many of us would not be here today and Queensland might be on its way into oblivion. I wish to pay tribute to some of the people who made the LNP a reality. To Minister Lawrence Springborg, we are all in your debt. Mark McArdle, Bruce McIver and Gary Spence also made this possible, as did many others who have worked so hard. I thank them all. To my great friend Pat Weir, who is the essence of our party, I will borrow words from the federal member for Wright: Pat, you are a champion!

I acknowledge my LNP colleagues who have served Queensland in previous parliaments in opposition. They are trail blazers and I salute every one of them. I thank Premier Campbell Newman for putting so much on the line and standing up for Queensland. Do us proud, Premier; make this the Sunshine State once again. To my fellow new LNP members, I say this: look to those who have experience in this place and follow their example; work hard for your people as they are depending on you; and, most of all, help one another and work as a team. I look forward to working with members of the opposition and crossbenches on committees and in debate in this place for the good of Queenslanders and for democracy. Know that I will be fair, albeit passionate, about many things. To my LNP parliamentary colleagues from the south-west region, Lawrence, Howard, Ray, Ian, John and Trevor: the seven of us will make a difference in this place. We will fight for the south-west communities and their interests. I look forward to what lies ahead, particularly to the contribution our part of Queensland will make.

There are things in life that shape who we are. My influences are varied. Of course, my upbringing based on strong Christian values and personal responsibility has played a big part. My years serving on committees such as the Queensland Racing Pigeon Federation, the QPC, the North Ipswich Pigeon Club and the Lions Junior Rugby taught me about service for others and making things work. My career in the Queensland vocational education and training sector has taught me how training, skills and knowledge underpin opportunity and that quality is worth pursuing. I will never forget my days at the Bremer Institute of TAFE and will work to see our public training providers deliver the skills that will rebuild our economy.

To my former colleagues in the railway, I say this: I believe in you and I will watch the industry with interest. I was lucky to have worked across much of Queensland's rail network and have a keen understanding of the potential for rail to contribute to the growth of this state. To Sue, Miss Tanya and our lovely Wendy-Mae who we all miss so much, Lindy, George, Kevin, Jodie, Wendy, Peter, Mr Bishop, Michael, Rex, Barb and Tom: working with you gave me such pride and I will never forget your support, loyalty and hard work. I state here that the sell off of QR was a mistake by the Labor government and it stands condemned for its betrayal of the railway and of Queensland.

My upbringing and my work has taught me a lot about life and has instilled in me a strong work ethic and an understanding of the value of family, a sense of community and the ideal of reward for effort. I believe that the people of Ipswich West will embrace the changes and opportunities this new government will bring and will share in the prosperity it will create. Ipswich West, you are now my people and I will work hard to give you a voice and deliver for you a better future. I thank you for your faith in me and I will not let you down. I am your humble servant. Finally, I thank the House for its courtesy on what is for me a very significant occasion.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! I acknowledge in the gallery a former member for Aspley, the Honourable Beryce Nelson, who is here to support the member for Nanango. Before calling the member for Nanango, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and, as such, the member shall be heard in silence.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.03 pm): It is with pleasure that today I rise in this 54th parliament as the member for Nanango to deliver my maiden speech. Madam Deputy Speaker, please pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on the momentous occasion of her election to such high and important office. I congratulate the honourable Premier for his hard work and dedication. I am proud to be a member of his team for Queensland. I feel deeply honoured to be able to address the parliament as the member for Nanango. It is a great privilege and one afforded to only five members before me in the past 100 years.

Queensland's longest serving member and longest serving Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, served as this seat's member from 1947 to 1987. It is thanks to the foresight and determination of my predecessor and his government that we were able to build Queensland into an economic powerhouse of its time. For every story about Sir Joh as a great Premier, there are many more about him as a great local member. During the campaign, I heard many first-hand accounts of Sir Joh's close relationships with the local community. I have no doubt that that was the foundation on which his political achievements were built. I also acknowledge the hard work and dedication to the state and the South Burnett of Lady Florence Bjelke-Petersen. It was lovely to see Lady Flo at the opening of the 54th Parliament and I thank her for her words of wisdom. I acknowledge the Hon. Russell Cooper, who was the member for Crows Nest, an area encompassed by the Nanango electorate after the redistribution. Russell has provided me with invaluable advice and offered support for which I am sincerely grateful. The federal member for Maranoa, the Hon. Bruce Scott, has been a tower of support and encouragement. His hard work and dedication for the betterment of our region is appreciated. I also acknowledge the support of my federal colleagues Barnaby Joyce and Wyatt Roy for the time and effort they have spent within the Nanango electorate.

It is my goal to represent the people of Nanango with the same vision and enthusiasm as my predecessors. In delivering this speech today, I am conscious of the hard work ahead of the newly elected Newman government and the role that I will play in it. I have a vision for Queensland. My vision is for a state that is prosperous, not a state that is riddled with debt; a state that is a world leader in trade and industry; a state that utilises its prime agricultural, grazing and cropping land to provide food security and feed its people; a state that provides steady economic growth and low unemployment; a state that allows us to enjoy a good quality of life by utilising our natural wonders and environment; and a state that our children are pleased to call their home. Although this vision is broad, it is for these ideals that I stand here today. As a member of the Newman government, I have pledged to build a four-pillar economy based on agriculture, tourism, resources and construction. I have pledged to lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste, delivering better infrastructure and better planning, revitalising front-line services for families and restoring accountability in government.

I was born in Miles and raised on a beef cattle property. I attended Guluguba State School, a small one-teacher school that can boast producing two members present in this House today. I acknowledge my colleague the member for Maryborough, Anne Maddern. Time precludes me from explaining the years of community and local government service that my parents have dedicated to that wonderful local community, but I thank them for it. My husband Jason and I have been fortunate to experience the highs and lows of family farming and corporate farming, managing beef and cropping properties in King Island, New South Wales and Queensland. We have experienced the heartbreak of droughts and storms and the diversity and strength that is required to make the land your home. From this, coupled with my experiences establishing businesses in Kingaroy, I understand the challenges of creating jobs, balancing the books, how government decisions can impact on the viability of business and how important it is for one to have a say in the decision-making processes that affect our society. I have practised law in Coolamon, New South Wales and Kingaroy, Queensland. To reach this goal, I undertook a law degree externally through QUT whilst having my three daughters and living hours away from the closest university and library. That experience taught me that no challenge should be considered too great or too far away.

The Nanango electorate covers some 31 towns and 31 communities, 28 primary schools and six high schools. It covers four regional local government areas: Somerset, Western Downs, Toowoomba and the South Burnett. Our local councils are battered and bruised leftover shells from the horrendous Labor administration that was responsible for the forced amalgamations. I look forward to our can-do government's plan to reinstate the power to this vital level of government. This morning in the House I was very pleased to hear the honourable member for Mundingburra and Minister for Local Government state that we will 'make changes to the Local Government Act to put mayors and councillors back in charge, to ensure that local communities control their own destiny'. Statements such as this explain why we are a government for the people and a government that is in touch with our communities.

The Nanango electorate covers some 13,800 square kilometres and from Brisbane it is the inland gateway to the rest of Queensland. I believe the Nanango electorate is able to strongly support the Newman government's plan to build a four-pillar economy. It encompasses three key agricultural areas: the Somerset region from Kilcoy to the small cropping districts on the border of the Lockyer Valley including the townships of Coominya, Somerset, Esk and Toogoolawah; the South Burnett where the finest peanuts are grown in the unique rich, red soils—and the South Burnett also can boast that it is Queensland's largest wine region—and the region around Crows Nest and Goombungee extending to the fine cropping soils of the Darling Downs. Whilst all these areas produce fine crops, the electorate also produces some of the state's best beef and pork.

The people who reside in my electorate are, in my unbiassed opinion, the luckiest in the state. We live in a region that is blessed with some of the finest prime agricultural lands, abundant tourism opportunities, natural resources and industry, but, most importantly, resilient and easygoing people. During the campaign I met many of these people and what struck me was that everyone was hurting. They were sick of the waste and the stranglehold that government had placed on their lives. For too long the people of the Nanango electorate have given more than they have received in return. People choose to live in this region as it provides so much by way of lifestyle and opportunity. However, I was constantly faced with the question of why should we live with a lower standard of services because we have chosen to live outside the boundaries of Brisbane? I am pleased to say that the Newman government has a plan to change this perception and deliver for the whole of Queensland.

The electors of Nanango are the people who have helped me reach this chamber. I have doorknocked, walked the streets and visited many rural property owners. I met many small business owners, be they farmers, mechanics, builders, plumbers, real estate agents—the list could go on. They were all strangled with government policy and red tape. I also met with many different community groups, and the red tape is strangling them as well. I speak, for example, of groups such as the rural fire volunteers who are finding that volunteers are discouraged from joining due to the red tape. I also met the lady in her eighties who runs the historical society of Crows Nest. She has been told that she should not work in a volunteer position and keep the doors of the historical society open as she is too old for the volunteer insurance policy.

It is for these reasons that I look forward to the challenge of being the Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform. I am fortunate to be working with the Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, in this role and I wish to acknowledge his professionalism that has allowed us all to be in the chamber today. I thank him for sharing his experience and I look forward to him being my mentor. I am also pleased that the Treasurer has already tabled legislation to reduce red tape that will assist in lowering the cost of living for all Queenslanders.

Living in a rural community is challenging. However, I do not believe the answers to the issues we face in the regions lie in living in the past. The oversimplistic solutions of the far Right would see many of us worse off in a very short period. The expansion of the coal seam gas and mining industries is altering our outlook for the future. However, we must work hard to get the balance right including implementing a better system of regional planning to provide improved security for our landholders and the Queensland communities alike.

In my electorate of Nanango I have seen firsthand the failure to plan and manage. Like other residents of the electorate, I question why we do not have adequate health services and why the three major highways that traverse the electorate—the D'Aguilar Highway, the Brisbane Valley Highway and the New England Highway—are in such poor condition. I will be working hard to ensure that the Nanango electorate gets its fair share of road upgrades. I look forward to the building of the \$10 million worth of passing lanes on the Brisbane Valley Highway and the D'Aguilar Highway.

I thank the education minister for the announcement of the new high school for Highfields. The member for Toowoomba North and I have fought hard for this much needed resource. It will be a school that shall benefit many rural children and save hours for some schoolchildren.

As living in the regions is wonderful, it is not always easy when faced with these lack of services. It is essential that health needs are our top priority. The staff at the Kingaroy Hospital, or the South Burnett Regional Hospital, must be thanked for the work they do in such difficult conditions. Over 400 babies are born each year in that substandard hospital birthing suite. That is more than one per day. The suite is in a different section, up two floors, across the way and a long walking distance from the maternity ward. Due to staffing numbers, mothers are sometimes left alone in these birthing suites a long way away whilst staff are required on the wards. This is a terrible situation for both the staff and the patients.

The region needs better access to specialist medical services. Our government will act to improve access by increasing the provision of financial assistance for those who need to travel as the current level of assistance is entirely inadequate. I will be fighting hard to ensure the region gets its fair share of health services and I look forward to the establishment of the regional health boards as a positive initiative of our new government.

Today I was pleased to hear the Minister for Health state that he intends to rebuild the capacity of health services in rural and regional Queensland. As a member of the South Burnett suicide prevention group, I am constantly astounded by the number of deaths in our region from suicide. Mental health is a growing area and the number of men from rural areas taking their lives is growing at an alarming rate. Our group estimates there is approximately one death a week from suicide within the South Burnett. Our local hospital does not have the facilities to handle mental health patients as we do not have a safe room. I will be fighting hard for the provision of a safe room in our hospital.

Agriculture is the lifeblood of this electorate. In order for it to survive, agriculture needs to see an increase in efficiencies and productivity to enable it to compete with any other industry. This can be achieved through important research institutes like the Bjelke-Petersen Research Station at Kingaroy, supported by the Department of Agriculture and federally by the GRDC. Education, therefore, needs to be promoted in areas surrounding agriculture, sciences and natural resources to encourage our next generation into the field of agriculture. The loss of the Dalby agricultural college facility has unfortunately encouraged the gradual decline of education of the next generation of farmers as the agricultural colleges were the breeding ground for the next generation—providing innovative ideas that were often coupled with the passing down of traditional methods from previous generations.

We must, however, acknowledge the current difficulty primary producers face when finding employees. While primary industry remains a major export earner and a major contributor to the economy, the industry faces severe labour competition from the resource sector. We, therefore, need to encourage a balance between the two industries to achieve sustainability for the future of food production.

Tourism is a high growth component of the electorate's economy. We live in an economy in which every family is struggling with the rising cost of living. However, the electorate of Nanango provides a low-cost holiday destination with an abundance of tourism opportunities, be it fishing, camping, game hunting, four-wheel driving at Jimna, water sports, wineries, bush walking, gold panning—an activity our Premier and his family enjoys—or farm stays. The electorate must continue to be a family friendly destination within easy reach of Brisbane.

The Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, when completed, will be a 148 kilometre recreation trail which follows the old Brisbane Valley railway line and provides walkers, cyclists and horse riders with a wonderful opportunity to see the countryside from a different perspective. We have several key water storages: Wivenhoe, Somerset, Gordonbrook and Atkinsons Dam. Currently, Somerset Dam is a water lovers' paradise with thousands of people taking the opportunity to get out and about and into water sports such as skiing, fishing and sailing. Somerset has played a major part in the increasing tourism enjoyed by this region and, therefore, the economic opportunities that flow. Wivenhoe needs to be assessed for the opening up to water sports in this same fashion.

My communities also thrive on events. One of these is the country race day. However, the racing industry day has been stripped bare under the previous Labor government. I will be working hard to ensure our country race days are reinstated. Our local communities can benefit from being a training ground for our trotters, race horses, trainers and jockeys and country race days ensure that local communities like Esk, Kilcoy and Nanango can enjoy the flow-on economic benefits. At this juncture I would like to thank Con and Jenny Searle, Dr Tony Fitzgerald, Ian McCauley, Kev Purcell, John Lee and Brian Lenihan for their hard work and dedication to this vital industry within our electorate. Country racing is a passion of mine. My mother was the Wandooan race club secretary/treasurer for more years than she can recall, and my father was the starter and involved in the same club for many more years. I grew up attending race meets and I understand why country racing is essential for the regions.

I believe that Queenslanders want a government that respects the individual, that respects free enterprise and free society without unrealistic and undue influence. They expect their government to plan for the future, be economically responsible and manage the state in a clear and effective manner. I look forward to these challenges for the time that the electors of Nanango will allow me to be in this place.

I would like to thank many people. Firstly, my small but effective campaign team was amazing. Llew O'Brien, who is here today, my campaign manager and director, upheld an unwavering belief that we could win Nanango back into the LNP fold. His support, patience and friendship was invaluable. Jack Delaney should go down in history as the world's best campaign treasurer. Jack retired from his business on 1 January and went into full-time campaigning on the 2nd and ran the campaign office and budget without complaint. Thank you.

To Chris Anderson, Lorraine Blades, Col Keim, Wendy Tully, Viv Lethbridge, Mitch Redford and Rachel Power, Murray, Linda and Maree Frecklington and the team of blue workers too many to name: thank you for your help and support. Thank you to Neville Shannon of Hampton, Ivan Vonhoff of Crows Nest, Beven Kahler of Geham, Alan Grieve of Colinton and Errol Luck of Merringdam for introducing me to the people of your wonderful districts.

The seat of Nanango is unique and one in which the members of the LNP worked very hard to bring back into the fold. Whilst too many to mention, it is important that the parliament records my thanks to the hardworking and dedicated branch members: thank you for hanging in there. Thank you to Bruce McIver, Barry O'Sullivan, Michael O'Dwyer, James McGrath, Mitch Redford and Gerard Benedet for your encouragement and faith.

The seat of Nanango has not been represented by an LNP member for years and I thank my neighbouring members—in particular, the member for Callide, Jeff Seeney; the member for Condamine, Ray Hopper; the member for Glass House, Andrew Powell; and the member for Lockyer, Ian Rickuss—for the support you have provided to the people of the Nanango electorate for many years.

To our Deputy Premier, the Hon. Jeff Seeney: thank you for your assistance throughout the past two years. Your guidance and leadership and hard work have paid off for our members. Thank you. Thank you to all of the then opposition members who visited the Nanango electorate, as together we were able to show the people of this district that an LNP government would be proud to represent them.

I would like to thank two ladies who reside in my electorate—both of whom are former members of parliament—the Hon. Di McCauley and the Hon. Beryce Nelson, whom I am very pleased to have here today. Both Di and Beryce gave me great support and encouragement to undertake this role. I can only hope that I can follow in your footsteps for it is women such as yourselves who have allowed women like me to be accepted as an equal in this chamber.

To my sister and brother-in-law, Jackie and John, and our good friends Kate and Peter Hay, who worked endlessly for the campaign: I cannot thank you enough for your time and effort. To my parents, Don and Robyn Stiller, who provided me with a grounding of honesty, hard work and the value of community service: your guidance and help towards Jason and the girls was invaluable and I stand here proud as your daughter.

I would like to thank my husband, Jason. Whilst I tell my three daughters that anything in this world is possible, it is my husband who has allowed anything to be possible for me. His support and sacrifice has enabled me to be here today. To our three daughters—Isabella, Lucy and Elke—thank you for wearing the T-shirts, attending the endless market days and the endless meetings. I take the guidance of many of my colleagues that being a member of parliament is not a job but a lifestyle. My three daughters now understand that there is no such thing as a quick meeting and the joys of attending a country show each weekend is not a chore but a practice in good budgeting.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the people of the Nanango electorate for giving me the honour of being their representative in parliament. For those who voted for me, I hope my efforts over the next years will reward your faith. For those who chose otherwise, I will be working hard to earn your support. In either case, I am here to serve you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before calling the member for Maryborough, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and as such the member shall be heard in silence. I call the member for Maryborough.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.23 pm): This day is a very special day for the electorate of Maryborough: this is the first time that they have had a member in the government for 14 years. I am very humbled and honoured that I have been chosen to be their member in the government—the first LNP government in Queensland and one with a unique record of having the largest majority ever in the Queensland parliament.

Along with my colleagues, I wish to pay tribute to the party and parliamentary leaders of the former Liberal and National parties of Queensland—the member for Southern Downs, Mr Lawrence Springborg; Mr Bruce McIver; the member for Caloundra, Mr Mark McArdle; Mr Gary Spence and their close associates—for their vision and the work they did in bringing the two parties together in one merged, vibrant and united party. I sincerely believe that we stand today as a government because of the work that they did. I also believe that the manner in which now Premier Campbell Newman came into the leadership role shows the flexibility and forward thinking of the LNP.

While I am humbled and honoured to have been elected as the member for Maryborough, I am also proud to have this opportunity to speak before the House on behalf of my constituents. It has been pointed out to me that, while I am the first member of the electorate to be a member of the government for a very long time, I am also the first woman to ever represent this electorate.

I come from a rural background, growing up on a cattle property at Giligulgul, which is between Gurulmundi and Guluguba—where the small school is that both the member for Nanango and I attended, and from small things great things grow. For those of you who do not know where that it is, it is between Miles and Wandoan on the western downs. I have lived in Dalby, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville, and I have lived in Maryborough for the last 25 years. I have worked as a secretary, but for almost the last 20 years my profession has been as a property valuer and for the last 23 years my husband and I have owned a property valuation practice.

The Maryborough electorate is relatively large, covering almost 6,000 square kilometres, with a population of just over 52,000 people. The main regional township is Maryborough, with a population of around 28,000, but there are numerous other small towns and rural localities. So when I speak of the Maryborough electorate or Maryborough residents, I am referring to the whole of the electorate including all the small towns and localities.

Maryborough currently has a quite diverse economic background with our engineering businesses; primary production including cane farming and the MSF sugar factory; soft and hardwood timber industries—we have the second largest timber mill in the Southern Hemisphere—grazing and other primary production; the supporting commercial and professional businesses; and a large transportation company. There are three police stations, two ambulance stations, one fire station and one auxiliary fire station, 27 schools and two hospitals—one public, one private. There are approximately 110 kilometres of dreadful and lethal Bruce Highway intersecting the electorate.

While it is good to reflect on the current make-up of the electorate, it is worth contemplating what has been. A friend recently provided me with a copy of a publication dated 1968 in which it was stated—

Maryborough is one of Queensland's leading industrial cities with a flour mill, butter factory, ship building yards, sawmill, Queensland's biggest fish depot, engineering works producing locomotives and other heavy machinery, etc. It draws its power from nearby coal mines.

There was also a meatworks which was not listed in that article. Sadly, there are only two of those industries left—engineering and timber—and the workforce in these industries has been significantly reduced in the last few years.

Maryborough citizens are also keen to point out that we did have a 400-plus-bed major teaching hospital with intensive care, maternity, surgery and all the other facilities associated with a well-equipped regional facility. It is a sore point with many of our residents that we no longer have intensive care or a maternity unit and that the bed capacity of our hospital is now in the order of 80 beds.

I thank the Parliamentary Library for the statistical profile that they have provided for the Maryborough electorate which confirms what many in the Maryborough electorate, myself included, knew instinctively. I will quote some of the most important statistics which are relevant to an understanding of Maryborough.

The population of the Maryborough electorate is mainly caucasian, with 17.8 per cent of the population aged over 65—5.2 per cent higher than the rest of Queensland. This higher than average ageing population is putting pressure on the provision of services from our hospitals, allied health services and community support services.

At the 2006 census, only 50 per cent of the population had access to the internet and, from my experience during the campaign, I estimate that at least 40 per cent of the population still do not have access to the internet. This poses a significant problem for government in terms of the dissemination of information to the community. It is most frustrating for those who do not have access to the internet to be told that they can access the government services they need over the internet. In many cases, the lack of internet connection comes down to a lack of income to buy these services. The unemployment rate for the electorate stands at eight per cent, with the state average being 5.5 per cent. These figures were provided by the Parliamentary Library.

The one index which gives the clearest picture of the socioeconomic status of the electorate is the socioeconomic index of disadvantage, which focuses on factors such as income, educational attainment, unemployment and dwellings with motor vehicles. In the Maryborough electorate, 60.4 per cent of the population falls into the most disadvantaged sector compared to the Queensland average of 20 per cent. That is, we have three times the number of the most disadvantaged when compared to the rest of Queensland. Despite this negative picture, the Maryborough electorate is a wonderful place with wonderful people. The percentage of the population who volunteer in the community is higher than the state average, and we have become known as being friendly and happy.

There is an active arts community. This year Maryborough is hosting the state titles of the battle of the brass bands, and last year we hosted the state eisteddfod. We have the wonderful Broлга Theatre, which in November this year will be one of the five regional theatres to host the simulcast of Opera Australia's *Madama Butterfly*. We have a very vibrant sporting community, from juniors to masters, covering almost every sport that can be listed. We have many state and national champions and some Olympic gold medallists.

This year the community will again host the Technology Challenge and supporting events—a 24-hour road race on an inner-city circuit with teams of high school students who have designed and built human powered vehicles. This race brings students, their parents and teachers from all over the state, and last year there were almost 100 teams with around 2,000 students competing. This event is supported by both the business and volunteer communities.

We have hosted and will continue to host many other events, such as the annual Mary Poppins Festival and Pub Fest, for which we hold the Guinness world record for the most people to have had a drink at 10 pubs in a designated time. I will add: the drinks do not have to be alcoholic! While on the surface it may look like nothing more than a fancy-dress drinking session, it is actually a charity fundraiser which each year raises thousands of dollars to be donated to a worthy cause.

Our engineering community is noted for its high level of innovation and technical skills. Just last week the board of QR inspected the Downer complex and viewed the mock-up of the new Sunlander. They were very impressed. So while we have a very low socioeconomic level and high unemployment, this community has not sat idle but has endeavoured to work positively towards improving the community. However, we would appreciate some assistance from government as we work to achieve the same levels of employment and socioeconomic benefits as the rest of Queensland, and I believe that the policies as released by the LNP prior to the election, and now in the course of implementation, will contribute significant benefits to the Maryborough community.

I believe that I have been elected by the people of this electorate to be their voice, to bring to the attention of the government the issues that they are most concerned about, and therefore I present these issues. Over the years the issue which has been foremost in the minds of most people in the electorate is the current state of Maryborough Hospital. They consider that they have been disadvantaged by the loss of services in the hospital, particularly the lack of a birthing unit. They are tired of the difficulties of having to access a significant level of services at Hervey Bay Hospital or other hospitals, with the associated costs and stress of travel for patients and families. This feeling was clearly demonstrated at the time Maryborough patients had to access their dialysis services three times a week at Gympie, which meant a nine-hour round trip. Our community organised a petition, which gained 8,000-plus signatures, and an intense media campaign which ultimately resulted in the redevelopment of one of the buildings on the hospital site into a very modern dialysis unit. The new dialysis unit has been gratefully received by the community, and the new rehab unit, which is currently being put into the old Lady Musgrave ward, will also assist annually some 1,600 residents of Maryborough and Hervey Bay to get back into their homes after injury or a stroke. However, there is a need to continue to build on these services, to raise the level and extent of services provided and to utilise the buildings on the site to their maximum capacity so that fewer patients are required to travel to another centre for treatment.

It is also important that a system of rapid and regular transportation for an extended period of time—from early morning to late at night—be implemented between the two hospitals for the transportation of patients, staff, pathology samples et cetera. Currently the Ambulance Service is being used to transport significant numbers of patients from Maryborough to Hervey Bay at a huge cost. A rapid transit service between the hospitals would particularly assist those who are frail, aged or incapable of accessing other appropriate forms of transport.

Also missing in our region is a dedicated palliative-care facility, something which is sorely needed given our higher than average aged population. Groups in the community are currently working to raise awareness of the need for this type of facility and to set in place some plans to implement these services.

A very significant number of residents of this electorate are very upset about the forced amalgamation of the councils. As the LNP is in the process of establishing a Boundaries Commissioner, the electorate will now have a choice—an opportunity which until now has been denied them.

An area of concern relates to the ongoing issues of inconsistent and irregular contracts, particularly rail-car contracts, to our large engineering works. This community is asking that government, when giving consideration to the awarding of rail-car contracts, takes into account not only the cost of the rail cars but also the community benefit which will accrue from the awarding of the contract, both in terms of keeping a core skilled engineering group employed and in terms of the economic and social multiplier effect which results from increased employment. It is my goal to work to establish an engineering department of a university or tertiary institution located in Maryborough. This community has a sound engineering base and there have been requests by both potential students and employers seeking to have engineering degrees available locally.

A number of projects which would benefit this community economically and socially have been held up for years by difficulties in negotiating the red tape within government departments. There has been a concerted effort by members of the Burrum Heads community to upgrade the currently dangerous boat ramps to a new boat ramp which, if developed, would increase tourism and commerce in the township. The Mary Harbour 1,200-lot residential development and the proposed marine industry precinct at Granville have for years been stalled due to the difficulty of negotiating government red tape. In conjunction with these developments, it would be sensible to look at the feasibility of raising the approach roads to the city side of the Granville bridge to the level of the existing bridge to reduce the number of times that the Granville area and southern coastal townships are cut off from the main part of Maryborough due to flooding. The Maryborough airport is an asset which is currently underutilised.

Maryborough used to be the regional centre for branches of many government departments which over the years have been eroded away. For the sake of the provision of services, this community seeks to take advantage of the announced LNP policy on regionalisation. The Maryborough Sugar Factory currently has spare capacity, and both growers and millers are looking to expand the industry locally. The cost of electricity and the cost, as proposed by the previous government, for payment for water and water infrastructure charges loom as major stumbling blocks to the expansion of the industry.

As stated earlier, the Maryborough community has a higher than average volunteer group. Governments, both state and federal, rely heavily on volunteer groups to support many of the disadvantaged in our community. Unfortunately, over the years the amount of financial support provided by governments has declined relative to the cost of providing the services. More and more community groups are finding themselves in a cost price squeeze. This whole problem has been compounded significantly by the amount of regulation and red tape which is constantly being imposed on the community organisations, and I fear that at some point in the not-too-distant future there will no longer be the volunteers we need to fill these roles because it will have all become too hard and too demanding on the volunteers, particularly given that we have an ageing population. Community support groups are looking to government to assist financially but, even more importantly, to remove the burden of red tape and regulation to allow the volunteers to get on with doing what they do best.

Of concern particularly to the business community, but also to private individuals, is the difficulty of knowing if and when legislation has been passed which may impact on them. There are many instances of legislation being enacted with those affected only finding out some time later, generally by accident and more often than not at some cost. My goal and the goal of our community is to work with government to ensure there is a standard of living and a provision of services and infrastructure to the Maryborough electorate commensurate with the rest of Queensland.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the previous member for Maryborough, Chris Foley, for the contribution he and his family have made to the community over the past years and for the gracious way in which he acknowledged defeat and conceded the electorate of Maryborough. The new parliamentary team of 2012 have been privileged to receive excellent instruction in our roles and responsibilities by the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, and his team, and I thank them most sincerely for their work.

I would not be here representing the electorate of Maryborough without the support of the community, those who voted for me and those who worked so hard and diligently on the campaign. I cannot name you all—and some of them are here—but know that I appreciate every single thing you have done to assist. I will, however, publicly thank my daughter, Rebecca, son, Andrew, and daughter-in-law, Carolyn, for their quiet and sustained support throughout a long campaign process. Finally, my heartfelt thanks and love to my husband, Lloyd, who has walked every step of the way with me. I pray God will grant me courage, strength and wisdom to serve well the Maryborough electorate and the state of Queensland.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Before calling the member for Burnett, I note that this is the member's maiden speech and, as such, the member shall be heard in silence. I call the member for Burnett.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.39 pm): I am proud to stand here today with my colleagues of the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I congratulate you all on your election success and I look forward to working with you for the advancement of Queensland. I acknowledge the people of the Burnett for the significant responsibility that you have bestowed upon me. I accept this great honour and privilege. I want to acknowledge my family's support in our journey. My family supported my every career decision—from our relocations around Queensland from Mount Isa, Rockhampton and Thursday Island to our involvement and investment in the construction sector in Bundaberg. Without their support and patience I could not have continued my academic studies later in life, obtaining two degrees and my masters in 2010. I started my working career cutting railway sleepers in Central Queensland, completing an apprenticeship in the building industry and maintaining and advancing my qualifications as a registered builder. James, my oldest son, has forged a career as an electrician in the mining sector. Joshua has followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a carpenter and now working in facilities management and planning. My daughter Richelle and her partner Luke are now proud parents of baby Alyce, but probably not as proud as my wife and I to be blessed with our first grandchild.

I want to take this special opportunity to acknowledge some terrific people who contributed to our election result. Firstly, I thank the LNP executive for its excellent and professional approach. I thank LNP President Bruce McIver, who was supportive and provided assistance when required. I also want to thank the LNP head office team—James McGrath, Gerard Benedet, James Martin, Rachael Parry, Harriet Nunan, Kate Wilson, Diane Balke, Rachael Power, Matt McEachen, Mitchell Redford and most particularly the Wide Bay Chair, Llew O'Brien. The campaign was well supported by the LNP and I want to thank the many ministers who enthusiastically supported the joint campaign for Bundaberg and

Burnett—Premier Campbell Newman, Deputy Premier Jeff Seeney, Deputy Speaker Dr Mark Robinson, Dr Bruce Flegg, Scott Emerson, Jarrod Bleijie, Andrew Powell, Andrew Cripps, Mark McArdle, Tracy Davis, Steve Dickson and Jann Stuckey. I thank them very much.

Locally, I was introduced to the Burnett LNP branch preselection by the Hon. Jack Dempsey, the member for Bundaberg. I want to thank Jack and his staff, Marcia and Chris. It was a privilege to work with these dedicated people, who often put my needs ahead of their own. Jack would often step aside at functions to help promote my election campaign. One of the truly remarkable examples of party commitment and to me personally was Jack's insistence on running a joint campaign, sharing resources, sharing campaign office and holding functions together. Jack, I will be eternally grateful for your help. I also want to acknowledge the support I received from our federal colleagues during the election campaign—Senator Fiona Nash; Senator Ron Boswell; Senator Barnaby Joyce, who visited the electorate several times; the member for Flynn, Ken O'Dowd; Dr Andrew Laming; and the Leader of the Nationals, Warren Truss, who was always available. Thank you for your advice and guidance.

Locally, I could not have been better placed having the support of the member for Hinkler, Paul Neville. Early on in the campaign it was evident that I was being nurtured and mentored by a truly great man and a great politician. Paul Neville was always available during the campaign, and this has continued. Paul has always provided endorsement of my candidacy publicly, although he was not obligated to. But unselfishly he promoted me and the state LNP during the entire campaign. The jewel in the experience with the federal team was the member's staff. I was privileged to get to know and become friends with Paul Neville's staff—Darlene, Janelle, Heather and Kate. These staff were patient, tireless workers and most supportive. Kate Barwick was truly inspirational. Her work ethic, her experience and the huge responsibility that Kate bore was much appreciated.

It is clear that you cannot win elections without a good team of supporters and volunteers. It is also clear that you cannot win elections without a good plan for campaign success. I want to thank Mary Walsh and Jim Elmes who ran the campaign office; Angela Nightingale; the branch members from Childers; Stephen and Trish Hoffman; Bill Trevor and team; the Bargara supporters; Peter Hoffman and Barry Masters and the Agnes Water supporters; Robert Edgar, Barry Davies, Flora Barwick, Joe Gatt; and the army of volunteers; thank you to you all. My campaign manager Geoff Campbell was terrific. Geoff and his family were a source of inspiration and stability during the campaign. I want to acknowledge the commitment of Jain Henricksen. Jain, who I have worked with for many years, has graciously joined the Burnett electorate office.

Special relationships and friendships are forged during campaigns, and Ken and Christine Tyson were supportive from day one. During the campaign their enthusiasm, knowledge and untiring commitment was tremendous and the future of the LNP and the local branches will be well served by their continued involvement. I want to mention long-term supporters and members from our Gooburrum branch, Ernie and Elaine Jobson. Ernie and Elaine are life members of the party and, sadly, Ernie passed away the week before the election. Our thoughts are with the family, but we know Ernie was with us in spirit on election night and I know that he would have had a contented grin on his face with the election result.

The electorate of Burnett is one of the most beautiful and unique in Queensland. It covers 7,500 square kilometres. The Burnett covers most of the coastal region south of Gladstone to Woodgate as well as coastal and inland regions around Bundaberg. The Burnett River flows through the region, hence its name. The region is serviced by two regional councils, Bundaberg and Gladstone. I congratulate the mayors and councillors on their success in the recent council elections. A new spirit of cooperation and desire for progression in the region is evident, and I thank the elected officials and the staff for the professional manner and goodwill they have displayed.

I want to acknowledge the volunteers in our region, the tireless workers who contribute so much. Whether it is group leader Charles Elson and his team at Woodgate SES, Marylyn King in Winfield from Rural Fires, Josie Meng and the Round Hill Volunteer Marine Rescue or Branka and the Country Women's Associations, we need to help these groups with appropriate funding and support to ensure that these services are available in our times of need. As we all know, volunteer groups in all their forms are the backbone of our communities. I want to acknowledge and thank the organisers of just a few of the events that are run in our region: Cane2Coral Fun, Run and Walk which raises much needed funds; the Agnes Water and 1770 festival; and the Childers Festival of cultures which is held in the last weekend in July.

I am a very proud member of the Rotary club of Bundaberg Sunrise whose members have been working for our community for many years. Rotary orchestrates many programs, both in Australia and internationally, and I am particularly proud of our club's facilitation and promotion of multiculturalism in our region. The annual multicultural festival is an event that I am proud to have been associated with for many years. Young people in our communities are extremely important and Rotary has exceptional programs to help foster and develop students in their formative years. Youth exchange and group study exchange programs are a particular passion of mine, and I am proud to have chaired these programs for many years in our district.

I want to remind the House of the need for continued support for international humanitarian projects. The fact that in this day and age children are still sold into slavery and prostitution is something we should all be aware of and something we need to wipe out. Our family's international charity of choice is Destiny Rescue, a Christian charity doing tremendous work in Asia. We are very proud to support, sponsor and work with at-risk and rescued children in Thailand and Cambodia.

Whether it is the townships of Childers, Miriam Vale or Bororen, which have the Bruce Highway running through them, or the many provincial towns which are connected to federal and state roads via local corridors, there is desperate need for action when it comes to road infrastructure. Many areas in the Burnett electorate are cut off every time it rains and many communities lose significant revenue when tourists cannot get through or produce and commodities cannot be shifted. Local residents are inconvenienced when they cannot get to work or their children cannot get to school. We must provide flood mitigation solutions to my electorate, especially the communities of Agnes Water and town of 1770. Flood proofing Fingerboard Road, which links these towns to the Bruce Highway, is an absolute economic imperative for the entire region. The Discovery Coast Tourism committee has worked hard on advocacy and research on the financial impacts of the road closures, and it is quite obvious that urgent attention is required.

From the time of first settlement until approximately 30 years ago, most agricultural production in the Burnett was centred around growing sugar cane. Since that time, agricultural production has diversified and the Burnett electorate is now home to many of Australia's largest and most innovative rural producers. We have the largest chilli grower in Australia, one of the largest tomato growers, the largest avocado grower, the largest grower of cucumbers and the largest sugar producer in the country.

The Burnett is also home to the largest macadamia grower—not only in Australia but in the world. More than 80 per cent of sweet potatoes grown in Australia are grown in the Burnett. Horticulture contributes more than \$500 million to the local economy each year. Around 20 per cent of Queensland's beef producers are located in the wider Burnett region.

I am most fortunate to represent a diverse, productive and innovative agricultural region with the soils, climate and water to produce some of the best food in the world. My electorate and its primary industries are pivotal to Queensland's economy and the key to our nation's food security. That reliability makes the Burnett region of immense importance to agricultural production in this great state. However, many challenges confront the agricultural industry and threaten the industry's productivity and profitability. Those challenges include the rising cost of production, biosecurity risks, loss of crop protection, loss of labour to the resource sector, impractical and unfair federal legislation, arrangements with large retailers and proposed changes to electricity and irrigation water pricing. All of those challenges are serious threats to the industry's capacity to survive and thrive.

My electorate also produces high-quality seafood that is enjoyed throughout Australia and the world. On that point, I would like to raise the issues facing commercial and recreational fishing in the Burnett. The fisheries harvest in the Burnett is very low and declining—not from reduced fish stocks, but from poor management intent on reducing the livelihood of many local families. We have the largest per capita fishing zone and the lowest fisheries harvest rate in the world—at about one-thirtieth of the global average. We also have more restrictive and costly marine resource management. Two-thirds of our seafood consumption is imported. The fishermen in the Burnett operate in the most environmentally sustainable manner and should be encouraged to provide the maximum sustainable means of production. They are champions of their industry and I am proud to represent them in this place.

For too long Queenslanders have paid a high price for the gross mismanagement of our natural resources—something that is reflected in our cost of living, our health, our freedom and in the broader wellbeing of region—with no benefit to the environment at all. Another major problem affecting much of the grazing and agricultural land in the electorate is the infestation of weeds such as giant rat-tail grass, groundsel, lantana and cat's claw and feral animals such as wild dogs, pigs and foxes. Local landholders and councils seem to be fighting a losing battle. Weeds are among the most serious threats to Australia's natural environment and primary production. They displace native species, contribute significantly to land degradation and reduce farm and forest productivity. After habitat loss, invasive species, including weeds, animal pests and diseases, represent the biggest threat to our biodiversity. Weed invasions change the natural diversity and balance of our environment and they threaten the survival of many plants and animals. I welcome the initiatives proposed in the Investing in our Environment for the Future policy and again highlight the significant work that needs to be done.

In a rural electorate such as Burnett the impact on landholders of the Vegetation Management Act cannot be understated. The act, which set out to address broadscale clearing in Western Queensland, has resulted in severe and unintended consequences for producers and landholders who were unlucky enough to have properties containing remnant vegetation. By virtue of this legislation and the complete absence of genuine compensation provisions, these landowners now bear the cost of the perceived public interest in maintaining remnant vegetation on their properties. The former government, not

satisfied with placing this burden on landholders, also placed the onus on landowners to meet the cost of fixing incorrect mapping, usually requiring a costly consultant's report as well as the indignity of a DERM application fee. The process for map amendments is tortuous and places unfair burden on landholders who simply want to understand vegetation management of their property and manage that vegetation accordingly.

Other simple farm management actions such as realigning boundaries is attracting DERM—and now NRM—application fees of up to \$5,000, which usually means that they do not happen. Other simple actions cannot go ahead because the necessary clearing exemptions for new boundary firebreaks, or protecting fences, might mean that we have to clear a couple of trees. Land zoned for rural residential purposes under local authority planning schemes had development rights disappear overnight when they were mapped as remnant vegetation. Surely, it is a fundamental premise in a civilised society that the cost of preserving a resource for the public interest should not be borne by individuals.

As if rural landholders have not suffered enough under the former government, the recent strategic cropping legislation has now taken a similar path of unintended consequences. Legislation, which was supposed to preserve good-quality agricultural land from mining activities, now prevents farmers from adjusting property boundaries despite this matter being addressed by the original state planning policy and being enshrined in local authority planning schemes. Surely, that is an unintended consequence of the policy.

As I outlined earlier, the sugar industry has played an important role in the history of the Wide Bay region. South Sea Islander labourers were integral to the development of the sugar industry. The cane fields in the Burnett electorate are dotted with stone walls built by the South Sea Islander labourers who worked on the district's sugar plantations. It is important to maintain the physical reminders of the past, such as stone walls and burial grounds. They are part of our history. It gives us a sense of understanding and respect for the contribution made to our state's development. Between 1863 and 1904 South Sea Islanders aged as young as 12 were brought out to work on Queensland farms and the Burnett electorate has many burial sites, most of them for workers aged between 16 and 30 years. At least 644 people are buried at a site near the Bundaberg cemetery, but many South Sea Islander workers were buried along the fence lines of the plantations where they worked. One such farm is Sunnyside, which is located between Bundaberg and Bargara. It is the site of 50 South Sea Islander graves. The property was sold to cane farmer Brian Courtice's family in the 1920s. I will be working with the local South Sea Islander community and Mr Courtice, who has proven to be a wonderful guardian of the South Sea Islander legacy, to protect and recognise those sites of significance.

The tourism industry is also very important to the economy of the Burnett. We are blessed to have some of the most beautiful stretches of coastline in Australia—reaching from the long open beaches of Woodgate in the south almost all the way to Boyne Island and Tannum Sands in the north. Our hinterland areas are also unique, with the historic and cultural centre of Childers nestled in the hills of the Isis district and the heartland communities of Rosedale, Lowmead, Miriam Vale and Bororen lying in the north of the electorate. The Burnett electorate is also the gateway to the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef, with Lady Elliot Island, Lady Musgrave Island lagoon and Fitzroy Reef important tourist sites. In the north is the Discovery Coast, made up of Agnes Water and the town of 1770, which is the site of the second landing of Captain James Cook on Australian soil. Coastal townships such as Bargara, Elliott Heads, Burnett Heads and Moore Park beach complement the many tourist attractions in the city of Bundaberg and are a huge asset to the region.

Also situated in the Burnett electorate is the Mon Repos Conservation Park, which is where world famous aviator Bert Hinkler first flew his gliders. It was the launching pad for his aviation career, whereby he became the first to fly solo from England to Australia. Mon Repos and its surrounding beaches are also famous as the nesting sites for the largest number of marine turtles on mainland Australia. The majority of these turtles are the endangered loggerhead turtles, but other species, including the flat back and green turtles, also nest there. In the late 1960s turtle researcher Dr Col Limpus started studying the breeding of the turtles at Mon Repos and his research has continued right up to today. In fact, this nesting and the hatching of the baby turtles has developed into one of the most important tourist attractions of the region, with some 28,000 tourists visiting this season. I pledge today to help support the work being done to protect nesting sea turtles and hatchlings by promoting and resourcing the Cut the Glow to help Turtles Go community awareness campaign. This campaign aims to reduce the glow from domestic and street lights, which disorient nesting turtles.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the people of the Burnett electorate. We are here in the parliament to work for and serve the people of Queensland. I feel that my experience in business, management, community service and my humility will underpin my role as the member for Burnett.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Before I call the member for Pumicestone, I remind the House that this is the member's maiden speech and the courtesies afforded for that speech should be observed.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (4.00 pm): It is an honour to be standing before you today as a member of the 54th Parliament of Queensland to deliver my first speech. Today I stand here proudly as a member of the Liberal National Party, a party that has led the way. Indeed, it was from the conservatives that the first federal female MP, Dame Enid Lyons, and the first state female MP, Irene Longman, were elected. These achievements were won not via a quota, these positions were earned by hard work and on merit. The first Indigenous parliamentarian, Neville Bonner, was a member of the Liberal Party and my federal member of parliament, Wyatt Roy, was the youngest elected federal member of parliament. He is also, like me, a proud member of the LNP.

I stand here today as only the second person to be chosen to represent the electorate of Pumicestone since its formation in 2001. I would like to acknowledge my predecessor and her 11 years of service to the parliament. Before Pumicestone was created it was part of both the Caboolture and Glass House electorates back in the eighties and I would like to pay a special tribute to Mr Bill Newton who was one of the hardest working parliamentarians I have ever met. Bill is a wonderful man who still to this day has his community at heart in everything he does. I first met Bill when I was a rookie environmental scientist providing a briefing to him in his role as member for Glass House. At the conclusion of our meeting he said to me, 'Have you ever thought about going into politics? You should consider it'. Well, Bill, I thought about it for over a decade and I finally took your advice. Thank you.

My electorate of Pumicestone is a mixture of seaside communities, agricultural pockets, industrial and commercial precincts and fast-growing residential areas. These residential areas with the largest population bases are the tight-knit communities of Caboolture in the west and Bribie Island to the east. The electorate is crisscrossed by a number of streams, creeks and rivers that all flow towards our beautiful Pumicestone Passage which separates Bribie Island from the mainland. The electorate is only 293 square kilometres, of which 120 are national and state parks. Those two great arteries of Queensland commerce, the Bruce Highway and the electric rail line, pass through the electorate servicing both the residents of my electorate and commuters and tourists travelling to and from the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane.

There are just over 50,000 people in the Pumicestone electorate and our residential growth is almost 50 per cent faster than Queensland's growth. We have approximately 3,500 businesses, with the major employment areas being retail, construction, manufacturing, and health care and social assistance. Our unemployment rate sits around 8.6 per cent and has no doubt contributed to almost 40 per cent of our people being classified as being in the most disadvantaged quintile. This results in a high demand for community services in our area. However, it is our strong sense of community and wonderful natural attributes that have provided the electorate of Pumicestone with some of the most desirable real estate, attracting retirees who flock to areas like Bribie Island. This has resulted in 21 per cent of the electorate being over the age of 65, which is about 70 per cent higher than the state average. I have lived in the electorate of Pumicestone since I was 15 years old and my husband Chad and I are now raising our three children in the Pumicestone electorate. As parents and small business owners, we share many of the concerns of our fellow community members both on Bribie and across the electorate. There are big issues facing our community, many of which stem from the neglect of the former state government.

The reason I joined the Liberal National Party of Queensland was because of its philosophy that government should be smaller, government should facilitate and support prosperity and that it should not overtax or overregulate. When I was doorknocking throughout the campaign, the message was clear. When I was attending community meetings the message was clear. When I was meeting people outside Centrelink the message was clear. The message was clear and it was always the same: stop the rising cost of living. Business owner after business owner has told me that the big inhibitors to them growing their businesses are overregulation, increasing costs and lack of confidence. They know that small business is the engine room of the economy, that this is the sector that will create the jobs in my electorate and other electorates across our state. Excessive regulation is killing small business and without small business there are not enough jobs to provide employment for local families. It is the high taxes and the increased cost-of-living pressures that are taking families to the brink.

Unfortunately these higher taxes have not resulted in better services in our local area. In my electorate infrastructure needs have been neglected. Small business has borne the brunt of a lazy government willing only to take the easy road on decisions. The Caboolture Hospital is a case in point. The hardworking medical staff at the hospital are underresourced. There are not enough beds, there are not enough doctors and there are not enough nurses. People are waiting too long to be seen and many families have lost faith in a system that leaves them waiting several hours in the early hours of the morning with a sick baby to see a doctor. Our ambulance officers do a wonderful job, but they cannot keep up with the demand in our local area. I look forward to being part of a government that seeks to deliver better health services to my community.

Bribie Island has gone from being a sleepy hamlet to a thriving, growing community. Clearly the old bridge that was built in 1963 and links the island to the mainland is not going to last forever and it requires some future planning for its upgrade. During the floods of 2011 Caboolture was left isolated by the flooding of the Bruce Highway. In our community we were lucky to be spared the truly dreadful consequences of the flooding which many in Queensland experienced, but it became obvious that something needs to be done to flood proof the very artery of our community, the Bruce Highway.

Another casualty of this rapid growth was the provision of vital services in our local communities. My electorate looks forward to seeing the benefits of our government's commitment to increasing police numbers. The police have made it clear that they need better resources and support in order to make our communities safer. I also look forward to working with our hardworking police and our community groups to help address antisocial behaviour in the community.

It is my privilege to have been appointed Assistant Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Queensland resources, together with tourism, agriculture and construction are the four pillars that make our state great. According to the Queensland Resources Council, based on the 2009-10 prices, Queensland's minerals and energy sector could be valued at more than \$92 billion a year by 2019-20. Last financial year it was worth \$36.5 billion, spending more than \$21 billion in Queensland on goods, services and salaries. Sadly, the Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies 2010-11 showed that the Queensland sovereign risk ranking has fallen from eighth in the world in 2006-07 to 38 last year. This government will ensure that Queensland's infrastructure is up to the task and we will close the gaps in skills shortage that are hampering growth and eroding confidence. This government is committed to supporting the resource sector so it continues to play its part in powering the growth of our great state. Importantly, this government acknowledges the responsibility it has to ensure that growth in the mining sector occurs in a responsible way. This government is fully cognisant of the nexus between development and preservation of the environment. The beauty of our environment is one of the great drivers for our tourism industry that, together with the mining industry, provides employment and prosperity for many Queenslanders.

I believe my background holds me in very good stead to provide assistance to the honourable minister, the member for Hinchinbrook, in this important portfolio. I am an environmental scientist who has worked in the mining industry ensuring that development occurs sustainably and not at the expense of the environment or communities. My work has taken me around Australia and around the world and I look forward to utilising my skills and knowledge in this area for the benefit of Queensland.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Pumicestone for electing me to represent them in this place. I won every booth in my electorate and I am fully aware of the responsibility that such a show of faith bestows on me. I am proud of the campaign that I ran in Pumicestone. It was focused on the issues of concern to our community and not on personalities, gossip or innuendo. I intend to continue in the same vein and I look forward to being part of a government that restores accountability and good government to Queensland. I have met some absolutely wonderful people in the past 18 months. I will never forget the selfless volunteers I met while I was helping out at the flood refuge run by the local churches and community groups during the 2011 floods. The Ross family and the volunteers at the Bribie Christian Outreach Centre do an amazing job and I thank them for welcoming me into their team to make vegemite on toast to feed the school kids. I thank groups such as Family Haven who took the time to make sure that I well and truly understood the issues facing those in need of crisis care. To the many volunteers who give their time to help others, your service to our community gives hope to so many and it has been a privilege to spend time with you all during the campaign.

I met many wonderful people while doorknocking and at community events during my campaign. They are the backbone of our community and they make us stronger. I will not pretend that the 18 months of my campaign were all plain sailing. There have been times that have been really tough. The campaign that the Labor Party ran was appalling with its misinformation and its unsubstantiated attacks on Campbell and Lisa Newman, their family, other candidates and members of parliament.

On a local level, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my tireless campaign manager, Beth Harris, and our wonderful team of volunteers. Beth has been a towering source of encouragement, strength, logistical and moral support and I am grateful for the unflinching faith she showed in me. Thank you to my campaign team who, together with Beth, worked tirelessly to deliver such an extraordinary result on election day. While it is always risky to start naming people, I make special mention of the people who worked side by side with Beth and I for the majority of the campaign. This group consists of Sandy Miller and Rhonwyn McSweeney, Jill Young, Graeme and Maureen Jones, Von Furner and Rita Cobbe, Sid and Barb Sweeney, Ray and Gayle Kriedemann, Val Potier, Sharon Johnson, Sharon Parsons, Karen Schloss and family, Janet Norquay, Simon Prasad, Gail Torrens, Col and Bev Seis, Darryl Brown and Vic Abbey.

During the election it was wonderful to see the volume of non-party members working alongside our branch members, wanting to get involved in the campaign. I was encouraged by this groundswell of people who had decided to stand up and demand that they be listened to. There were hundreds of

people who were active in my campaign, so I will summarise by saying a big 'thank you' to Tim and Denise, Bernie and Stella, Greg and Julie, Bud and Alice, and Mum, Dad and Chad for letting me sign-write their vehicles. I thank the wonderful team at Sign Crafters that produced the bumper stickers that now adorn about 300 cars, bikes, shop windows and mobility scooters in my electorate. I thank the business community that supported me strongly. I thank the pram pushers, the kindy mums and dads and the supportive parents and grandparents who were very encouraging and also very understanding when they saw me racing through the front doors of kindy trying to set a new record for the fastest drop-off, only to find that my children just wanted to stop and cuddle for a while. As a parent, how can you walk away from that? I thank all the lovely people who attended my fundraisers, bought raffle tickets and frequently dined at our sausage sizzles. I say a big 'thank you' to Annette for opening up her home to us.

I thank my wonderful friends Anissa, Lola and Jules, who kept me sane and gave great advice. I thank them for forgiving me for not returning their calls or attending their gatherings, and for not being around to celebrate my brother Scott's 40th birthday, my sister-in-law Chantelle's 40th birthday and parents' 40th wedding anniversary. I promise that I will make it up to you. I thank my mentors Greg Newton, Con Galtos, Ray Sinclair and Alex Mackay: our chats were therapeutic and kept me focused. I congratulate Gary Parsons, my Division 1 councillor, on his deserved re-election. I look forward to working with him to deliver more for our area. My federal member of parliament, Wyatt Roy, is an exceptional person, an inspiration, a wonderful asset to our electorate and a great friend to my family and I.

I thank the people of the Toorbul, Donnybrook and Meldale communities. Their regular home cooked community dinners fast became a favourite campaigning activity in our family. I look forward to many more evenings sitting around, talking about fishing. To my colleagues at our R&W office on Bribie Island, I thank you for having to put up with all the joys of being part of the unofficial campaign office. I thank my extended family across Queensland: the Freshwaters of Brisbane and Glasshouse, the Cornelius family of Palmwoods, the Frances of Pittsworth and the Chivertons of Dalby. I thank the wonderful team at LNP headquarters. To Bruce McIver, James McGrath, Barry O'Sullivan, Michael O'Dwyer, Mitch Redford and Gerrard Benadette and all the band at HQ I say this: your guidance, assistance and friendship is greatly appreciated. I also thank the Premier, Campbell Newman, and my colleagues for their advice and support during the campaign. I look forward to working with you to take our great state forward.

I have saved my most important 'thank yous' until last and they are to my family. My parents raised my brother Scott and I to have a strong commitment to community service and hard work and to lead by example. They both worked day jobs and night jobs and, in his spare time, dad was also in the Army Reserve. As kids, my brother and I loved the adventures that resulted, such as sleeping in the ticket booth at the Maroochy drive-in while they sold tickets, swimming in the pools of the houses mum used to clean to make extra money, playing with the coin counter at the Commonwealth Bank where dad worked and spending our weekends at the surf club with all the other nippers while mum and dad did the patrols, helped with the carnivals and the running of the club.

When I broke the news to my parents that I was thinking of standing for the state seat of Pumicestone, my mother's response was, 'You've got to be joking? If you do, I won't talk to you!' She could not believe that a mother of a one-year-old and a two-year-old, who was pregnant with her third child and who, with her husband, ran a seven-day-a-week real estate business, thought that she could fit in a campaign. I am happy to say that mum and dad ended up being my biggest supporters. Her concern was more about how much babysitting her and dad would have to do, as opposed to my being able to do the job. Over 18 months both of my parents campaigned tirelessly. I am sure that they are happy that the campaign is over and that they do not have to wear my campaign shirts anymore. Now they can do their grocery shopping, attend Rotary meetings or have a drink at the local bowls club without having to explain what a four-pillar economy is. I will never be able to thank my parents for everything they have done and continue to do for me, but I can confidently say that they have been the best parents anyone could ask for and that I am proud to be their daughter.

To my husband, Chad, I say this: you have been an amazing support, a constant motivator and you make a great First Lady of Pumicestone! It amazes me how he juggles our family business and our three boys, and makes it look so easy. He is a brilliant husband and a loving dad. Our boys, Jordy, Bailey and Kenton, have been my strength and my inspiration. Wanting to deliver a better Queensland for them and to make them proud of me has been a powerful motivation. I thank them for their patience, support, good behaviour, understanding and belief in me. I only hope that one day they will reflect kindly on the experiences they had when mummy was a pollicie.

I take up my responsibilities in this place full of optimism that, as a member of the state government, we can deliver a better future for Queensland. I will be a strong voice for my community. I pledge to listen and to faithfully represent the concerns of my electorate. I promise to work hard each and every day to make lives better. In my role as assistant minister, I look forward to working with a team that will restore Queensland's strong economy, see people back in work and see this great state

restored to its rightful place as Australia's leading state. I thank my colleagues in parliament for their support during my campaign and here today. I wish them all the best for their term in office. It is an honour to represent the people of the Pumicestone electorate and I will not let them down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Before I call the next speaker, I remind the House that this is the member's maiden speech and that the courtesies afforded for this occasion should be extended to him.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (4.17 pm): It is an honour to join this chamber as the member for Barron River. I congratulate our Premier, who has the ability to return us to our rightful position as Australia's premier state, leading the country in tourism, construction, agriculture and mining, boasting education infrastructure that is second to none with a workable and efficient health system, which is the right of our constituents. I, Michael Trout, pledge my loyal service to the Premier, the Deputy Premier and all the cabinet members and will support them in their vital role in providing service to our state as part of the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I pledge my dedication to the people of my electorate of Barron River, which comprises suburbs of Cairns from the airport to Palm Cove and includes the good citizens of Kuranda, Whitfield, Brinsmead, Smithfield and Redlynch.

I acknowledge many friends and family who are in the gallery today and who have travelled to support me. I am proud to be the second member of the Trout family to represent the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. My great-great-grandfather Richard Trout was the member for Enoggera in 1912, interestingly, exactly 100 years ago. As a freshman to party politics, it was an exceptional honour to be endorsed and, even more so, elected as the member for Barron River, particularly given the overwhelming confidence placed in myself and the LNP government.

I give credit to the many people who have mentored and encouraged me in the run-up to endorsement and the huge number of helpers who assisted in the election campaign. My special thanks goes to Dennis Quick, a tough mentor; my campaign manager, Brett Sundell; Alistair Mitchell, for his direction and discipline; Matt Connolly; Nicole Tobin-Donnelly; Keith and Stephen Turner; and many wonderful, dedicated individuals who willingly and enthusiastically gave of their time and energy in doorknocking throughout the campaign and working on the booth on polling day. I wish I could mention you all, but be assured I am humbled by your support.

I am so fortunate to be standing here now. How many people get to realise a lifetime ambition? How many fathers can tell their children that they were awarded such an opportunity to improve people's lives, to make a positive difference to the community in which they live? The fact is that there are many such fathers. They exist in all of our service organisations and their effort and input go unacknowledged. I am honoured to join their ranks.

This is time for change. This moment represents a significant opportunity in the life of my electorate and for Queensland. I have so many people to thank for the fact that I am standing here before you today: my family, who are my inspiration; my four gorgeous daughters, Hannah, Amy, Heidi and Emma; my partner, Sally; my wonderful parents, Peter and Dorn, who instilled in me the fire to serve and encouraged me to follow my instincts and my dreams. They are my constant source of inspiration. There is also my brothers, Steve, Luke and Matt who, along with my colleagues Andrew, Annie and Mark, have helped me throughout the campaign and continue to operate our business.

How enriching, how rewarding it is to be in a position of power in the best possible sense, that is, to be able to make things better for individuals and the community. I am eternally grateful to the people of my electorate. Now it is my turn to show my family and the electorate that I can make a difference to your world, that I can make a positive difference to the people of the Barron River electorate. I take this responsibility you invested in me very seriously and I will serve you well. My constituents have also sent me here to be a powerful voice for Far North Queensland. Too often over the past decade policies have been formulated and decided upon in places far from my electorate, whether in Brisbane or Canberra.

I join this parliament with a background in farming, tourism, business ownership and customer service. I was raised on the land—a Queenslander through and through with a strong work ethic, a will to persist through adversity, a sense of social justice and equity, a commitment to service and a deep seated respect for all people. I pledge to carry these qualities into my position as a representative of my electorate and of this government.

I am a country boy, a Queensland boy. I was born in Chinchilla on the Western Downs and raised on a cattle station on a bragalow block that was cleared and made useable as a result of the remarkable foresight and ingenuity of the former Bjelke-Petersen government. My parents rank among those fortunate Aussie battlers who survived the cattle depression of the seventies, raising cattle and children on a modest income. I inherited the core principles of honesty, openness, thrift, community spirit, a strong work ethic and appreciation for good Australian values of mateship and caring. We were rich—not financially, but rich in the sense of having a wonderful upbringing, enjoying happy times in a cohesive community within the security of a loving family.

I moved to Cairns in 1992, having spent a great deal of my formative years in a saddle, eating dust behind a herd of cattle. It therefore seemed appropriate that my first business venture was based on outdoor activities in a country environment. Mungalli Falls Student Village offers 26 learning and adventure activities ranging from Aboriginal culture and abseiling to horse riding, river kayaking, rockclimbing and teaching young people the value of exercise, teamwork and respect for the environment and for each other. My next business venture, Blazing Saddles Adventures, is a successful horse riding and quad bike business. I have eaten a lot of dust since then as well as a lot of humble pie in the ensuing years of growing the business, learning the hard way about the ever-changing nature of tourism, and adapting the business to suit current markets in order to survive. I acknowledge a close friend and confidant, Andrew Steel, whose tourism experience and business acumen helped me form a solid platform in tourism.

Business has also provided me with the opportunity to travel extensively throughout Asia and my own country, not only promoting my business but also 'flying the flag' for Queensland. My farming background taught me to be resilient in order to weather unpredictable obstacles. In mid 2011, the dreaded Hendra virus struck Blazing Saddles, thankfully not affecting any of my staff, and causing death to only one horse. However, it effectively closed down the horse riding side of the business while we sat out the two-month quarantine period and coped with the negative backlash. Had I not diversified into quad bikes some years earlier, the business would not have survived. I learned many lessons last year, not the least of which was the true value of diversification, determination and community. I can never repay the debt I owe those who supported me during this time, but I hope in some way to channel my thanks into giving selflessly to the community that supported me during this difficult time. Martin Luther King said, 'Life's most urgent question is: What are you doing for others?' I ask myself that question every day. As a business owner, customer service was paramount, and at the end of the day the result of serving to the best of my ability benefited me and my family. Despite the satisfaction of looking after my family, I still felt the need to be part of my community and help my fellow North Queenslanders, whom I saw negatively impacted by any number of issues we face in the Far North and which were exacerbated by the ruling ALP government.

The term 'tyranny of distance' goes hand in hand with doing business, and just merely living in Far North Queensland. Our region is remote and it needs to be treated as unique in a positive fashion and with respect for the difficulties imposed by our geographical isolation. We have the advantage of living in one of the most ecologically diverse and picturesque areas of Australia, with reef and rainforest to attract tourists from all over the world, but we are severely disadvantaged by our distance from major centres and reliance on tourism as our main source of income. In past years, the state government's lack of understanding of Far North Queensland's isolation and uniqueness has been a source of angst to the three electorates of this region.

Our tourism industry is fragile; its prosperity is subject to fluctuating worldwide economies, the status of the Australian dollar and, of course, the forces of the elements, as evidenced by Cyclone Yasi in 2011. The annual problems associated with our 'wet season', predominantly the closure of the Bruce Highway during periods of heavy rain, take their toll on our economy. Our economic viability relies heavily on our initiatives, determination and creativity in maintaining our position as a tourism centre of choice in the absence of industry, transport infrastructure and limited natural resources. We are fortunate to have amongst our population some incredibly resourceful and motivated people who have fought to keep our region afloat in the absence of support from the former state Labor government.

During the Labor government, Cairns and Far North Queensland became the forgotten region, the tail end of the state, a town at the end of the Bruce Highway, the poor neighbour. But this does not have to be. We now have incredibly strong, cohesive government representation with business experience. We jointly share an unrivalled passion to put the Far North back in the nation's directory, to extend our horizons through numerous initiatives and effective communication, to encourage business and open lucrative gateways to Asia and Papua New Guinea.

Tourism is our lifeblood. There is so much to be done and we have already made some inroads. Direct air access to Singapore and China will provide immediate economic stimulus. Already plans are underway to encourage other airlines to make Cairns a major destination. We need to take back ownership of our brand—Cairns, the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. We recognise several critical initiatives that are needed to diversify our economy in Far North Queensland. These include the dredging of Trinity Inlet, which will expand the capacity of cruise liner access as well as allowing the expansion of HMAS Cairns, our naval facility. Sporting facilities need upgrading to meet international standards, affording more opportunity to develop sports tourism in a tropical location.

Our beautiful Tablelands region deserves recognition as a prime tourism destination and brand in the same way as the Hunter Valley in New South Wales or the Margaret River in Western Australia. The education sector holds immense capacity to attract employment, construction, recognition and prosperity to our region. I have already had the pleasure of visiting many schools in my electorate, as well as the outstanding James Cook University, Tropical North Queensland TAFE and our international

marine college. I have been inspired by the energy and enthusiasm for excellence that warrants support and attention. I envisage an international aviation skills centre as well as an international disaster rescue centre to further diversify our economy.

I was most impressed by the efforts made at the Kuranda District State College, where excellent results have been achieved through the Families as First Teachers program, which addresses the numeracy and literacy needs of preschool Indigenous children and prepares them for school life. Policy-making should start from the basis that teachers, judges and police do not bring up our children; this is a responsibility of their parents. If we are to give a child a chance, children must be able to learn and teachers must be able to teach. Therefore, we must restore the values of discipline, and inappropriate and antisocial behaviour should never be seen as acceptable either inside or outside the classroom.

The rapid acceleration in crime is reflected in urban areas all around Australia. Last Friday, in collaboration with the member for Cairns, Gavin King, a crime action plan was rolled out for the region, with a strong emphasis on Neighbourhood Watch and community involvement in combating crime. Neighbourhood Watch is, at the heart, a local initiative that depends for its success on individuals who are committed to strengthening their own communities. I am strongly committed to facilitating the establishment of new Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout my electorate while assisting in any way I can in the re-establishment of pre-existing groups.

I applaud the Trinity Beach Neighbourhood Watch group and the dedication and determination of local resident Julie Matthews. The success of this now 70-strong group should serve as an example to communities all around Australia. After numerous years suffering from burglaries and other theft crimes, this popular tourism destination on the northern beaches now has one of the lowest crime rates in Queensland.

With juvenile suicide at an all-time high, I intend to help parents, children and schools stop bullying. Having four daughters, two of whom are still at school, this is a subject very close to my heart. There would be very few families whose lives have not been touched in the saddest ways by youth suicide.

The previous government sold our airport to build a new hospital, but what we in fact gained was a patched up old hospital. Whilst we have to make the best of this now, we welcome a new era with the introduction of a new board under the direction of chairperson Bob Norman, whose leadership qualities and experience bode extremely well for the future of our healthcare services.

Our unemployment rate under the ALP was the worst in Australia. What a shameful legacy. The Far North, particularly the Cairns region, has seen record bankruptcies, a huge number of empty shops, small businesses going to the wall and families torn apart by the accompanying hardships. This is not acceptable.

As a business owner, I personally welcome with open arms our government's initiatives in reducing red tape and overgovernance. Red tape discourages business. In Queensland it is a major contributor to the non-profitability and closure of small business. Overregulation is frequently cited as a reason small business growth is stymied. In order to succeed, governments need to get out of the way rather than constantly interfere. Imagine if every small business could employ one more person—our four per cent unemployment target could easily be met. Many small businesses simply do not want to deal with the rules and regulations that accompany growth or expanding into a bigger business. I will be encouraging small business owners in my electorate to have their say on what red tape they most want removed.

Where the previous government saw us as the village at the end of the road, we have already felt the effects of change. I thank the Premier and his ministers for his promise to get back the international flights, expand the cruise liner business and so allow us to prosper as an international city.

I am ready to work with all three levels of government to effect the many changes required to bring our electorate back from the doldrums. For the first time ever North Queensland has three representatives—Gavin King, David Kempton and myself—working with great camaraderie to achieve the same goals. It is an exciting time with so many positive changes. We have new mayors—Bob Manning in Cairns and Rosa Lee Long on the Atherton Tablelands. I also thank the federal member for Leichhardt, the Hon. Warren Entsch, for his guidance and assistance both now and into the future.

We have an incredible team state-wide and locally. I have a committed team in my electorate office and my door is always open. I will work tirelessly to ensure that our goals and objectives are achieved over the next three years. I intend to make the electorate of Barron River proud. I won't let you down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Before I call the next member, I remind the House that this is the member's maiden speech and I ask you to observe his speech in silence. I call the member for Cairns.

Mr KING (Cairns—LNP) (4.35 pm): Inspired by the campaign tactics of the Australian Labor Party, I will start by quoting from one of my old newspaper columns. On this occasion, however, I will endeavour to keep it in context. I wrote this particular piece while sitting in a Cairns city cafe as a community campaign was unfolding on the street outside. The campaign 'CBD Blitz' was aimed at revitalising our long-neglected CBD. The campaign was all about proving that people power can achieve what governments often fail to do—and that is to listen, to respond and to act to community concerns and needs.

A cross-section of the community from business owners through to artists joined forces to help kick-start the revival of our city's heart. This particular column described the scenes I saw looking out through that window of that cafe on Grafton Street on December 2010. The column was titled 'Cairns, take a bow'. I begin the quote at the moment politicians of all stripes started arriving at the event conveniently at the same time that the media arrived at the event—

Politicians and political hopefuls are everywhere.

...

But forget the politicians.

They need to do more than just turn up.

I don't want to write about them.

I want to write about everyone else down here at Grafton St, who despite their differences all want the same thing: a city that is alive.

They all ascribe to different political affiliations.

...

But these are not greedy business owners or weirdo artists or unscrupulous shopkeepers or dole bludging performers.

They are Cairns.

Some of them work themselves down to the bone, hanging on by the skin of their tired fingers, just to make it through this most terrible economic downturn.

Some are national leaders in their creative fields, musicians and artists and theatre actors and classical performers.

They are the heart and soul of this city.

They are the colour, the spark, the salt of the earth and the cream of the crop.

A 30-year plan or another feasibility study or more meetings and talk ... won't help them.

They need action, they need to be listened to.

It was while writing about this event and, indeed, participating in it that a flash of realisation hit me. I saw how desperate the people of Cairns were for action, how desperate they were to be listened to. Suddenly I was inspired to do more than just write about the problems and pontificate about possible solutions. I saw firsthand that the community was intensely passionate about our city. They were ready. They were willing to donate their time and effort to make it a great and vibrant place once again, if only just for that moment.

I also saw, without a shadow of a doubt, that they lacked the political leadership to help them achieve it. Some 18 months after I wrote those words, the people of Cairns made an historic choice. On 24 March of this year, for the first time since Federation the people of Cairns placed their trust in a non-Labor member of parliament. It is a humbling and awe-inspiring honour to be handed that trust after more than 100 years of Labor dominance in the seat of Cairns. The community made that choice after several years of the worst economic slump in the history of our city and two decades of the worst state government in Queensland's history.

Our unemployment rate across the region remains among the highest in the nation, hovering close to 10 per cent—double the state average. Our tourism industry has been battered by forces beyond its control. The construction industry is on its knees. And everywhere you look, particularly in the CBD, there are empty shops and small businesses closing down. But with a new state government and now a new regional council, there is a tangible air of hope and optimism in our city. Green shoots of economic recovery are sprouting all over Cairns. It is now my job, every single day, to help foster and support that renewed sense of hope and optimism. And every single day I will work to convert it into action and results.

To that end, we will deliver on the promises and policies we put to the people of Cairns during the campaign. We will tackle our very serious law-and-order issues with more police on the beat and tougher sentences. I will work with the community and agencies to deliver and enhance our crime action plan, released last week in partnership with my colleague from Barron River, Michael Trout. We will continue working hard in our efforts to secure direct flights between Asia and Cairns to stimulate our economy and bring confidence back to our region. We will improve marine access to Trinity Inlet to help

bring more cruise ships and boost the capacity of our neglected port. We will work with the new council to deliver a long-overdue new headquarters for the SES and a Cairns campus of the Regional College for Disaster Management.

The health needs of Cairns residents—so long treated like second-class citizens, so long forced to travel to Townsville or 2,000 kilometres away to Brisbane for often basic surgery—will now be met by the new local hospital board and our \$15 million fund to attract specialists to Cairns Base Hospital. Cairns will also benefit from the building of the Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University. These plans and policies are but the beginning of a new era of confidence and economic growth in Cairns.

I firmly believe in the Newman government's four-pillar plan to grow the Queensland economy, because it will directly benefit Cairns and Far North Queensland. The four pillars are aligned with our region's economy, both now and into the future.

Tourism, of course, is the No. 1 driver of our economy, contributing well over \$2 billion annually to our gross regional product. I am honoured to serve as the Assistant Minister for Tourism in the first LNP government, and I am incredibly thankful for and humbled by that opportunity. In my role as Assistant Minister for Tourism I represent the tourism industry across the state, but as the member for Cairns—and with apologies to the many, many members from the Gold Coast—I firmly believe that Cairns is Queensland's premier tourism destination. I am also thankful to the Premier and tourism minister for choosing Cairns as the host city of our first DestinationQ forum, to be held on 25 and 26 June. This once-in-a-generation forum will be the start of a new conversation between industry and government and will set the course for the future direction of tourism in our state. It is just one of the early steps we are taking to achieve our goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure by 2020.

Aviation access is the lifeblood of the Cairns tourism industry, and our government's \$8 million Attracting Aviation fund has been warmly welcomed by the industry as a long-overdue measure to stimulate aviation in Queensland. I note that Jetstar just yesterday announced a massive boost to domestic services into Cairns and the basing of up to 60 staff in our city. This is absolutely fantastic news for Cairns and yet another sign that confidence is returning to our great city.

Agriculture holds enormous potential for growth in our region, with Cairns serving as the supply hub for our nation-best produce, farmed on the Atherton Tablelands. Far North Queensland will be a key player in our government's goal to double agricultural production by 2040.

Mining can provide huge ancillary benefits to Cairns. Due to our world renowned lifestyle and our magnificent natural environment, our city has strong potential to become a fly-in fly-out destination for mineworkers and the regional base for large companies working in Papua New Guinea, the Pacific Islands and mines near Weipa.

Property and construction in Cairns goes hand in hand with the fortunes of our tourism industry. No place in Australia has been hit by the disastrous domino effect of the global financial crisis and government neglect more than Cairns. Four of our biggest multimillion dollar construction and development companies have collapsed in the past three years. This has caused untold damage and pain for hundreds of tradespeople, subcontractors and small businesses that have supplied these large construction companies. And this is reflected in our nation-high unemployment rate. Our government's property and construction strategy contains practical measures to help revive our building industry once again, and our government's broader plans to ease the cost of living for families and to cut red tape and waste will also help the Cairns economy enormously. I am proud to be part of a government that takes its hands out of the cash registers of small businesses and instead allows them to get on with the job that they do best: running their business and creating employment.

Alongside law-and-order issues, cost-of-living pressures and our local health system, getting the Cairns economy firing again is a priority for me in this term. I will not be diverted or distracted from the plan to sustain, grow and build a four-pillar economy. I will make every day count to deliver on this plan.

I will also set my sights firmly on the future of our great city. A very strong point that I would like to make is that for too long Cairns has been viewed, both locally and further afield, as being at the end of the line, and not just in a geographic sense. But instead of being at the end of the line, I want the nation and the world to view Cairns as the exact opposite. We are in fact at the starting line of Asia and the Pacific. We are at the starting line of opportunity to engage in trade with our near neighbours across the waters. We are ideally placed to compete with tropical cities around the globe.

I want Cairns to grow—to thrive as an international and sustainable city. I want Cairns to be an international hub of training and learning, from tertiary and language studies through to marine and aviation skills. I want the Cairns CBD to be a tourism attraction in its own right. I want our city heart to be a buzzing, cosmopolitan place with more residential living and more business, be it public or private sector. I want Cairns to link in with China, and not just in terms of tourism. I want Cairns to be a place of innovation, of new technology—a place young professionals choose to move to. I sincerely believe that, working in partnership with industry, the community and my fellow far northern MPs, we can achieve all of this and much more.

I grew up in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, where my parents still live. I want to thank my parents for the sacrifices and hard work that they have endured to help me achieve the goals that I have set down throughout my life. My dad worked at an aluminium smelter and just last week lost his job after 37 years in the same role. My mum is a nurse and she has gone back to work to help pay the bills. Our family comes from humble working-class stock and the values of a small town upbringing will always remain with me.

I want to sincerely thank those people who helped during the long months of my election campaign. It was one of the toughest and ugliest on record and I am so very proud that our team showed admirable restraint by never, ever joining the Labor Party down in the gutter. We held our heads high and through discipline, integrity and teamwork we prevailed. I will never forget those people who stood by me and helped on that campaign. I want to sincerely thank the Premier for his leadership and support over the past 12 months. I want to thank my fellow government MPs for their new friendship and the work and achievements over the next term.

While they are not yet old enough to realise it, I want to say thank you to my beautiful babies, Saskia and Percy. Thank you for giving me endless moments of peace and clarity. To Leah, thank you. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for our home and our family. You are the one forever.

Thank you also to Cairns—the place that I love and treasure. I met Leah in Cairns. We bought our first home together in Cairns and both of our children were born there. We feel blessed to live in Far North Queensland. It is a city that is a home to the most privileged and the most disadvantaged, a place where people from all walks of life and cultures interact in one of the most beautiful, most inspiring natural environments on earth. Through high-flying booms and devastating busts, the Cairns community has always endured with an in-built sense of resilience and strength, of perseverance and determination. Perhaps it is the lingering spirit of the pioneers who forged new paths northwards into the tropics in the late 1800s or the love and respect of country by those Aboriginal elders who treasure the land they are custodians of. Maybe it is our region's dry wit in the face of cyclones and natural disasters, exemplified in a classic hand-painted sign outside a boarded-up shop in February last year that simply read, 'Kiss my Yasi!' That is the spirit of Cairns that I am proud to represent. I want to be the strongest voice possible for Cairns in a state government that truly takes regional Queensland seriously. I do not take the responsibility of being the member for Cairns lightly and I do not take it for granted—not for a second.

Finally, my pledge to the Cairns community is that I will always listen and I will always take action. I will strive every single day to help people who ask for assistance, regardless of their background or political persuasion. I will always support and help foster good ideas and good projects. I will never proclaim to be an expert in all things or tell the people of Cairns what is best for them the way the previous Labor government so often did. Again, I pledge to always listen and to always take action. Most of all, I pledge to give absolutely everything I have to make Cairns the jewel of Queensland once again. I thank the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ruthenberg): Order! Before I call the member for Albert, I remind members that this is the member's maiden speech and I would ask that we listen in silence. I call the member for Albert.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (4.54 pm): Firstly, I wish to congratulate the Speaker of the House, Fiona Simpson. It is an honour to have you as our Speaker in the 54th Parliament. We know you will serve the role of Speaker with the utmost integrity. I also want to recognise the diamond jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the traditional landowners of the Albert region, the Yugambeh people. Today I stand here humbled by the task in front of me. This is a task I do not take lightly. This is a task which can only be achieved through perseverance and dedication. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the people of Albert who, by giving me their vote, wish me to represent their ideals and aspirations. No matter what your beliefs or your political ideals, I am here to represent all equally and fairly. I am your grassroots servant.

I pledge my loyalty to the people of Albert and the 54th Parliament. I want to dedicate my speech to three former members of parliament. My mentor and former member for Forde, Kay Elson: you have always been an inspiration and I have learnt so much from you. To the Hon. David Jull, my former campaign director: you will be remembered for your wonderful persona and jolly nature. To my good friend and confidant the Hon. Ivan Gibbs, former member for Albert: your wisdom will never be forgotten. Unfortunately, during the campaign tragedy struck with the loss of two great Queensland political figures in David Jull and Ivan Gibbs. David and Ivan, you will be greatly missed.

On 26 July 2008 a momentous moment in Queensland political history unfolded with the formation of the Liberal National Party. It was a dream thought to be impossible. However, this dream came true through passionate resolve of visionaries such as Bruce McIver, Gary Spence, Lawrence Springborg and Mark McArdle. These men will be recorded in the annals of political history. However, we must not forget all the rank-and-file members and delegates who participated in the merger. It is the members who should also be thanked, for if it was not for them and their support and vision for a grand future of our state and party we would not be in this place today.

There is one individual I wish to mention personally—Bruce Duncan, the LNP regional chair for the Gold Coast. Our friendship developed during the merger process and has continued to this day. He is a man of impeccable character who went to enormous lengths to streamline the merger on a local level. Bruce, I thank you for your guidance and your friendship.

To my beautiful wife and darling daughter, your steadfast support during the campaign was instrumental in putting me in this House. You never wavered when it came to hard work and you always supported my endeavours. In the final days of the campaign you were a shining light that kept me motivated and grounded.

To my father Peter, the teachings you instilled in us at a young age have served us well. Your teachings of hard work, education and, most importantly, do unto others as you would have them do unto you are values we live by. You were the oldest son of a sharefarmer. You have worked hard for what you have and at the age of 68 you simply do not know when to give up. My mother, Marjorie, has always been the anchor of my family. She is a lady of determination and has given steadfast support. To my brother, Paul, thanks mate. No-one could ever wish for a better brother. I am blessed to have a wonderful family. The family unit is the cornerstone of our society and that is a principle I live by.

I wish to convey my appreciation to all of those who have helped the LNP Albert campaign. Their help was instrumental in victory. I will mention just a few of those friends and supporters by name: firstly, Elizabeth Holton, my campaign manager, and her ever wonderful husband, Garry. Their loyalty and dedication is legendary. I thank the Caulfield family, Pam and Errol, and my SEC chairman, Darren Caulfield, for the endless help they have been. Every time we asked for help, they were there to assist. I thank Stewart Proud, Gary Berndt and, of course, Paul Badger and Sheree Allaway. I would also like to mention Michael Crandon and Michael Latter for their steadfast support during the campaign.

The state electorate of Albert was created for the 1888 election. That means that the Albert electorate is one of the oldest electorates in Queensland. Before the 1920s, the electorate covered a vast area, including the entire Gold Coast and Beaudesert shires. Since then, the electorate has endured multiple redistributions to form its present day boundaries and size. Tom Plunkett senior, a member of the conservative party, has the honour of being the first member for Albert—from 1888 to 1896 and from 1899 to 1908. I also wish to recognise the two previous members who served the people of Albert: Bill Baumann, who served my community from 1996 to 2001, and Margaret Keech, who served from 2001 to 2012. I wish them all the very best and I thank them for their service.

The electorate of Albert comprises a diverse mix of urban, industrial and semi-rural lands located halfway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast—from Mount Warren Park in the north, Studio Village in the south and Buccan in the west. The Albert electorate is spread across the second and third largest cities in Queensland, Gold Coast City and Logan City. Demographically, the electorate continues to change owing to its high transient population and continued development. The Albert electorate is situated in the northern Gold Coast corridor, which continues to be one of the fastest growing and developing areas in Australia. It is home to the forest-covered rolling hills of the Northern Darlington Range—an area of unique beauty and home to rare species such as the Ormeau bottle tree. The Albert electorate is also blessed with panoramic views of the Gold Coast from its southern vantage points. It is a wonderful area of splendour and diversity.

The northern areas of the Albert electorate contain one of the most significant industrial areas within Queensland. The Yatala Enterprise Area contains over 550 small, medium and large businesses that employ over 10,000 workers. The southern sections of the electorate contain some of Australia's best known playgrounds: Movie World, Wet'n'Wild and Outback Spectacular. It should be noted that Movie World has been successful in the creation of first-class entertainment. Movies such as *House of Wax*, *Peter Pan* and *Fortress*, just to name a few, were made at its Gold Coast facilities.

The Albert electorate is blessed with successful community groups that work tirelessly for the greater good. But even with these successful community groups, there is a great need for individual identity in some districts. As technology has developed, we have been pushed away from face-to-face conversing to a more impersonal electronic world. That is a world that creates its own set of dilemmas through cyberbullying and crime. Building stronger communities builds strong individuals. These words have echoed throughout history and they are as true today as they ever were. I am honoured to say that the community groups of the Albert electorate should be proud of their achievements. The Ormeau Lions Club holds a very successful Ormeau Fair every year, which attracts over 10,000 people. Norm Jessen, the President of the Ormeau Lions Club, should be recognised as being one of the great achievers in my district for the hard work that he does every year in organising this fair. He has gone a long way to personalising my community. Heather Christensen of Quota International of Beenleigh is another worthy person to mention. Her tireless work for the Quota International eisteddfod is be commended. Quota has given youth the opportunity to live their lives out on the stage.

I also wish to recognise the Logan State Emergency Service—a service that I have been a member of for seven years. Its dedication to its community is of the highest standard. It never turns down a call for help. Mayor Pam Parker calls them her orange angels. I wish to mention two members of the Logan State Emergency Service: firstly, the local controller, Jim Ferguson. He became the local

controller only weeks before the devastating 2011 floods. His ability to organise and adapt to a continually changing situation instilled confidence in his members. He should be proud of what he has achieved in a very short time. The city of Logan can rest easy in the knowledge that we have people like Jim Ferguson. No words can describe my admiration for Terry Chapman. His passion for the state emergency service and his community knows no bounds. He would have to be one of the longest-serving members of this great organisation. Whenever a member has a question, he is always the first to answer.

I will not limit my congratulations to three volunteer organisations. Many other organisations work hard for my community—Rotary, other Lions clubs, community action groups such as the Ormeau Progress Association, Landcare, My Ormeau, Neighbourhood Watch, the Rural Fire Service and many others. As I have previously alluded, I am proud to have been a long-serving member of multiple community organisations. Over the years I have built many friendships from these community groups. It is a testament to those friendships that it is those people who I call upon.

I come here humbled and grateful to be the elected representative of about 31,000 electors of Albert. My philosophy has always been of hard work. I fully support the LNP's ideals. Governments are here to represent their constituents and spend taxpayers' money wisely. When governments fail in their fiscal management of budgets, it is hardworking taxpayers who bear the cost through increased taxes and reduced services.

Failure to rectify budgetary deficits only passes the legacy onto the next generation. I do not want to see my daughter and her generation pay for our generation's mistakes. I believe her generation should have the same morals and convictions. I respect the right for individuals to succeed, to work hard, to be rewarded and to be given the freedom and dignity to hold their own beliefs and ideals. I fully support the Campbell Newman government in focusing on the diversification of our economy by the implementation of the four-pillar economic policy. For too long we have relied on a single sector of our economy, which has left us vulnerable to overseas manufacturing demands. Focusing on the broader spectrum of tourism, agriculture, resources and construction will help the distribution of wealth throughout our economy and will create employment.

I quote: 'Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: if it moves, tax it; if it keeps moving, regulate it; and if it stops moving, subsidise it.' Small and medium businesses have long been the powerhouse for employment in our economy. For many years small businesses have suffered under increasing red tape and bureaucracy. Once again, this shows the clear differences in the philosophies of the political parties. Creating situations where clerical work is increased enormously is a recipe for inefficiencies and limits productivity. This is a recipe for disaster which only hinders economic development. Furthermore, allowing business to succeed only enhances the strength of our economy and creates additional employment.

A common trepidation which was expressed to me during the election campaign was in relation to the lack of police in the electorate. This is a common theme throughout the state but more so in the northern Gold Coast. We currently have one of the poorest ratios of police officers to residents. I was overjoyed when Campbell Newman announced that over the next four years his government will recruit 1,100 new police officers over and above attrition rates. At least 100 new officers will be allocated to the Logan and Gold Coast region. In addition to these numbers, the government will retrain 200 officers from behind desks to front-line duties. On behalf of multiple resident groups, Premier, I wish to thank you for your diligence on this matter. Furthermore, we have many more concerns that I wish to convey to this parliament at a later date to best represent the good people of the Albert electorate. I wish to thank the Premier and cabinet for producing a coherent plan to tackle multiple problems. I wish to thank the House for the courtesy its members have extended to me and I look forward to being a strong voice for Albert.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the House that this is the member's maiden speech and that the courtesies afforded to a maiden speech should be observed.

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Alger—LNP) (5.13 pm): I rise today to make my first and, I hope, one of many contributions to the debates and discussions we will have in this chamber. Before I begin my speech, I would like to congratulate the member for Maroochydore on her appointment as the first female Speaker of the Queensland parliament. I know that she will provide leadership and guidance to all in the chamber, but especially to the new members of parliament, of which I am one.

It is with the most humble heart that I stand here today the member for Alger. As we all know, it is a privilege to be elected to parliament and with that privilege comes great responsibility. As I spoke to residents on street corners and in shopping centres throughout the recent election and before, they expressed to me the struggles that they were enduring with skyrocketing cost-of-living pressures and they looked to me as their LNP representative to ease these burdens. Living in and connected to my community, my family contends with the very same burdens: do we pay the light bill this week or put food on the table? I understand the kitchen table discussions that go on every day in homes in my electorate. That is why I am proud to be a member of a Campbell Newman led government which has a plan to cut the cost of living for Queenslanders and deliver on our promises.

Many voters in Algester and across Queensland cast their vote for an LNP candidate for the very first time. It is their hopes and dreams, along with those of all my constituents, that I, as the member for Algester, carry into this place. I will be a strong voice for my community in pursuing the issues that matter to them. All of us in this chamber know that the privilege of being a member of parliament is not bestowed lightly by the electorate. I am the first Liberal National to ever represent the Algester electorate and I know that I will have to work hard every day for my residents, and I will do so gladly. I will strive to better the lives of all residents in my electorate.

Becoming a member of parliament, as we all know, is not a one-man show and I would like to thank a number of people who were crucial to my success in Algester: Paul and Debbie Daly who have supported me throughout my two campaigns and before; John and Teresa Samson, whose support and advice was instrumental in our success; Steve Andrews; Ray and Kerrie Attwell; Rob and Deb Millar; Steven and Katrina Johns; Chester and Melvina Hallum OAM; Bob Norton; Lucian O'Kill; Clinton Patterson; Brent Brettag; Tony Stevenson; Henri Rantala; Heather Millard; Alf Middleton; the Hon. Gary Hardgrave and his wife, Lorraine; the former Logan City Councillor Lynne Clarke and her husband, Don, and many, many more who provided support and advice to me in the campaign. I thank them all and look forward to their continued support. I would like to thank my old boss, the hard-working local councillor for Marchant in the Brisbane City Council, Councillor Fiona King. For the past two years I have watched how hard she works for her residents and I am happy to see her returned for another four years in the recent local government elections.

To my beautiful wife, Kelly, who could not be here tonight, and our wonderful daughter, Harmony, I say thank you for your love and advice that you give freely to me every day. You sustain me when things get tough and I love sharing our lives together.

I would like to thank Matt McEachen and the whole team at LNP headquarters for their support and efforts throughout the campaign. I would also like to thank the now members for Sunnybank, Stretton, Logan, Waterford and Albert, and Joanna Lindgren, candidate for Inala. We worked as a team through the campaign and we will work as a team in government.

The Algester electorate is diverse and quite distinct. On the western side we have Forest Lake built around its beautiful lake and on the eastern side of the electorate we have Algester and Parkinson. Right in the middle we have the semirural areas of Pallara, Willawong and Doolandella. The electorate also takes in parts of the Logan City Council area: Forestdale, Hillcrest and my local area, Bonesia Heights. The issues facing my community are the same as those faced by most of Queensland: battling the skyrocketing cost of living, providing the necessary infrastructure for future development, planning sustainable developments and providing the required health, education and emergency services assets for a growing region.

As the youngest of eight children who grew up in a housing commission area in Coopers Plains and educated at Coopers Plains State School and then Sunnybank State High School, I understand the importance of providing for those in our community who have found themselves in difficult circumstances. I also understand that government does not have an answer to everything. I am a firm believer in personal responsibility. We cannot control all things in life but we can control how we treat people and how we act within our community.

My mother taught me very early on to treat people how you would like to be treated. She also taught me by her actions the humility and selflessness of being respectful of others' views and circumstances. We are all a product of our upbringing and I pay tribute to my mum and my late dad, Bill Buster Shorten. My dad won the Grogan medal for Yeronga Football Club in 1951 and he taught me the life skill of listening. They say apples do not fall far from the tree. Well, in my case that is true. For most of his working life my dad was a rep for Westons Biscuits and I have also found myself in customer service roles, which has provided me with my drive to find solutions to people's issues. I believe this will stand me in good stead in my role as the member for Algester.

As I mentioned, I grew up in a housing commission home in Coopers Plains. My mother only recently moved out of the house that she called home for the past 60 years. In that house she raised a family of eight kids, 13 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. When I was growing up through the seventies and the early eighties, there was a sense of community. You knew your neighbours and your best friends were the kids in your neighbourhood. In my case, endless hours were spent playing that great sport of backyard cricket. I can say that, after 30 years, friendships forged in the heat of a backyard summer are still strong. I thank my brothers and sisters who have been a constant in my life. I have learnt so much from them. I thank my eldest sister, Lyn, and her husband, Colin. As mum already had seven kids, she was pretty busy when I came along and Lyn and Colin picked up when mum was not able. I thank my other sisters, Lorraine, Linda and Lisa, and my brothers, Ian, John and Daryl, for their love and support.

That brings me to my next point: throughout the recent election campaign, I was approached by young people questioning why they should vote or even be worried about politics. I am deeply concerned that a generation of our youth are so disengaged from and jaded with our political process

and what that means for the future of our democracy. Government is important. As Bill Clinton, the former US-President, said, 'The role of government is to give people the tools and create the conditions to make the most of our lives.' This is no less important for young people leaving school with their whole lives ahead of them. This is why it is imperative that we create the economic conditions and return confidence to the business community so that industry can expand.

There are other issues facing the youth of today, which is why I use this opportunity to announce that once a year I will be convening a youth round table for the Algeester electorate. The round table will be a forum for community groups, schools and NGOs to come together and discuss issues that are facing the youth of Algeester. As part of this initiative, I will be appointing an Algeester youth ambassador. Recently I was very honoured to join Madam Speaker at the launch of the 2012 YMCA Youth Parliament, which was held in the chamber opposite this one. That is a great initiative and it should be supported by all members. In fact, a previous youth representative now works in my electorate office.

I have talked about the sense of community that I grew up with. It is that sense of community that I want to rebuild in the streets and suburbs of the Algeester electorate. I want to see the residents come together to celebrate important dates like Australia Day, Queensland Day and Anzac Day. Algeester is a kaleidoscope of cultures and I would like to see those diverse communities celebrating their cultures and customs and, in doing so, building a strong, vibrant and understanding community. I will work towards making our community sustainable by supporting things such as community gardens and healthy lifestyles. With life getting busier and busier, our parks and green space take on more and more importance, not only for leisure but also for simply sitting and taking in the beauty of our natural world.

I started my speech by recognising a woman whose appointment marks a milestone in the Queensland parliament. I finish my speech by recognising another remarkable woman; a person who has given of herself for the past 60 years and celebrates her diamond jubilee this year. Of course, that most remarkable woman is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It is with sincere and heartfelt joy that I send my very best wishes and those of the constituents of Algeester to Her Majesty on her 60th year on the throne. Recently on a television program I heard that a well-known republican said he wished that Her Majesty would stop visiting Australia, because every time she does she sets the republican cause back 20 years. I hope that last year's visit will not be Her Majesty's last to our state or our country.

During this speech I have ranged across lot of areas, but they all boil down to one thing: I want to deliver for the constituents of Algeester. Whether I am the member for a long or short time, my goal is to leave Algeester better than I found it. I will work every day to do just that.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

MOTION

Mungkan Kandju National Park



Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.25 pm): I move—

That this House:

- Recognises the handing back of Mungkan Kandju National Park to its traditional owners (the Wik Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu People).
- Welcomes the transfer of an additional 75,074 hectares of freehold land previously revoked from the Archer Bend section of the park to the Oyala Thumotang Land Trust.
- Acknowledges that the return of this freehold land serves in part to rectify a past injustice whereby Wik Mungkan People were prevented from purchasing the Archer Bend Pastoral Holding as a pastoral lease.
- Recognises that with the return of this land, the State Government is closing a chapter of history and building a joint approach to conservation, as well as forming a strong working relationship with traditional owners.

It is a privilege to speak to this motion because it helps mark the resolution of what must rank as one of the most shameful acts by any government in our state's history. Last week saw the culmination of a process started by the previous Labor Party state government to right a wrong perpetrated on Indigenous Queenslanders almost four decades ago. Honourable members may know the details of the particularly shameful act that led to last week's event on Cape York. For those who do not, I will put on the record a few salient points.

In 1974, John Koowarta, a stockman of the Wik people, sought to buy a cattle station at Archer Bend near Coen. Archer Bend Station had been John Koowarta's people's traditional homeland. Mr Koowarta and other Wik people approached the then owner of the pastoral lease, the American businessman Remington Rand. Mr Rand was quite willing to sell, but the then state Premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, would have none of it. He described the deal as 'land rights by the back door'. Because it could not be sold to the traditional owners, the purchase of the property was finalised two years later in 1976 by the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission.

The commission had been established and funded by the Whitlam government and its work continued under the Liberal-National government of Malcolm Fraser. It is interesting to read old newspaper clippings from that time. They carry stories of the criticisms levelled by then Premier Bjelke-Petersen against the then Prime Minister. Mr Fraser was someone who displayed a more enlightened approach to Indigenous issues than others on the conservative side of politics. Clearly this did not endear him to Bjelke-Petersen. In fact, Malcolm Fraser's attitude on Indigenous issues at one stage sparked a comment by Bjelke-Petersen that the Prime Minister was practising apartheid in Australia. The attitude of Bjelke-Petersen prompted one federal Labor Party backbencher to say that the then Premier had developed an 'infinite capacity to obstruct every step taken to advance Aboriginal people'.

After the Archer Bend land was purchased by the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission, it sought to transfer the lease to the land's traditional owners. But the transfer was deliberately blocked by the state's then National-Liberal Party government. The government's objection was based solely on the fact that the land was to be used by Aboriginal people. Its action was that simple. It was that small-minded and it was that vindictive.

In 1977 the case went to the Human Rights Commission, which upheld Mr Koowarta's complaint. But the state government of the time stood its ground. The case then went to the High Court, which in 1982 found that the Bjelke-Petersen government had breached the Racial Discrimination Act. At the time, a *Courier-Mail* editorial noted, 'To many Australians it must seem strange that the Bjelke-Petersen government welcomes acquisition of land by foreign companies while denying it to some of their fellow countrymen.'

But then Premier Bjelke-Petersen was not to be outdone. He declared the Archer River property a national park. That move was designed to forever deny the Wik people the right to buy the land—their homeland. It was a decision described by Kevin Guy, councillor of the Australian Conservation Foundation, in an article in 1998, as one of 'spite and prejudice'. The then Premier did not believe Aboriginal people should be able to own large parcels of land. In fact, in 1972, the then minister for lands said in this House—

The Queensland government does not view favourably proposals to acquire large areas of additional freehold or leasehold land for development by Aborigines or Aboriginal groups in isolation.

As the second defendant in the case of *Koowarta v Bjelke-Petersen and others*, he reiterated this statement in his statement of reasons for his decision to refuse to sell the property. He went on to say that the Queensland government was totally opposed to any Aboriginal ownership of their traditional lands.

It was not until 2010, nearly 20 years after John Koowarta's death, that the former Labor government finalised plans to hand back the Archer Bend land. By then it was part of the Mungkan Kandju National Park. Lengthy and complex negotiations were undertaken by the government with local Indigenous peoples and elders. Those talks also involved Indigenous community organisations such as the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation, the Cape York Land Council and conservation groups.

This landmark decision marked the end of a sordid and politically motivated case of blatant discrimination and prejudice the like of which I trust we will never have to witness again in our lifetime. As I said earlier, this decision in 2010 by the previous Labor government righted a longstanding wrong. As the former environment minister, Kate Jones, said in this place on 6 October 2010, the decision to hand back the land delivered 'a new era of land justice for Queensland'.

The logistics involved meant a handover ceremony could not be organised before this year's state election. So it was left to the new government and the new Premier to formally recognise what the Labor government had started and delivered. I want to place on the record in this House this evening that I commend Premier Newman for attending this important ceremony. However, the most important thing is that the people whose rights had been trampled upon by the current Premier's political hero were finally given justice.

The respected Walkley Award-winning journalist Tony Koch is well known for the stories he wrote and broke on Indigenous issues in Queensland over his long and distinguished career. Tony Koch has described Joh Bjelke-Petersen as 'a mean-spirited opportunist'. Such a description was never more fitting than when considering the former Premier's role in the Koowarta case. Tonight is an opportunity for this whole House to put on record its support for the people and for John Koowarta, who fought for this outcome.

In May 2010, as acting minister for climate change and sustainability, I attended a similar handover ceremony for the new Alwal National Park up on Cape York. The 42,000 hectare park was created on a property previously known as Mulkay, and is now owned by the Olkola Aboriginal Corporation Land Trust. In his decision in *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)*, High Court Justice and later Chief Justice Sir Gerard Brennan spoke of the Aboriginal peoples' 'connection with the land'. As

someone who grew up in Brisbane, I can say that it is not until you actually set foot on the land in Cape York that you can really appreciate the beauty and majesty of this region. It is not until you see the tears in the eyes of the families, who had only dreamt of such a day, that you can fully appreciate the significance of an agreement such as this. These dreams and hopes have existed in the collective experience of the Indigenous peoples for generations and would always continue to do so until the dream was realised. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life to have played even a small part in such an occasion. Families ventured from all over the cape and from all over Queensland to celebrate.

I note that the 20th anniversary of the Mabo decision will be commemorated this Sunday. Like Eddie Mabo before him, John Koowarta did not live to see the handover last week. But I understand he was represented by his widow, Martha, and nephew Bruce Martin, who attended the ceremony along with other family members who travelled great distances to be there. Even though John Koowarta did not live to see the dream become a reality, his name and his vision will live on forever more.

On 5 September 1991, then Premier Wayne Goss said on John Koowarta's death—

The great tragedy is that, within months of achieving his life-long ambition, last Thursday John Koowarta died at the age of 50 of a respiratory disease following an extended illness. Mr Speaker, it is only appropriate then that, as Premier of this State, I formally acknowledge and pay a tribute to the dedication and hard work of John Koowarta ... On behalf of this government and the people of Queensland, I extend to John Koowarta's family our deepest sympathy and regret at his passing and, most importantly, at the injustices meted out against him and his people.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I second the motion. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier for ensuring that the many years of hard work by the previous government were not wasted and that the agreement with the Wik peoples has finally come to fruition.

Many Queenslanders remember the shameful acts of the Bjelke-Petersen government in using brute force and heavy-handed tactics to crush the Aboriginal people's aspirations in Cape York. John Koowarta became a symbol of the oppressive actions of that government, along with John Sinclair and anyone else who stood for progressive change during that era. We were very excited to read in the media about the signing of the agreement and to see the television reports of John Koowarta's widow and nephew acknowledging the important role he played in the history of Cape York. It was just a shame that no representative of the Opposition was invited to attend, given that all the preliminary work had been completed by the previous government over many years. That is what a humble, dignified and gracious government would have done. Instead, what we have seen is the Premier tailoring what he says about Bjelke-Petersen to suit his audience.

At a fundraising function before the last election, he told guests that the Bjelke-Petersen government was the last decent government in Queensland. I guess Rob Borbidge would still be smarting a little over that comment. Then, a little later in the campaign, he told the media in Kingaroy, Joh's home town, that the Bjelke-Petersen government was corrupt. As he said, 'it certainly was a period of Queensland's history where a lot of terrible things happened and there was clearly corruption, and it's all there in the report of the royal commission'. But then, two weeks ago, in his maiden speech, he was again effusive in his praise of Bjelke-Petersen. I quote from his speech—

Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who held the office for over 19 years, was the longest serving Premier in our history. His government built this state into an economic powerhouse that led the way for our country for so long.

Then later he stated—

If I as Premier of Queensland can live up to the standards of my eminent predecessors, I know that I will have worked hard and with honour for the people of Queensland.

In a complete backflip last week, at the handover ceremony on Cape York, the Premier was quoted in both the *Australian* newspaper and the *Courier-Mail* as saying—

Thirty-five years ago, a great injustice was perpetrated and we're here to put that right.

It is like Jekyll and Hyde, listening to the Premier on Bjelke-Petersen. What Joh did to John Koowarta and to the Wik peoples was to deprive them of the ability to benefit from the decision of the High Court. It was a shameful period in Queensland's history. Joh, in a flagrant abuse of the doctrine of separation of powers, directed the lands minister to oppose the sale of the cattle station to the Wik peoples on the basis that he did not want Aboriginal people to own too much land. As the media pointed out at the time, he was only too happy for foreign nationals to buy up big chunks of Queensland but not so happy about land being owned by certain Queenslanders. Because the land was declared a national park, even when John Koowarta won his battle in the High Court, the Wik peoples were prevented from gaining ownership of the land.

The footage shown last week on 7.30 of John Koowarta complaining about the government's actions to Sir Ninian Stephen, one of the justices of the High Court who determined the matter, was very moving. As Sir Ninian observed, 'Yes, exactly, yes. So that you're really no further advanced as far as ownership of the land is concerned.' This was a case that has had a significant impact on Australian law, and it took the courage of John Koowarta to make Queensland stand up and take notice. He may not have lived to see his dream come to fruition, but his family were all able to take part in this important ceremony and honour his memory.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (5.41 pm): The House has just been treated to a somewhat distorted history lesson from members of the Australian Labor Party who have nothing to offer but urban myths, nonsense and their distorted recollections of the past. The debate before the House tonight would be shameful in its inaccuracies. We are not going to try to correct all of those inaccuracies that the Labor members have put forward in moving this motion tonight. It serves to illustrate the extent to which they have nothing to offer the people of Queensland but this pining for the past, this reinforcement of the urban myths that the old socialists tell each other as they sit around remembering their glory days, and they inculcate their younger generation with these tales of a time back in 1977.

In 1977 I think I was two years out of school. I am probably one of the senior members of this place but back then I was two years out of school. There were a lot of things from that time and that generation that can be seen differently from today's perspective, but that is where the Labor Party are—content with their urban myths, with their self-delusional stories of the bogeymen of the past, to somehow justify their existence today. I move the following amendment—

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

- 'that this is National Reconciliation week, and in that spirit the Government intends to further develop and strengthen relationships with Indigenous people, including through actions such as the return of this freehold land;
- Endorses the Premier's apology delivered last week to the Wik Mungkan people for what they have been through;
- Recognises Premier Campbell Newman and his government's commitment to provide opportunities to Indigenous people of Queensland, including real jobs and training; supporting home ownership and business opportunities; and
- Notes the LNP's election commitment to a joint approach to conservation in partnership with traditional owners and that Gerhardt Pearson and other Indigenous leaders have endorsed the LNP's plans to introduce a Bioregion Management Plan to replace the former Labor Governments misguided wild rivers declarations on Cape York.'

The amended motion now reads—

That this House:

- Recognises the handing back of Mungkan Kandju National Park to its traditional owners (the Wik Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu People).
- Welcomes the transfer of an additional 75,074 hectares of freehold land previously revoked from the Archer Bend section of the park to the Oyala Thumotang Land Trust.
- Acknowledges that this is National Reconciliation week, and in that spirit the Government intends to further develop and strengthen relationships with Indigenous people, including through actions such as the return of this freehold land;
- Endorses the Premier's apology delivered last week to the Wik Mungkan people for what they have been through;
- Recognises Premier Campbell Newman and his government's commitment to provide opportunities to Indigenous people of Queensland, including real jobs and training; supporting home ownership and business opportunities; and
- Notes the LNP's election commitment to a joint approach to conservation in partnership with traditional owners and that Gerhardt Pearson and other Indigenous leaders have endorsed the LNP's plans to introduce a Bioregion Management Plan to replace the former Labor Governments misguided wild rivers declarations on Cape York.

I want to start with the last point of the amendment. Anyone who has followed the proceedings of this House knows how outrageous the whole issue of wild rivers has become in Queensland politics. Election after election we saw commitments made to the Greens political party about preferences. In fact for one election they actually had the numbers. They did the deal—three seats here and 14 seats there; preferences here and preferences there. Do members know what the currency was that paid for the deal? Wild rivers declarations. We came back into this House immediately following that election and the first piece of legislation was to pay the piper—to pay the Greens political party for their support. That was the only reason the member for Mount Coot-tha was re-elected. That was the only reason he was back here. The only reason that the then Treasurer was able to inflict his longstanding damage on the people of Queensland was that they were prepared to use the people of Cape York as currency. They were prepared to use the future of Aboriginal communities in Cape York, the future of Aboriginal kids, as currency in their political deals. That is the shameful record of the people who come in here and want to talk to us about their distorted recollections of a previous coalition government.

The motion before the House we will support in its amended form, because it is a recognition of the modern day rather than the way things were 35-odd years ago. It reflects no credit on those who moved the original motion in the House tonight, given the extent to which they have sold out the people of Cape York, given the extent to which they have been prepared to trade away the future of the people on Cape York. We will right that wrong just as we are about righting so many other wrongs that the previous government has visited on the people of Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (5.46 pm): It is my pleasure to second the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. I say to the ALP members in this House: why don't you move on? This started in 1974—38 years ago, for heaven's sake. The reality is that Labor have done nothing over many, many years apart from take the Indigenous vote. That is really all you have ever done. What have you really done to improve the lifestyles of many Indigenous people in this state? Very, very little. In fact, if you want a history lesson, I can recall when Labor finally came to power in 1989. And guess what happened in the year or two after that? There was a riot outside Parliament House by the Indigenous people. They nearly tore the gates down of this place because of your inaction and the mistruths you told—the hope that they had that you would do something and you did nothing at all. Of course nothing has changed.

You took away their dignity in many instances. You have kept them subservient all the way through. All you have done is try to control their access to alcohol rather than looking after the people in the way they should be looked after, such as getting kids to school. You have not done a great deal in relation to helping them expand their operations to give them some dignity. We want to give them some private freehold land. We want to have a joint approach to conservation and to the whole management aspect of northern Queensland and any parts of national parks.

The wild rivers legislation, as the Deputy Premier mentioned, was purely a political stunt that was done by the ALP in a deal with the Greens to try to get some armchair support from people in the cities. The reality is that it did not work. The Indigenous people would not wear it. They opposed it all the way down the line. They told us when we travelled in the north that the wild rivers legislation under the ALP was just not going to fly.

Let me talk about the real jobs that we need to create. What have you done in relation to providing real jobs for Indigenous Australians? Very, very little. In fact, what I think people should consider in this debate is just how little you have done. What have you done to support home ownership? What has been done by this ALP government over many years, nearly 20 years, to support homeownership in Indigenous communities? You have done nothing. There were many opportunities. What about helping them to build their own homes and training the Indigenous people? This is what we need to do. They need to be able to go out there and build their own homes. We need to give them the skills to do that. What did you do? You imported homes that were built elsewhere and you expected them to live in them and appreciate what you did for them. You did nothing for them.

We have to do more. I think the handover of that land by the Premier was a significant move. Whatever happened 38 years ago does not really matter. We move on. One of the great injustices that you people keep talking about relates to the electoral system. Things have moved on. We have changed. I think people need to recognise that. You cannot keep going back to the Boer War or whenever. The reality is that you have to move on. Let us do that and take these people with us.

Let us make sure that when we try to help these people we do it with some long-term commitment so that there is something for their kids. They want their kids to be trained. We do not want them brought up the way those opposite ran this state. We want Indigenous communities to have the right to live like anybody else—to have ownership, to have their children trained to ensure they are not living the way those opposite allowed them to live for such a long time.

The amendment moved by the Deputy Premier really does go to the heart of where we have to be with Indigenous affairs. We are giving Indigenous people jobs and training and taking a joint approach to conservation. I believe that this amendment should be supported.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.51 pm): I rise to support the motion, moved by the Leader of the Opposition, recognising the handing back of the Mungkan Kandju National Park to its traditional owners. To the Wik people, the Koowarta family, the NGOs and others who fought long and hard to secure this outcome, I say congratulations. This motion carries with it significant lessons for Queenslanders and for those of us privileged enough to be sent to this parliament to represent them.

It should be noted that the words in the opposition's motion were actually drawn from the Premier's media statement about the handover. So those government MPs who vote against the opposition's wording are actually voting against the words of their leader in supporting the amendment. I table that media statement.

Tabled paper: Ministerial media statement, dated 22 May 2012, by the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, titled 'Historic handover of Cape York Park' [\[189\]](#).

Over the past week or so I have spent time talking with some people who were there at the time, who watched and observed as events unfolded in the late 1970s. Some were former public servants; others were residents of Cape York. While most did not want to have their names put on record, all agreed that it was a dark, suppressive and shameful period in Queensland's history which was endemic of the way the state dealt with Aboriginal people and their connection to the land.

They recalled the battle fought by John Koowarta—a strong man and strong leader who was bloody-minded about getting his country back. They also remembered the plight of Eddie Holroyd. But unlike Koowarta, the Bjelke-Petersen government responded to Holroyd in a much more positive way when the then Aboriginal affairs minister, Bob Katter Jr, gave him a lease over the majority of the Pormpuraaw DOGIT to run cattle.

Although his actions were deliberate, John Koowarta became somewhat of an accidental hero. He was a leader in the cape, whether he liked it or not. What made him stand out was that his motivation was connection to country rather than the purpose of economics.

At the time there were some people in the Commonwealth Public Service who were particularly supportive of John Koowarta, including department of Aboriginal affairs state manager Warren Smith. Smith was very much onside with Koowarta's ambition but did not think those up the food chain in Canberra would take to it based solely on that ambition. Mindful of his own internal agency politics, I am told, he thought it was best to advance John Koowarta's case on more of an economic footing rather than connection to country. But Koowarta's ambition was clear. It was about connection to country, his country.

Many still talk about the anger that came out of the Aboriginal community because of that action which essentially outed Bjelke-Petersen as someone who would leave no stone unturned to ensure that denial of land justice occurred and was implemented. Whatever John Koowarta wanted, John played card after card after card to stop him from getting it. As soon as he complied with one prerequisite, they would invent another one. Prior to that, there was a lot of hiding behind pieces of legislation and the economic debate. These acts by the government caused local people's blood to boil and have provided motivation and kept people focused for the past few decades.

John Koowarta was all about returning to country and asserting authority and the right to make decisions on his country. Returning to country is an affirmation of who you are and where you are from, and it is incredibly important and grounding for people who have not had the opportunity to do that for a very long time. No matter how late this land handover was in coming, it is one of the few genuine examples of where that has been the motivator from start to finish. And it still is today. That spirit, that connectivity, has never been broken. Understanding the nuances and the obligation people feel to look after their country exceeds anything government can come up with in legislation.

True to the reasons John Koowarta pushed for so hard for so long, the Mungkan Kandju handover was more about hearts and minds than economics. It was a recognition of correcting past wrongs. And while the business opportunities might not be enormous, no doubt local people will be front and centre looking at some interpretive cultural tourism, recreational sports fishing around the Archer, developing the grey nomad market, and linking up with and expanding on the Moreton Telegraph Station with a series of registered and serviced campsites from Weipa down to Aurukun. Yes, there are constraints of trade because you are dealing around national park estate, but there are a range of things that could be possible for fairly minimal investment, and I would like to see a framework that outlines what the specific advantages for those traditional owners might be.

In recognising the significance of this handover, we must also draw on the lessons of history and recommit to the principles that should guide future policy and legislative action—commitment to the independence of judicial bodies, empowerment of those without institutionalised power, and support wherever possible for those who are willing to build stronger and more resilient communities. I am proud that I was part of a government that did the hard yards to work with Cape York communities, to negotiate with a common purpose, and I am proud to be part of a parliament that can recognise these important developments.

When I was minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships I was present at the handover and a party to the signing over to traditional owners of more than 544,000 hectares of Lakeland National Park last year, so I know how special the ceremony last week must have been for the Premier and his ministers. Generosity of spirit is one of the best things about Aboriginal people. When they shake hands and forgive, they mean it. The Mungkan Kandju handover was sealed with a handshake. Now it is time to move forward together.

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (5.56 pm): It gives me great pleasure to participate in this debate about last week's historic land transfer—a land transfer of more than 450,000 hectares of land in Mungkan Kandju National Park in the Archer Bend area to Aboriginal ownership. Can I pause and note for the record the honour bestowed on me by the Wik-Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu people in inviting me to be part of last week's

celebrations. Our government's acceptance of the invitation demonstrated our commitment to ensuring that Indigenous communities have a bigger say in decision making about economic development and the management of their lands.

I take this opportunity to once again place on record this government's pledge to protect the cape's iconic natural areas and waterways in partnership with local communities. This government is working with local people on the cape, not against them, to protect iconic areas and to find a balance to allow appropriate economic development. Compare this to the failings and the duplicity of the previous Labor government, which was so hungry for Greens preferences that it stifled the voices of Aboriginal people on the cape under the guise of so-called environmental outcomes.

This government will replace the wild rivers declarations on the cape with a bioregion management plan that sets out a vision for ensuring the natural values of the cape are properly protected yet balanced with sustainable economic development. The one-size-fits-all wild rivers declarations are hurting the aspirations of the cape's Indigenous communities. That is why, within our first 100 days, we have started the process of real, meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities, Cape York organisations and other local stakeholders.

We will not impose an outcome on the cape like the former Labor government did. We will not dictate from Brisbane to communities more than 2,000 kilometres away on the cape. The main difference between this energised, can-do government and the previous tired Labor government is that we will not be seeking Greens preferences at the expense of good public policy. Instead, the community, who know and love the land and whose ancestors have cared for the land since the dawn of time, will help shape its future. We are seeking their views about how together we can address complex issues such as sustainable economic development, natural resource management and the protection of rivers and other areas of cultural and environmental significance. Through this plan, the wild rivers declarations will be revoked and a range of initiatives, such as possible World Heritage nomination, more Indigenous rangers and country based planning, will continue to be explored.

The Cape York bioregion management plan gives us a wonderful opportunity to bring together the environmental, cultural and economic aspirations of cape communities while at the same time streamline processes and reduce red tape. I believe that together we have a unique opportunity to articulate a strategic vision for the region and find the best way to turn this vision into a reality. I will ensure the plan produces tangible outcomes that benefit not only Cape York Peninsula and its communities but also Queensland as a whole. While the bioregion management plan is being progressed, this government will continue to deliver tenure resolution and joint management of national parks on Cape York Peninsula. The government is looking forward to working in partnership with Aboriginal traditional owners to jointly manage Oyala Thumotang National Park, Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land and other national parks on the cape.

The transfer of Mungkan Kandju National Park and Archer Bend has been a major step forward in the resolution of tenure on Cape York Peninsula. It has significantly increased the area of land that has been returned to Aboriginal ownership under the program to nearly two million hectares. Of that area, more than 1.2 million hectares are now protected through jointly managed national parks. This government is also assisting Aboriginal land trusts to manage and protect natural and cultural values on their lands outside parks, including in nature refuges. We will continue to do this by providing financial assistance as well over the next three years for land management at Archer Bend, both within and outside Yuukingga Nature Refuge. This government recognises the aspirations of local communities and will work with them to deliver sustainable land use. We will work in partnership with the people of Cape York Peninsula to deliver a bioregion management plan, tenure resolution, joint management of national parks and improve the economic and environmental outcomes for the region. In summary, I am proud that this government has already in its first 100 days made great progress in returning land to traditional owners while conserving the unique values of the cape for future generations of Queenslanders.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to speak to the motion moved by the Labor Party and the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier. All we are again witnessing from this Labor Party is a paternalistic policy that has been exploiting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vote over the last 20 years. All we have witnessed is a divisive policy that is about buying the vote of Indigenous people to promote the cause of the Labor Party in this state in electorates like Cook and other electorates in North Queensland. We can call the motion before the House tonight what we like, but it is the 'save Jason O'Brien motion'. Jason O'Brien went into political oblivion on 24 March this year, as did a lot of his colleagues, because of the divisive, black and white policies that have created more division in this state in the last 20 years than those opposite realise.

There was one thing that this Labor Party did create—that is, poor health standards amongst Indigenous people. It had its alcohol management programs that through prohibition have driven alcohol management underground. We have seen what has happened. This afternoon I heard the member for Cairns mention the unfortunate situation in Cairns. I have witnessed how that has been a travesty of justice not only to the Indigenous people of Far North Queensland but also to all people of Far North

Queensland, Central Queensland and north-west Queensland. What have we witnessed with these programs? We have witnessed just how these people have been exploited in order for the Labor Party to buy votes so it could keep its paternalistic policies in government in the south-east while absolutely decimating the good Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people right across this great state.

I can assure you that the one thing that the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier this evening will qualify—he qualified it, as did the member for Warrego—is that this was again another green vote issue in terms of the wild rivers policy. The real fact of the matter is that the ALP had it wrong. It still has it wrong and today is the day of reckoning here in Brisbane. I say shame on you. Shame on you, because this is about exploiting what you should not be exploiting. You should be out there promoting the cause of trying to create a better life for Indigenous people, whether it is through equality of education or better health standards.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Member for South Brisbane, I know more about Indigenous people than you do. I have grown up with them. I have worked with them. I have lived with them and I am mates with a lot of them. I tell you tonight: while ever you are in this chamber and I am here, you are going to get plenty from me on this. I tell you what: I will remind you of the exploitation that your government—

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Gregory, I ask you to refer your comments through the chair and refrain from using the term 'you'. I ask you to also refer to members by their appropriate titles.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hear your words and I respect you, Madam Speaker. However, I certainly do not respect the policies of this mob on the other side and what they did for Indigenous people in this state. What did they do? We have seen no homeownership. They want homeownership. We have to create more tenure and get more young men and women who can go through the education system and be proud Indigenous leaders. We need to give them a health standard and an education standard. We will not have a policy of divide between black and white, and that is what we have had in this state over the last 20 years—that is, a divide between black and white because those opposite only discovered black people in the last 20 years. Their paternalistic policies have been to the detriment of Indigenous people in this state. A Campbell Newman-led government will make certain that our can-do policies for Indigenous people will take them well and truly into the 21st century.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (6.06 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this House to speak to the motion moved by the opposition—a motion that resembles quite strongly the words in the Premier's press release at the time of the handover of this important parcel of land. I note that the Premier is not involved in this debate tonight. He seems to have declined.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, please resume your seat. It is a standing practice of this House that we do not refer to members if they are not able to be present in the chamber, and that is a courtesy and a standing practice across the chamber for very good reasons. We respect that courtesy and I would ask you to respect the courtesy of the House. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I apologise for that. Last week's return of the Mungkan Kandju National Park to the Ayapathu, Kaanju and Wik Mungkan peoples was a long overdue day in Queensland's history. It comes after a decade of hard work by previous Labor governments in building strong partnerships between stakeholders of Cape York, particularly local Indigenous communities, and conservation groups. There is no doubt that Cape York is an incredibly special part of this state and this nation. Its environmental value and its traditional Indigenous significance cannot be captured in a budget line item.

It was this mindset that motivated Labor 10 years ago to guarantee environmental protection and Indigenous ownership of Cape York for generations to come. It was the Beattie Labor government that established the Cape York Tenure Resolution Implementation Group, CYTRIG, bringing together representation from the Cape York Land Council, Balkanu, the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and the state government. CYTRIG worked methodically, it worked determinedly and it worked consistently under the overarching policy of fifty-fifty to identify tenure resolution and voluntary acquisition and return 50 per cent of this land as Aboriginal freehold title and 50 per cent as Aboriginal owned and jointly managed national park. The fact is that only Labor governments at a state and federal level have invested the resources needed to make the voluntary land acquisitions and tenure resolutions that have made this land handover possible. Over the last decade state Labor governments have spent \$30 million to achieve the voluntary acquisition and tenure resolutions needed to secure millions of hectares of land with a high conservation value as Aboriginal freehold and jointly managed Aboriginal owned national park.

Only a year ago this was estimated to be in the vicinity of 1.2 million hectares and I expect today that it is much more. At last week's handover, Premier Newman ignored this spirit of respect and collaboration and instead chose to divide and exclude, with conservation representatives—namely the Wilderness Society—locked out of this important ceremony after dedicating many years of work and advice to help secure the Mungkan Kandju National Park handover.

On many occasions Premier Newman is keen to trash the Labor legacy. However, on this occasion we witnessed the Premier, quick off the mark, flying up posthaste on the government jet to the cape to preside over the handover of the Mungkan Kandju National Park to claim credit for righting an injustice. The Newman government can stand up and claim the glory, but the fact is that the only thing the LNP can claim actual credit for is creating this injustice in the first place and pitting one group of Queenslanders against another. Mr Newman promised that he would govern with humility, grace and dignity. Where is the humility in claiming somebody else's work—something that is very familiar to that side of the chamber? Where is the grace in ignoring those who worked to make this handover a reality and where is the dignity in rewriting history to hide the horrendous impact of Liberal National Party governments in Indigenous Queensland's history?

While Premier Newman may be focused on claiming credit for the hard work of others, this House—the House of the people of Queensland—records the facts and the facts speak for themselves. It was the Liberal National Party government, under the leadership of Premier Newman's political hero, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, that committed this atrocious injustice of denying John Koowarta his right as a citizen—a right confirmed by the High Court of this nation—to buy his traditional land on Cape York. It was the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments that championed and delivered this righting of an injustice in partnership with Indigenous communities and conservation groups. These are the facts. This is the history of the Mungkan Kandju National Park handover to traditional owners. This is what Labor delivers in government.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (6.11 pm): Talk about an own goal! One of the reasons we have the standing order, to which the Speaker just referred, to encourage members not to refer to other members who are not in the House is to protect them. It is to stop members casting aspersions on other members. Do members know where the Premier is tonight? He is at the Reconciliation Awards with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. What an own goal!

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. I apologise for referring to the Premier in his absence. What I will not apologise for is referring to the events of last week.

Madam SPEAKER: The member will take her seat. She will not argue a point of order. A point of order is not an opportunity for debate.

Mr CRIPPS: Talk about an own goal! I support the handing back of the Mungkan Kandju National Park in Cape York to its traditional owners. I am proud to say that I had a role in this outcome by signing the Indigenous land use agreement on behalf of the state of Queensland, which facilitated the transfer and approved the issue of the deed to the local land trust.

The Newman LNP government has a strong commitment to addressing the land related needs of Indigenous Queenslanders. That commitment includes involving Indigenous people in the management, conservation and development of their traditional lands. My department is responsible for administering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land acts that allow for certain lands to be transferred to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. These land transfers are an important recognition of the interests and responsibilities of traditional owners and foster their capacity for self-development, self-reliance and cultural integrity. Access to land provides Indigenous Queenslanders with economic employment and homeownership opportunities as well as opportunities to create partnerships to manage the land with other interested stakeholders.

The past policies of the former Labor government had a fanatical preoccupation with environmental issues on the cape without providing genuine job and income-creation opportunities for Indigenous communities. The Newman LNP government recognises the challenge of balancing the interests of all stakeholders but, most importantly, recognises what is best for those people who live and work in that unique region of the state. We believe that sensible, well-considered development is possible on the cape without diluting its significant environmental and cultural values. In recent years these environmental values have been assessed to death and perhaps the time has come to focus on establishing economic opportunities that will sustain local communities in the longer term. In particular, the Newman LNP government has committed to addressing land tenure issues to ensure that councils can deliver homeownership to Indigenous Queenslanders and remove the bureaucratic roadblocks to give a fair deal for homeownership for Indigenous Queenslanders.

This government will work in partnership with Indigenous Queenslanders to develop pragmatic strategies and mechanisms to assist their communities and meet their homeownership aspirations, like every other Queenslanders in any other community across the state. The Newman LNP government looks forward to promoting positive partnerships and opportunities for Indigenous people on their traditional lands. In the next six months a further four land transfers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are anticipated in Gladstone, Mission Beach, Magnetic Island and the Murray Island community in the Torres Strait. On community lands such as Murray Island, the LNP government will work with the new owners of the land and other stakeholders to remove the barriers to sustainable homeownership.

Once again, what an own goal from the Labor opposition tonight! Ultimately, it has come a gutser. That is North Queensland slang for they have brought themselves undone. They have sacrificed their principles and the intention of their policies on Cape York in favour of preferences from the extreme Greens. I take the point made so very well by the Deputy Premier in his contribution tonight when he moved the amendment that they use the future of cape communities as currency for political preferences from the extreme Greens. That really is something for which they will forever be condemned.

I want to draw to the attention of the House tonight what it has done for them. They have lost the seat of Cook for the first time since they held it in 1977 after they defeated the first Indigenous member of this parliament, Mr Eric Deeral. So let us learn some history. The first Indigenous member of this parliament was Eric Deeral and he was an LNP member of this parliament. All honourable members should remember what I said before: do not listen to their rhetoric. It is empty.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.17 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise to participate in this debate. It has been interesting listening to the speakers for and against the motion and the amendment. It certainly takes courage to apologise when someone has made a mistake and especially to apologise for the actions of a previous state government. I note the revocation of the national park. It is not often that we see a government revoking a national park. There is no doubt in my mind, as has been referred to in a lot of the material that has been prepared on this matter, that the whole reason this national park was declared was to defeat the locals' attempt to purchase the land. That was the whole reason the area was declared a national park. It was not because of the significant environmental value of the land. It was declared a national park simply so that the locals were not able to purchase the land, because they were certainly going to achieve that result. So there is no doubt that there were good and strong grounds to have that national park declaration revoked. It will be interesting to see if there will be any future moves by the new government to overturn existing national parks that have been created in the past 14 years.

I note that at the official ceremony the Premier spoke about the importance of working in partnership with the Aboriginal communities and to give them a real economic and social future. I see that approach as trying to change the handout mentality. In some of these communities I have seen how a reliance on alcohol has destroyed the families and destroyed the communities. A number of the government members spoke about overturning the previous government's paternalistic attitude to the way in which it tried to deal with some of the problems in the Aboriginal communities. A few years ago when I visited some of these Aboriginal communities in North Queensland I could not believe how the consumption of alcohol could destroy a community so completely.

Some of the Aboriginal women I met told me that they had lost one generation and it was up to them to raise the next generation. Government members spoke about how they are going to work in partnership. I still recall getting off the plane, standing under a tree and these Aboriginal women came up and said, 'We need your help. Our leaders want the alcohol to continue and be involved in a range of other activities. Please help us.' The member and the minister certainly tried. I understand that was one of the reasons why they tried to bring in this prohibition of alcohol.

I suppose history will show us all how the future will unfold and how those communities will be able to benefit from the new way forward that some members have spoken about. There is no doubt that there is always time for a change. Perhaps on the anniversary of this debate each year let us reflect on what the government has achieved in the new way forward in improvements for the Aboriginal communities which we all on both sides of the House feel so passionately about. It is more than giving them freehold; it is about improving the health of the people. The next significant time when we will gather in this chamber and we will have a chance to further reflect on the important issues that many of us from both the government, opposition and crossbenches have touched upon tonight will be when the budget comes down. That is when we will have a chance to see where the real dollars are going to be allocated for the next 12 months to improve the health of these communities and to enable these communities to work in genuine partnership. I think actions do speak louder than words.

I noted when I read the motion and the amendment that the only real difference is in the final clause. The opposition's motion refers to recognising that, with the return of the land, the state government is closing a chapter of history and building a joint approach to conservation as well as forming a strong working relationship with traditional owners. I do not see anything wrong with that. I think it is exactly the case. In the amendment moved by the Deputy Premier he notes the LNP's election commitment to a joint approach to conservation in partnership with traditional owners and that Mr Pearson and other Indigenous leaders have endorsed the LNP's plans to introduce a Bioregion Management Plan to replace the former Labor's governments misguided wild rivers declarations on Cape York. I am not an expert on who is right or who is wrong about whether the wild rivers declaration is right. All I can say is that I can certainly recall hearing arguments from both sides of the chamber—

(Time expired)

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

AYES, 71—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Judge, Kaye, King, Knuth, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Johnson, Smith

NOES, 8—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 71—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Judge, Kaye, King, Knuth, Krause, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Sorensen, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Johnson, Smith

NOES, 8—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad, Wellington. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- Recognises the handing back of Mungkan Kandju National Park to its traditional owners (the Wik Mungkan, Southern Kaanju and Ayapathu People).
- Welcomes the transfer of an additional 75,074 hectares of freehold land previously revoked from the Archer Bend section of the park to the Oyala Thumotang Land Trust.
- Acknowledges that this is National Reconciliation week, and in that spirit the Government intends to further develop and strengthen relationships with Indigenous people, including through actions such as the return of this freehold land;
- Endorses the Premier's apology delivered last week to the Wik Mungkan people for what they have been through;
- Recognises Premier Campbell Newman and his government's commitment to provide opportunities to Indigenous people of Queensland, including real jobs and training; supporting home ownership and business opportunities; and
- Notes the LNP's election commitment to a joint approach to conservation in partnership with traditional owners and that Gerhardt Pearson and other Indigenous leaders have endorsed the LNP's plans to introduce a Bioregion Management Plan to replace the former Labor Governments misguided wild rivers declarations on Cape York.

Sitting suspended from 6.37 pm to 7.36 pm.

DEPUTY SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Error in Division

 **Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! Honourable members, there was an error in the reported vote for the division on the private member's motion. The announced result of the first division—that is, that the amendment be agreed to—was incorrect. The announced figures were ayes 72, noes 8; the correct figure is ayes 71, noes 8. The record shall be altered accordingly.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (7.36 pm): I advise the House that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly has today, in accordance with standing order 136(2), agreed that committee reports in respect of the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill and the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill are to be tabled by the committees considering those bills by 12 June 2012.

Portfolio Committees, Referral of Reports

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (7.36 pm): I advise that the committee has agreed, pursuant to standing order 194B, that the Auditor-General's report titled *Improving student attendance*, tabled on 17 May 2012, be referred to the Education and Innovation Committee and the Auditor-General's report titled *Results of audits: local government financial statements for 2010-11*, tabled today, be referred to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Resumed from p. 231.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (7.38 pm): I begin my speech by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land upon which we are standing. Mr Deputy Speaker, please pass on my congratulations to Madam Speaker on her appointment as the first female Speaker of the Queensland parliament. The House has made an outstanding choice.

I am honoured to be standing here today as only the second conservative member for Everton in its 40-year history. I am proud to be part of this historic intake of 2012. Never before has an incoming government been given such a mandate and never before has such a high expectation been placed on a new government. Along with my new colleagues, I am acutely aware of the enormous trust the people of Queensland have placed in us. I thank the people of Everton for showing confidence in me and I intend to work very hard to live up to that high expectation.

I wish to acknowledge the man who I believe was most responsible for the LNP's electoral victory, the member for Ashgrove and our new Premier. I thank the Premier for having the courage, boldness and vision to attempt what no other politician in Australian history had ever achieved. I thank him for his leadership and the grace he displayed when he withstood an unfounded attack from the previous Labor government—an attack that will go down as one of the dirtiest in history. I am proud to serve alongside the Premier in this LNP Newman government.

Although I am new to politics in a formal way, I have had a very keen interest in the subject all my life. I thank my mother and my late father for developing my political consciousness from an early age. Politics was a regular topic for discussion in my family. My brothers and I were taught to be informed, to have an opinion and to be unafraid to voice it. Ironically for a newly elected conservative politician, my family was as Labor as they come. In the recent election my first challenge was to convince my mother to vote for me. Despite my doubts, she assures me that she did. My mother was like thousands of other people in Queensland who voted for the Liberal National Party for the first time. My parents were from an era when the Labor Party represented the values of the average worker. Recent election results show that that voting public no longer believes this to be the case. I abandoned the policies and the philosophies of the Labor Party years ago, because it abandoned me. No longer would I be treated with contempt by a party and a government that patronised me on a regular basis. I found a better way.

I am proud to be a member of the Liberal National Party. My core political values align with those of this great party: the belief that individuals must take responsibility for themselves in life, that entrepreneurial spirit should be encouraged, that hard work and initiative should be rewarded and that healthy, strong families are the cornerstone of successful societies.

I stand here today as a member of the Queensland state parliament after joining the LNP only a little over two years ago. Only in this party could I achieve this feat. To be preselected as a candidate for the LNP you do not need to be brought up in student politics. You do not need to have worked as a political staffer. You do not need to belong to a faction, nor do you need to be an official of a trade union. The LNP offers people with real world life experience an opportunity to use that expertise to serve the people of Queensland. And there is no greater example of this than this current government, where I believe this is the greatest diversity of representation that this state has ever seen. The massive injection of new blood will bring an enthusiasm and zeal for change that will have a lasting, positive effect on this great state.

Being elected the new member for Everton is a huge honour, albeit a little surreal. The last time I was in this chamber before our recent induction was as a 12-year-old Grovely schoolboy during a parliamentary tour. I never dreamed that nearly 40 years later I would be sitting in this august House as an elected member. I hope that my election might be an encouragement to young people who come from humble beginnings similar to mine. I am a product of my electorate. I am a born and bred Brisbane boy who attended school in bare feet, sang a hymn at the start of every school day—this is in a state school—and at 'little lunch' drank the compulsory milk that was issued under the government policy of the day.

I am a proud state schoolboy who progressed from Grovely primary school to Mitchelton State High School—schools on the western and southern borders of my electorate respectively. I played junior rugby league at West Arana Hills football club, pumped petrol at the Mitchie service station and served as a part-time groundsman at the Brook Hotel during my final year at school. As a boy I helped deliver mail for my mum, a mail contractor, when the Everton Hills area was not developed enough to warrant an official postal delivery. Evading attacking dogs probably helped me years later to dodge fleet-footed rugby league players. My connection with the Everton electorate will remain in my heart all my life, with my dad buried in a small cemetery at Albany Creek across the road from where my mum now lives.

I come to this parliament with a background of varied experiences. Many will know that sport has played a major role in my life. As a child I played all codes of football, as well as cricket, golf, hockey and even wrestling. As you can see from my physique, that venture was short-lived. Sport has equipped me with many great life skills. It has taught me about leadership, working towards a goal, working as a team, dealing with failure and respecting your opponent. Of course sport also promotes a very healthy lifestyle. I am a strong believer in my old Mitchie high school motto—mens sana in corpore sano, 'a sound mind in a sound body'. I am delighted that we have a Premier who models this adage so well. It was great to join the Premier on some of his morning runs during the election campaign. In the interests of my future career advancement I made sure that he beat me every time.

As Assistant Minister for Sport and Racing, I look forward to helping this government implement policies like Get in the Game that encourage children to leave their computer games and get out into parks playing active sports. Unfortunately my talent as a junior rugby league player was never recognised, so I became a referee. As a rugby league referee, I developed a very thick hide which will hold me in good stead for parliamentary life. I know what it is like to be constantly abused, unmercifully criticised and blamed for every loss a team suffers—and I am talking about refereeing junior football! As a referee I always had 50 per cent of supporters against me. I thought I might find some relief from that burden when I retired from the NRL and joined the party room of the LNP. But, alas, this has not eventuated. The diversity of opinion about my refereeing career continues. On the one hand, we have the member for Gregory, who holds me in reasonable esteem because I controlled the 2004 grand final, which his beloved Bulldogs won. Countering that affection is the member for Hinchinbrook, who every day gives me menacing stares as he mistakenly blames me for the Cowboys loss in the 2005 grand final.

After 20 years of officiating in NRL, I am used to being under the scrutiny of millions of people, making hard decisions under incredible pressure. My objective in political life will be the same as it was as an NRL referee—that is, to win respect, not necessarily popularity. But I am much more than a rugby league referee. For the last six years I have been the CEO of one of Australia's largest youth and children's organisations, Scripture Union Queensland. This organisation is best known for its very effective and highly respected school chaplaincy program, a program that provides pastoral care for thousands of young people in Queensland state schools. Leading this non-profit organisation, with its 600 staff and \$30 million turnover, gave me another real-life experience that I believe will help me to be a more effective local member. I know the challenges associated with recruiting and retaining staff, I know how difficult and costly it is to comply with bureaucratic red tape, and I know how hard it is to stretch every dollar to make sure the costs of business are met.

More importantly, my time at SU Queensland helped me develop my heart for young people and children, especially those who are marginalised or are struggling in life. Modern life throws up lots of challenges for our youth. Some young people find themselves in trouble because they make bad decisions. However, more often than not, they are in these precarious positions because they are victims of bad decisions that adults make. They then find themselves in a cycle which is so hard to break. Mother Teresa once said that the greatest disease in this world today is not leprosy, not tuberculosis, but the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for and unloved, and many of our young people suffer from this 'disease'. It breaks my heart to see children suffering unnecessarily. They deserve every bit of support we adults can provide, and for many they find this support in their school chaplain—someone who is seen as independent, someone who is accessible and someone who will listen to them without judgement. I pay tribute to the over 500 chaplains serving our children sacrificially in Queensland state schools. I hope that in my time in this parliament I can help develop policies that will ease the pain for those young people who are suffering and also facilitate support structures that will prevent that suffering from occurring in the first place.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my heart for the marginalised extends to the plight of Indigenous Australians. I am embarrassed to say that it has only been in recent years that I have fully appreciated the challenges associated with being an Aboriginal Australian. Over the last few years a small group of Aboriginal elders have educated me about the dislocation the majority of First Australians feel. This education and the ensuing relationships that I have built have led me to develop a renewed respect for a very proud people. Respect and education is the key to achieving long-lasting reconciliation. We need to find real solutions rather than politically correct platitudes. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians need to take responsibility for finding a better way to close the obvious gap.

The source of my compassion for those who suffer is my Christian faith, a faith that has been on the public record for over 20 years. Nailing your colours to the mast like this often leads to emotive, ill-informed comments from a small section of the community who immediately tag you as part of some extreme right movement. People who know me would not place me in that category. I think they would describe my faith as earthy. I am a strong believer in the words of St James, who said, 'Faith without works is dead.' In public life I will promote those Christian values that this country was built on and are regarded as universal principles of truth: love your neighbour as yourself, every human being is unique and of value, and the marginalised and genuinely disadvantaged must be cared for.

The Everton electorate is a mix of the old and the new. On the southern border are the established suburbs of Mitchelton and Oxford Park, which have been settled since the early 1900s, while at the northern end is the newer suburb of Eatons Hill, typically populated by younger families. Right in the middle of the electorate is the Bunyville State Forest, a slice of wilderness beauty that acts as a giant lung in the district. We believe that we live in the best region in the best state in the best country in the world. Understandably, many others believe the same thing, which has led to a steady influx of residents over the years. This has placed enormous pressure on the district's roads and public transport systems. The previous Labor governments failed to plan for the impact of these population increases. I will do my best to find solutions in these areas that are sustainable and long-lasting.

Like the vast majority of Queenslanders, the residents of Everton are aspirational. They want to improve their lot in life. They want their initiative and hard work rewarded. They want their government facilitating their success, not stifling it. I believe that only a Liberal National Party government can provide the environment that allows these aspirations to be met.

The residents of Everton are crying out for cost-of-living relief. Water, electricity, gas and public transport costs have skyrocketed in recent years, making it more and more difficult for people to make ends meet. They recognise that these increases are in no small part due to the economic incompetence of the previous government. This ineptitude was best illustrated by the obscene waste that was the day-to-day practice of the former administration. As the CEO of a non-profit organisation for the last six years I was angered by this waste, as were the struggling families I now represent. I look forward to being part of a government whose economic competence will bring the financial relief that is so desperately sought.

I am incredibly grateful for the people whose hard work resulted in me being elected as the member for Everton. I was overwhelmed by the team of volunteers that we assembled over a 12-month period. It is not possible to thank them all, but I would like to place on the record my appreciation of the hard work and sacrifice of at least 150 friends and party members. Of course, there is always a core group of supporters who organise, strategise and lead the campaign. I thank Bruce 'Bronco' Hooker, a man who if cut would bleed LNP; Sandy Landers, an experienced political operative who is now my senior electorate officer; Shirley Lehman, who managed the prepolling; Steve Mammarella, our enthusiastic Young LNP representative; Matt and Katy Constance and their children, Tiana and Tyler, whose enthusiasm and commitment has revitalised our local branch; and of course the irrepressible Michael Leighton, who led the charge as campaign director. Michael's political acumen and passion are simply unmatched.

Finally, I acknowledge the support of my wonderful family. I thank my mother, Hazel, for her undying loyalty to her son, even when he breaks every tradition our family has ever had. I acknowledge my mother-in-law, Glenice, for her ongoing support and encouragement. I remember my late father, Len, and father-in-law, Graham, men diametrically opposed in political persuasion but who, if alive, would be united in their pride for their son and son-in-law. I thank my children—Danielle, Claudette and her fiancé Mark, Zachary and his girlfriend Sarah, and Miriam—for their patience and indulgence as they supported their father on another crazy project. I love them deeply. Last of all I thank my wife, Gayle, an amazing woman who has been by my side for more than 30 years. I thank you, darling, for your love and uncomplaining support for everything I have ever done in my life.

I was motivated to stand for the Queensland state government by sheer frustration. I was frustrated by the lies, the waste, the dishonesty and the utter incompetence of recent Labor governments. I along with my colleagues want to restore the public's confidence in the political process. This will only occur when we convince them that we are not here to serve our own needs but rather the wishes and the desires of our electorates. I am determined to put the service back into public service. I make a pledge today that, for as long as the people of Everton give me the privilege of representing them, I will serve them and the wider Queensland community with all my heart and soul. I thank the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Southport, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and he should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.55 pm): It is with a great sense of humility and pride that I rise today to deliver my first speech to the 54th Parliament of Queensland as a member of the Newman government. I am humbled by the trust that the people of Southport have placed in me and can assure them that I will not let them down. I am here today because they voted for change. Having won their

votes, it is now incumbent upon me to earn their trust and respect. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the Southport area—the Kombumerri and Ngarang-Wal people, people of saltwater and the Nerang River.

My parents arrived in Australia in 1952 with my older siblings Thea, John and Connie. They came looking for a new life and opportunities as far away from war-ravaged Europe as possible. My father, Matheus Cornelis Molhoek, a member of the Dutch air force at the time of German occupation, went on to survive the depravities and heartache of 2½ years in labour camps, Stalag B Muhlburg, about 80 miles south of Berlin, and Stalag 4C Brux. After a few years in Victoria my parents, like so many others since, decided the warmer climate and opportunities presented to them in Queensland were far more enticing, and so they moved north to Southport. My father, Ted, established a contracting business as a painter, signwriter and marine specialist. My mother, Margje, or Ria as she became known, cleaned the holiday homes of wealthy pastoralists and other holiday-makers. I was a surprise addition to their family, born over the back fence at Southport General Hospital in 1959, just three years before former member for Southport Mick Veivers made his rugby league Australian test debut in Brisbane and the same year the Gold Coast's first 10-storey giant high-rise Kinkabool was built.

My early years were fun but challenging. I remember travelling with my mother to Brisbane on the old steam train from Southport for visits to specialists due to my gammy legs. My older brother, John, would dink me up the Ferry Road hill on the back of his bike, making sure to keep my iron and leather clad legs clear of the spokes. Later, when my Forrest Gump style irons eventually came off, I enjoyed idyllic years of swimming, surfing, sailing and boating in and around the Broadwater, where my father painted many boats and did plenty of work around Marineland, Sea World and on buildings like the Sands, Iluka, Chateau and Tiki Village. As a child I enjoyed growing up around the Broadwater, and now it is up to me and my local parliamentary colleagues to give the Broadwater back to the people of Southport. Labor has neglected the Gold Coast's waterways, resulting in restricted access and amenity due to the build-up of sand. These waterways are vital to the region's economy and marine industry. Our government will act to ensure Gold Coast waterways are properly managed for the benefit of locals, boaties, fishers and tourists in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

In 1918, with a population of 2,000, Southport was proclaimed a town and severed from Nerang. Southport flourished. The 1930s saw the construction of a new town hall in Nerang Street and two new bathing pavilions, one on Marine Parade and the second across the Broadwater in Main Beach. The postwar years saw Southport flourish, with the population nearly trebling to 7,500 in holiday periods and 50 houses a month being built when postwar restrictions were lifted in 1952. Southport, the coast's oldest suburb, is home to long-established schools of St Hilda's for girls, the Southport School for boys and Guardian Angels Convent and Star of the Sea Primary School, which was established in 1898. Other schools include Southport State High School, Arundel State School, AB Paterson College, Aquinas College, Ashmore State School and Musgrave Hill State School, where each of my four sons—Timothy, David, Matthew and Andrew—were educated and where my youngest son is currently vice-captain.

My older boys attended Trinity College and are now students at Griffith University. My schooling was also in the electorate, where I attended Southport State School and then Keebra Park State High School, where I was among the first foundation students enrolled in 1973. It was at Keebra Park under the inspiration of Garfield Prowse, our principal, where my early leadership abilities were nurtured and I learnt the simple mantra and only school rule: do the right thing. It was also there that I developed my early love of rugby league. While I was a terrible player, unlike Mr Mander, that did not stop me from taking on the NRL and working with Michael Searle, Paul Broughton, Geoff Smith, Jim Raptis and others to establish the Gold Coast Titans in the National Rugby League. I am sure all Queenslanders were pleased to see the Titans register back-to-back wins for the first time since 2010 last weekend, with a strong 24-14 victory over the Knights in Newcastle.

While Southport's prominence may have waned a little in recent years compared with the apartment boom along the foreshore areas of the Gold Coast, it is today a sleeping giant. As we prepare for Southport's Centenary in 2018 and the Commonwealth Games that same year, we have before us a unique opportunity to leverage a new future for Southport and the Gold Coast and, with that future, more permanent jobs and greater economic prosperity. As the new local member, it is my sincere hope to lead that fight for Southport's revitalisation from the industrial areas of Ashmore and Molendinar to the health and knowledge precinct around Parklands and Southport's central business district. By working with local business leaders and residents and listening to these people, we have developed a simple plan for Southport. Southport will once again be the flourishing, vibrant central business district of the Gold Coast and internationally renowned for its standards of business accommodation, health care and tertiary education. Our priorities also include the restoration of law and order, standing up for families, finding more jobs and creating more opportunity. I will work towards the realignment of the Southport-Nerang Road and, with my colleagues, work to deliver a more robust tourism industry and deliver on our government's promise to double overnight tourism expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020.

As a former Gold Coast city councillor, I fought for the rapid transit light rail system and will continue to fight for improved public transport and connectivity with heavy rail. Greater connectivity is essential if we are to fully leverage the new Gold Coast University Hospital, the Games Village, our growing Griffith University, the redevelopment of TAFE, the Gold Coast campus of the University of Central Queensland and our almost 8,000 other Southport business based enterprises. The evolution of an improved rapid transit system will be an essential and sustainable lifeline for families in the north and west of the city. It will not only provide access to the beach and tourist spots but more importantly access to jobs in our core business areas.

My political journey began when my sister Connie took me to a protest rally against Gough Whitlam's proposed reforms to Australia's manufacturing industry and tariff reforms at age 15. I subsequently handed out how-to-vote cards for many greats of the old Queensland National Party, including Bruce Small, Ivan Gibbs and Eric Robinson, culminating in serving cups of tea at the opening of the Sir Joh House in Southport. Since then, I cannot remember an election when I have not supported the campaign efforts of Liberal and National candidates from Devonport in Tasmania in the nineties to Stuart Robert in Fadden and current members of this House from Mermaid Beach and Gaven.

After more than two decades as a broadcaster and senior executive, I decided in 2003 to run for the Gold Coast City Council. Cheered on by John Fradgley, my great mate Geoff Smith and then mayor Gary Baidon, I was honoured to win the 2004 election for Division 4 and to represent the people of Arundel, Parkwood, Biggera Waters and Labrador. In my four short years as a Gold Coast city councillor and chairman of the city's Finance and Internal Services Committee, I was pleased to deliver four years of budget surpluses, reduced debt, almost \$3 billion of new city-wide infrastructure and many great local outcomes and facilities for the ratepayers of Division 4. In 2008 I contested the Gold Coast mayoralty and lost. Later that year I joined the LNP and in November 2011 was preselected by my local branch to run for the seat of Southport. I could no longer stand back and watch Southport and Queensland deteriorate any further under Labor's mismanagement.

I grew up in Southport. I am raising my family in Southport. I love Southport. Under Labor, an estimated 13.5 per cent of all households are in housing stress. Not only has the cost of living escalated but so, too, have median house prices and median rents. According to the Department of Housing, statistics for the Gold Coast show that we have the highest number of households waiting for long-term social housing, with 1,903 families in the very-high and high-needs categories—700 more than Brisbane Central and 900 more than the Sunshine Coast—and 31 per cent of those waiting in South-East Queensland are on the Gold Coast. Is it any wonder the people of Southport and Queensland voted for change?

Under Labor, unemployment in Southport recorded amongst the highest in Queensland at 10.4 per cent and personal income is typically thousands of dollars lower than that of average Australians. Is it any wonder that the people of Southport voted for change? Is it any wonder that the people of Southport turned to the LNP and Campbell Newman's can-do plan to get Queensland back on track? I am proud to be part of the Newman government and firmly believe in our plan to build a four-pillar economy, lower the cost of living for families, deliver better planning and infrastructure, revitalise front-line services and restore accountability in government. Our can-do commitments to make tourism No. 1 again, getting the construction industry back on track and reducing unemployment to four per cent in six years are just what the Gold Coast and Southport need.

I am also pleased to be part of a government which plans to double food production in Queensland by 2040. As someone who married into an agricultural family, I appreciate only too well the challenges faced by many on the land. I met my wife, Melinda, at the Rockhampton Baptist Tabernacle in 1981. Woolworths based me at Northside Plaza as a young manager to open new stores in Gladstone, Hervey Bay, Blackwater and Emerald. Melinda's parents, Helen and John Pierce, are third generation graziers and farmers. Her sister Robyn Rich and husband Jim have Walal Station at Charleville and Mount Ravenswood on the Burdekin. Her brother Gary and wife Joyanne have Currawong near Baralaba. In the 1970s Melinda's dad cut railway sleepers to keep the family afloat at a time when poor cattle prices and drought combined to make things really tough. They later moved west to Triangle at Banana where our sons received an education into life on the land from their many aunts, uncles and cousins on properties around Central Queensland. When there was mustering, castrating, inculcating and branding to be done, Melinda would get back in the saddle with her dad. And me? Well, I would put on the kettle and babysit the kids.

Last year under Labor, Southport's Magistrates Court recorded almost double the number of protection orders in respect of domestic violence, and these numbers do not even take into account the thousands of child protection notifications recorded, further highlighting the appalling failure of Labor to protect families and our children. In May 2004 an older lady from Arundel came to see me one morning at the local shopping centre about her granddaughters. These two young girls and 11 others had been systematically sexually abused by their coach while others allowed it to happen. It was this incident that

led me to renowned child safety campaigner and advocate Hetty Johnston and my subsequent board role with Bravehearts. No child deserves to be robbed of their innocence. A modern, flourishing society such as ours should never be excused for allowing this to occur, nor should we watch on idly and allow our women to be bashed in their own homes nor allow drug dealers and unscrupulous licensed venue operators to prey on our sons and daughters.

We have been given great responsibility. It is up to us to deliver a safer Queensland. It is up to us to make Queensland the safest place to raise a child. In this light I cannot adequately express how humbled I was to receive the Premier's call and request to work with Minister Tracy Davis as Assistant Minister for Child Safety. We need to get Queensland families back on track. Under Labor we have seen two major inquiries into child safety. Under Labor over 150 recommendations were adopted, spending has increased almost fiftyfold and yet we are still to see any real improvement in the care and safety of our children.

I am pleased that the Premier has committed to establishing a new inquiry into child safety and I welcome our government's commitment to the introduction of a two strikes policy for sexual predators who commit serious sex crimes against children. Where Labor has failed, we must not. We must provide our kids with a more rounded education and teach our boys what it really means to be men. We must protect, honour and cherish our women. We must work harder to create a society where all people are valued, regardless of gender, race, religion or ethnicity.

Over the past years I have been blessed to have had some great mentors and friends—people like my 'other' dad, Fred Stallard; Paul Broughton; Brian Willesdorf; Bruce Lindley; Rhys Holleran; the member for Mermaid Beach, Ray Stevens; Pastor Garry Mac; Bravehearts child protection hero Hetty Johnston; and, more recently, my incredible branch president, James Kennett. Aside from the challenge of mentoring my own sons, who incidentally are individually growing up to become fine young men, I will in turn commit to mentoring and raising the next generation of leaders and work with others from Southport to establish meaningful mentoring programs for our young people.

I am so grateful that the people of Southport have chosen me as their new member and I am immensely proud to present myself to this parliament as the new member for Southport. However, I would not be here today had it not been for the generous support of my branch and Southport SEC: Bernard Ponting, Bruce Duncan, Bruce McIver, my many friends and volunteers and the support of members from the Surfers Paradise and Broadwater LNP branches. They are all part of the reason I am here today and I say thank you to each and every one of them. I especially want to thank the Gold Coast Young LNP, led by Herman Vorster and his wife, Melissa. To my campaign team, I want to make special mention of Stephen Petith, who gave up his studies to work almost full-time for the latter part of 2011 and the early months of 2012. I also want to acknowledge the role of James and Elaine Kennett, Don Ross, Jenna Rathbone, Wayne Moran, Jan Knox, Derryl McConaghy, Glen and Angeline Ayrton, Geoff Smith, Liz and Gary Crouch, Craig Devlin, Mitch Redford—my battleground coordinator—and the LNP campaign team. I thank all of them for helping me win this seat.

Lastly, and most importantly, to my amazing wife, Melinda, of 26 years and our four sons, David, Tim, Matt and Andrew: thanks for folding and delivering all those campaign brochures, thanks for putting up with grumpy old dad and thanks for sharing our home and this journey with me. Last weekend I told the boys that, in light of all I have been learning about the plight of some children across Queensland in recent weeks, perhaps I am not quite the grump they thought I was and perhaps they were a little more fortunate than I believed them to be.

I would like to close with two of my most favourite quotes: a verse given to me on my 21st birthday and the words of George Bernard Shaw. The first is from 1 Corinthians 15:58—

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is in vain.

The second is the words of George Bernard Shaw—

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

I thoroughly enjoyed my first full day in parliament the other week. I could not help but reflect on what an awesome privilege it is to be here in this House—a working-class kid from Southport, the son of an immigrant painter, elected by my community. What an honour. What an immense privilege. My commitment is not only to represent the people of Southport and the Gold Coast well but to advocate and fight for the restoration of Christian and community values, to be a champion for our women, our children and for families and to cheer on the next generation.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Waterford, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (8.14 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, firstly, I would like to congratulate the honourable Speaker of the House on her appointment. May I also congratulate our Premier, Campbell Newman, and my esteemed colleagues for their part in what has become one of the greatest landslide victories in the history of our political landscape. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and the land within which my electorate of Waterford is contained. I respectfully acknowledge the elders, both past and present.

I would also respectfully acknowledge my predecessor, the former member for Waterford, Mr Evan Moorhead. While we saw in Queensland one of the dirtiest campaigns this state has ever seen, while Queensland was dragged through personal attacks on candidates and their families, the campaign in Waterford was not by any stretch of the imagination one of those campaigns. I commend Mr Moorhead, his staff and supporters for maintaining what was between us—both Evan and I—a campaign that maintained its dignity and professionalism, where first and foremost the interests of our community were the priority.

For me personally, to be here today as the member for Waterford is both rewarding and humbling. It is for any one of us a great honour and privilege to hold office and to represent our community in such an esteemed position. I pledge to my constituents, the residents of my electorate, that I will not forget that. This honour is particularly humbling as I am the first conservative member to hold the seat of Waterford.

Waterford means more to me than a successful election. It is more to me than a job or a role. It is more than a seat of parliament; Waterford is my home. I have grown there, I live there and I am raising my family there. Waterford is not just a community; Waterford is my community. Waterford is an area that contains great diversity. From the varied multicultural backgrounds, the hopes and aspirations of our young and the experience and wisdom of our aged, there is strength in this electorate, as there is across the city of Logan. There is a great strength in the sense of community that permeates throughout Waterford—in our schools, our P&Cs, our community centres and groups, our PCYCs, our seniors groups, our Soroptimists, Lions, Rotary and Quota groups, our chambers of commerce and junior chambers of commerce. From school leaders to community leaders, there is a pride and a willingness to help our friends and neighbours, a willingness to work hard, to build our sense of community, to give of our own time and to volunteer to further the causes of these great organisations.

While we saw in Queensland following those floods in 2011 what it was to be an Australian and the tremendous efforts of those volunteers, it is with a great sense of pride that I acknowledge those in Waterford who give of their time and who volunteer tirelessly every day in my community. It is Frank Barnes and others like Frank whom I have in mind. It is that rich diversity and the moral compass of those volunteers who work against and despite the reputation and negative perceptions of Logan who make up the unique fabric of Waterford in what I believe is our great city of Logan. Again, may I say how humbled I am that the people of Waterford have entrusted me to advocate for those issues and the causes that they hold dear. To those who did not vote for me, may I also say that they, too, I represent and will represent to the fullest of my ability.

With regard to my being here, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work that my campaign team put in. Indeed, I simply would not be here without their tireless efforts. There was no glorious campaign in Waterford. There were no great amounts of money thrown into the Waterford campaign and it was, in fact, fairly humbly resourced. The strength of this campaign was borne upon the hard work and dedication of friends, family and volunteers in what was a back-to-basics, grassroots campaign over 12 months. To David Pellowe and the Pellowe family, I say thank you. To John Broadhurst, to Shane von Senden, to Lance Bare, Kevin Walters, Jim and Robin Gallen, to Terry Millful, Couda Chappel, I say thank you. To the Logan women's group, to the Waterford SEC and the Logan Business Branch, I say thank you. To all those who volunteered on the Waterford campaign, I say thank you.

There are also those who I feel warrant a special mention for their assistance and guidance throughout my campaign. To the honourable John Paul Langbroek, Minister for Education, may I firstly offer my congratulations and may I also thank you. Thank you for taking my call; thank you for your guidance and support. To Mark Boothman, member for Albert, to the Boothman family and to the Albert campaign team, I thank you for your support and for your friendship. To Luke Smith, councillor for division 6 Logan City Council, to Andrea and the girls and to Kevin, I thank you for your support and for your friendship. To Burt van Manen, federal member for Forde, to Pam Parker, mayor of Logan, and to your respective family, friends and supporters, I say thank you. To my friends and former colleagues of Brisbane City Council, to the MIPO team, the city property team and to my friends in the Brisbane city legal practice, I say thank you. To Doug Muir and Mary-lou Badeaux, colleagues and friends who provided me with support and guidance and who continue to do so, I thank you.

In the spirit of being a true politician I would also like to take the opportunity to talk about myself. As a child and student some may find it hard to believe that for the most part the report cards of my early years all read the same: Michael is a great student but is shy and does not mix well. I can attribute the change to a number of things: years of training in martial arts, my enrolment in the performing arts, the active pursuit of school leadership and, of course, the loving strength of family. But my inspiration in politics I can limit to a particular point in my life and to two particular people. As a school captain in the second senior year for Windaroo Valley High, I met my local politicians and was greatly impressed by their active involvement in my school, with me and with my community. These politicians were the then federal member for Forde, Kay Elson, and the former state member for Albert, Bill Baumann. As a young man it greatly impressed upon me their willingness and desire to work with and for the betterment of my community. I saw in Kay and Bill a path to follow, an opportunity for me to be able to be and to do something greater than work towards my own ends. I had been inspired. The seed for change, the desire to work harder for the greater good and the need to help others was well and truly planted. I then set about living a life and working towards gaining the experience that I felt would serve me well when the time came for me to stand up and represent my community. I feel that those experiences will serve me well in this new chapter of my life.

I am of a large family, a family that has had much to offer by way of varied experiences. Through the highs and lows of any family we learn and we grow and it is those around us who shape the person we are and have the potential to become. My parents, young when they became parents, gave of themselves all that anyone could ask of parents. They gave and continue to give their love, their discipline and their loyalty to my brothers and I, even if from time to time we may lose sight of that. My parents were never wealthy, but may I acknowledge that my brothers and I were never without. Their sense of selflessness can be attested to by many. While not many outside of my immediate family will know, and one of my younger siblings will never know, one of the greatest defining influences on the sort of person I am or was to become was, in fact, the death of one of my brothers. I am the oldest of six, but five of us remain. At a very young age the loss of George Geoffrey to SIDS was to have a profound impact on my parents and my family. At an age far younger than most would appreciate, it became incumbent upon me to grow beyond my years to take on a support role that was to later blur the lines between parents and child to son and friend. I do not begrudge those tragic circumstances; they were, as I mentioned, a defining influence. For me, my parents, whom I love dearly, are also dear friends. I thank them both for their love, their guidance, their fierce loyalty and their friendship. To my brothers, George, James, Luke and Bradley, you will know that my involvement in your lives has often blurred between the roles of an older brother and a parent, but neither were without a great sense of pride and love in the men that each of you has become or, in the case of my younger brother, the man you are becoming. To your respective partners, Kayla, Melissa and Megan, to each of you I extend my love and appreciation for the support you have provided.

To my wife, Jayne, who has been with me since we were both students in high school, I simply would not be standing here without your support and understanding. While I was a young inexperienced, and somewhat terrified father, I can say nothing—nothing—means more to me than our children: my daughter, Gabriella, and my son, Maximilian, or Max. Jayne, you and I have been through a great deal together. We have had highs and lows, as any couple has, but no-one knows me better than you do. You are my wife, an outstanding mother, but you are also the greatest friend I have. I love you and I thank you. To my daughter and to my son, while you are both too young to understand the path that our family now takes, I must first apologise and beg of you your later understanding for the long days and nights, for the times that I will not be there, but it is my hope that the times that I am there are all the more special for that reason and that you come to know that the reason I do all that I do is in the hope that for you and for all others there will be a future worth having.

I thank my mother-in-law, Doreen, and all of my family on both sides for their acceptance, love and support. I thank the Trabys and the Thompsons, whom I consider to be family, for their love and support. I am where I want to be. I am doing what I want to do. I am the member for Waterford and I would have it no other way. To the Premier, members of the cabinet, my friends and colleagues I say simply this: we have a great deal of work to do and I, for one, am looking forward to getting on with the job.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Burleigh, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.30 pm): Today I rise to give thanks to the Governor for her address on the opening day of parliament and to pledge my allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth and the people of Queensland, and most of all to the residents of Burleigh Heads, Palm Beach, Varsity Lakes and Miami, the suburbs that make up the electorate of Burleigh. I rise a very humble man, fully aware of the faith the good people of Burleigh have placed in me as their local representative, their local issues champion. Through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I add my congratulations to the member for Maroochydore for taking her place as the first female Speaker of this House, an honour that is well deserved. My best

wishes go out to the former member for Burleigh, Christine Smith, as she moves into retirement and full-time enjoyment of her grandchildren. If I can be remembered in the electorate with similar fondness as that with which Christine is held, I will be a happy man.

As I stand here, I am reminded of the words of Ronald Reagan when he spoke to the surgeons who were about to operate on him after he was wounded in an assassination attempt. He is quoted as saying, 'Please assure me you are all Republicans'. As I look around this chamber today, I am heartened to note that most of the critics who will judge my speech tonight are friends. My commitment to the people of Burleigh, to the people of Queensland and to members here present is to participate constructively in this place and to act in an honest, forthright manner, always keeping in mind the best interests of the people of the electorate of Burleigh and the people of this great state of Queensland.

With your indulgence, Mr Deputy Speaker, tonight I will give those present an insight into who I am and what I stand for. I was born in Bega, New South Wales, the first born of Jim, a banker, and Marie, a nurse. I have younger siblings, Chris and Joanne. Honourable members will be surprised to know that I met my wife, Sally, in Goulburn, New South Wales, around 45 years ago. We were next door neighbours and found ourselves walking to school together when we were about six years old. To this day I am still blamed for exposing the reality of the tooth fairy and Father Christmas to an innocent six-year-old, who has now been my wife for over 30 years. We have three children: Timothy and Jessica, who are 26, and our son Hayden turns 21 this Sunday. I know members will think I am too young, but Tim and his partner Aimie have provided Sally and I with a grandson, Joshua, who is heading towards his second birthday. I encourage all present to look forward to the grandparenting stage. That is the stage when you can say, 'Enough!' and hand them back. Joshua is wonderful and we truly adore him.

A few weeks ago I watched Q&A and an audience member asked Joe Hockey about living on the north shore of Sydney and how he would best promote the Australian egalitarian ethos. That made me think about how I would respond to that question. If I were to be totally honest, I would have to say that my philosophy of life does not support egalitarianism. While I believe we are all born equal, I have to say that, from then on, the decisions our parents make in our early lives, followed by our decisions, determine where we sit in society. My parents taught me about aspirations and how to strive for a better life. Those are important lessons that I have passed on to my children. They are lessons that have carried me through life and that have contributed to the person I am now. Undoubtedly, there will be members in this chamber and visitors in the gallery above who will ridicule me for this attitude, but I place on the record my overriding philosophies of life. The opinions and decisions I make in this place will reflect those philosophies.

I believe in the right of people to make their own choices in life. Regardless of whether or not I agree with them, they have a right to their own opinion and their own choices. I believe in small government with minimal regulation. I believe in a hand up from government, not a handout. In basic terms, I believe good government needs to ensure the population is secure from interference from the action of others. If a government does just that one thing, I believe it succeeds.

One of the key choices I believe a person should be free to make is to work hard, earn a good living and improve the living standard of their family. I do not believe that they should be made to feel ashamed or, indeed, ridiculed because of that choice. I believe this great country of ours is in danger of becoming a nanny state. Presently, too many people rely on the government for handouts for survival. Previous governments have encouraged this attitude and for many people it has now become a way of life. Our ageing population cannot afford for this to continue. If we are not careful, there will not be enough taxpayers left to fund our ongoing social responsibilities.

On 24 March I was elected as the new member for Burleigh and I will always be eternally grateful to the people of Burleigh for the honour they have bestowed upon me. The electorate of Burleigh is made up of Burleigh Heads and sections of Palm Beach, Varsity Lakes and Miami. We are blessed with some of the best beaches and parks in Queensland. To educate the young people of Burleigh we have nine schools. To protect the people of Burleigh we have one fire station, one ambulance station and one CIB station. We have 13 active community groups in the local area and to care for our citizens and visitors on our beaches we have six surf clubs. Burleigh is the home to Surf Life Saving's Surfcom and the Gold Coast City Council's lifeguard headquarters. Surf Life Saving is an association that is dear to my heart, having been a lifesaver for more years than I can remember. Until recently, I was the president of the Pacific Surf Life Saving Club in Palm Beach, a position I have relinquished with great sadness.

When I think about surf-lifesaving, I start to think about volunteers in general. I hope that during my time in this place I might be able to promote the concept of volunteering. With that in mind, this new government, a government of which I am part, needs to consider how it is that we treat volunteers. Over the past few years I have volunteered in a number of community roles and the greatest frustration I have felt is with the restrictions put on me as a volunteer by all levels of government bureaucracy. In my opinion, it is time to return to the situation where personal responsibility is paramount. It should not be the role of government to protect ourselves from ourselves. We need to be free to make our own decisions and, literally, to sink or swim with those decisions. Red tape is getting in the way of our volunteers and, if we want to keep those people doing the job they are doing, it is time we set them free. Let personal responsibility be the defining rule, not red tape.

The seat of Burleigh has a village atmosphere to it and that village atmosphere needs to stay as the defining feature of the area. With that concept fully in mind, there are a number of issues I will strive to solve during my time in this place. Firstly, the Tallebudgera boardwalk from Fleay's Fauna Reserve to the coast has recently had a very expensive makeover and yet it does not seem to go anywhere. It has been the victim of government's uncompromising regulation overcoming good sense and personal responsibility. I intend to do all I can over the next few months to see that the Tallebudgera boardwalk is reopened to the public from Fleay's fauna park to the beach.

Secondly, petty vandalism in the form of break and enters is out of control, with one local example being a tennis club that is within walking distance of my office being broken into eight times in the last two and a bit weeks—twice this past weekend and apparently again last night. Thieves are breaking in doing thousands of dollars worth of damage to the facility just to steal a few cans of alcohol, and they are doing this night after night. The police do not have the resources to deal with these crimes. Their response times are unacceptable and I am angry about that. It is not the police officers' fault; it is ours. We urgently need to give them the resources they need do their job properly.

A cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast would seem to me to be a no-brainer. Public transport is of course another big issue in my electorate, as it is in the whole of Queensland. I am a firm believer in the KISS principle—keep it simple stupid. To work, public transport must take you from where you are to where you want to go, be reasonably priced and convenient. If it is not, it does not get used and it may as well not be there. That leads me to the much discussed rapid transit system under construction on the Gold Coast.

To meet the criteria I have just discussed it is clear to me that the rapid transit system must cover the Gold Coast from one end to the other, not a small section in the middle. It must connect to other forms of transport and therefore must be linked to heavy rail and the airport. This concept can be delivered by extending the rapid transit system from Broadbeach, where it is scheduled to terminate under stage 1, to Burleigh and then out to Varsity train station. This could be stage 2, with stage 3 being the replacement of the proposed heavy rail with light rail from Varsity station to the airport using the rail corridor already designated.

Mr Deputy Speaker, now is the time to act. Queenslanders have given our government a clear mandate to do so. We have a mountain of problems ahead of us—everything from cost-of-living pressures to the safety and security of our families and properties, unemployment, a declining tourism industry and lots more. These problems are not isolated. They impact all electorates, not just my own.

I am a passionate man and might I say I have the tissues to prove it. I want to be part of a government that brings this state back to being a leading force not only in this country but also that contributes to the advancement of the world. From our dedicated police, ambulance and fire departments across our state to the teachers who develop the youth of tomorrow, to all the volunteers who willingly give their time to support many of our charities and not-for-profit organisations, we can and we must all play our part in making this happen because the alternative is something we dare not think about, nor should we accept.

The constituents of Queensland have spoken loud and clear. They did not just simply tick a box on election day. They, I believe, made a profound statement to all levels of government that a change was needed. The electorate of Burleigh has been neglected for too long by the past government. Crime has increased, unemployment has risen and many small businesses have closed their doors. Trades men and women are making the daily trek up the M1 to find employment.

My electorate has many wonderful assets that can be better utilised. Better utilisation of our existing infrastructure can assist in creating environments where our youth can have fun in a safe environment, provide small business with an opportunity to be successful and provide a beating hub for the community to gather and be social.

Winning the seat of Burleigh came at considerable personal cost to my family and myself both financially and emotionally—six years of my life, three elections, numerous pairs of shoes worn out doorknocking and the people of Burleigh having to put up with my ugly mug being constantly seen on cars, corflutes, flyers and even billboards around the electorate. There is a long list of people I would like to thank for their support, hard work and encouragement over the last six years.

First and foremost, to my family—my wife, Sally, who has put up with a grumpy husband for the last six years mostly, I must say, with good grace—mostly, I said. My children—Timothy, Jessica and Hayden and their partners Aimie, Simon and Anna, and our gorgeous grandson Joshua—have endured the ups and downs of political campaigning for six long years. They have been with me in rain, hail or shine, on the side of the road, hand-folding and stuffing letters, out in the middle of the night setting up polling booths—they have done it all. To my parents, Jim and Marie, for standing with me at prepoll—full-time for two elections and part-time for this one. To my siblings, Joanne and Chris and their families, for the hours spent on polling booths and their continued love and support.

A big thank you to Mark Henry, my campaign manager for the 2006 and 2009 election campaigns. Mark was right by my side every step of the way during those two campaigns and can justly take a large part of the credit for our success in this campaign. Mark, thank you. To Darren Macintosh, my campaign manager at this election: mate, you're a legend and I will never forget what you have done for me. Darren was always there keeping me going just when I needed that extra shove along. Darren has a future in politics himself, and I can't wait to repay the favour when his time comes. To Darren and his wife, Jessica, thank you for the time you sacrificed for me.

To Gloria Johnson, Corali and Peter Stevenson, and Norman Dunstan who all worked in my office during the campaign: I can never repay you for the effort you put in. Thank you. To my mates Ray Skalski, Ken Clark and Jon Ingall who all constantly said to me, 'I can't understand why you would want to be a politician,' yet they helped me out constantly because they were my mates. Guys, thank you. To my booth captains, booth workers, prepoll workers—over 150 in all—thank you for your support. I would not be here today without your help.

I would like to thank the returning MPs on the Gold Coast for their encouragement and support over the last three elections, and can I particularly single out Jann Stuckey, my close friend and mentor. Jann has always given me sound, often blunt, advice—something I am most grateful for.

To the LNP campaign team, led by James McGrath, Michael O'Dwyer and specifically Mitch Redford, who looked after my campaign directly: all of us here owe you a very big thank you. To Mr Bruce Duncan, regional chair of the Gold Coast LNP: your support and organisational skills have played a large part in the success of all members of the Gold Coast team.

The members of the Young LNP amazed me during the state campaign with their vitality and enthusiasm. Aply led on the Gold Coast by Hermann Vorster, these wonderful young people were seen everywhere—in every electorate on the coast and in their spare time, which there was not much of, in Brisbane. To the visionaries of the LNP, Bruce McIver and Gary Spence: your vision of a united Liberal and National Party and forethought to bring us a leader like Campbell Newman have got us here today, and to Lawrence Springborg for your determination in forming the LNP, I salute you.

Lastly to my best friend, Lisa Stoo'v'e, who was with me right from the start. Even though she fundamentally does not believe in politics, she supported me because she believed in me. She was with me for the first two campaigns and with me in spirit for this one. She then came over from Western Australia for a month to help set up my electoral office. Lisa, thanks for your love and support. Your friends here miss you and it is time to come home.

Mr Deputy Speaker and honourable members, Queensland is open for business again and it is time for all our lost friends to come home. Mr Deputy Speaker, may I say via you to the Premier: Premier, I am aware that many of us are here today in great part because of you. You deserve our faith, our friendship, our support and, above all, our loyalty. You have mine unconditionally.

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I finish with a quote from Benjamin Disraeli, 'Though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me.'

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Before calling the honourable member for Beaudesert, I remind honourable members that this is the member's first speech and he should be listened to with the courtesies reserved for such occasions.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (8.49 pm): I come to this place today as the third member for Beaudesert and am proud to state that, for the first time in two years, the LNP once again represents this great electorate. One of my predecessors, the Hon. Kev Lingard, was Speaker of this House during his 25-odd years in parliament. He was elected as the member for Fassifern in 1983, Fassifern being one of at least three formerly constituted electorates which now make up the electorate of Beaudesert, including the Albert electorate. His predecessor was the Hon. Sel Muller, who was also privileged to serve as Speaker. It should be pointed out that the Hon. Sel Muller succeeded his father as the member for Fassifern, the Hon. Adolf Muller having represented the Fassifern electorate from 1935 until his retirement in 1969.

From 1896 to 1899 the member for Albert was a man called Robert Martin Collins, who was also my wife's great-great-grandfather. Robert Collins was renowned in the pastoral industry in this state and is largely credited with the establishment of national parks in Queensland, to preserve the natural environment he held dear around his home in Mundoolun, which is now in the Beaudesert electorate. I make reference to the history of my electorate and its members because I am proud to continue the work carried out by all of these former members, and I pay tribute to them today. That there were only three members of parliament from 1935 to 2009 speaks volumes about the stable, steady representation afforded to the community by those members, and I hope that the electorate I now represent will see fit to support me as their representative for some years to come.

I congratulate Madam Speaker on her historic appointment as Speaker, the first female Speaker of this House.

The Beaudesert electorate has always been the heart and soul of Queensland and this parliament. Indeed, to see Queensland in a day you only need a good tour of the Beaudesert electorate. We have it all, from the rainforest at Binna Burra and waterfalls on Tamborine Mountain to Gondwanaland in Lamington National Park at the back of Beechmont and the fertile agricultural plains of the Albert and Logan river valleys; the hills of the Main Ranges and the Border Ranges; the ocean views of Beechmont; the unique environment of Kooralbyn and country towns like Boonah, Kalbar and Rathdowney; the magnificence of the vegetable belt in the Fassifern, looked over by the Great Dividing Range and Cunninghams Gap; and the growing centres of Beaudesert, Jimboomba, Cedar Grove, Cedar Vale and Mundoolun. An hour from Brisbane but definitely Queensland country, this is the Scenic Rim of Queensland.

The Beaudesert electorate has always been at the heart and soul of coalition governments. No party other than the LNP and its predecessors has ever won an election in this seat. I make this point to illustrate that my community has been steadfast in its support for our side of politics, and we who are now in government must never take their loyalty for granted.

The election of 2012 heralded an historic event, and this is the first election to result in a Liberal National Party government. May there be many more to follow. It is a long way from my time spent as a student at the University of Queensland in the year 2000 and the disastrous election of 2001. In those days there were not many Young Liberals on campus and even fewer National Party members. The student union was very much dominated by left wing students, and it was here that I had my first combative encounters with the Labor Party and our other political opponents in student elections. On reflection, the rough and tumble of student politics—it can be very rough and very personal—was crucial experience for later years.

Queensland has given us their trust because Queenslanders gave us credit for our policies and those who make up our government team. There is no doubt that this credibility exists because of the creation of the LNP in 2008. As one who grew up on a dairy farm in a National Party family but ended up at university in the Liberal Party, I see myself as the epitome of the merged party, including its traditions of liberalism and conservatism, and I thank all those in both our former parties who worked so hard to ensure the greater good was achieved. In particular I thank Bruce McIver and Gary Spence, along with the Minister for Health and many others, including the members for Gregory, Condamine and Warrego, who have been crucial to the development of a united LNP.

Sir Winston Churchill is quoted as having said, 'The problems of victory are more agreeable than those of defeat, but they are no less difficult.' And so now it is with the LNP in government, which must address the difficult problems left to us by the Labor Party. In particular, this LNP government must look after rural and regional communities constituting my electorate and similar communities across Queensland, repaying the overwhelming support given to the LNP.

The Beaudesert electorate is one of the fastest growing regions in Queensland. Families are moving in and springing up in new estates all over the place. And the community in Beaudesert reasonably expects that it should be able to give birth to children in Beaudesert. I am here to fight for them—to cut the cost of living and to deliver adequate hospital services in Beaudesert, increased public transport options across the electorate, the Beaudesert bypass and improved policing. I will be fighting to ensure the government gives us a fair share of state resources and infrastructure spending, such as the Mount Lindesay Highway upgrade, as our communities evolve gradually into more urbanised communities.

I will work to get the government off the back of our small businesses and our primary producers. Our unique natural environment in the Scenic Rim—the rainforests, national parks, mountains and superb and fertile agricultural lands—dotted with small and vibrant communities all over, should not be exposed to the impacts visited by resource industries. I thank the Premier and Deputy Premier for their commitment to implementing policies which recognise there are some areas where resource industries should not be developed. I will work on behalf of the electorate to ensure these important natural resources are preserved for future generations.

The tourism sector is growing in the Beaudesert electorate. There is a lot on offer, from hiking in the ranges bordering New South Wales or water sports on Moogerah, Maroon and the new Wyaralong dams, to wineries, lavender farms, farm stays, nature retreats, B&Bs and proper country shows. No offence to the member for Moggill, but the Brookfield Show is not a proper country show. I issue an open invitation to all members to visit the region on the doorstep of Brisbane, and I look forward to working with the government to boost tourism on the Scenic Rim.

A key part of the Beaudesert electorate's economy is our primary producers—not just farms but also the wider economy in the towns of this electorate which rely on primary industries. Australia needs primary industries, and I will support those industries. The government must work to bring cost relief to

all small business, especially power and water costs, and through COAG and other dialogue the government should drive an agenda to sustain our primary industries through reforms to the labour market and to trade practices law to provide a fair bargaining position for small business and to quarantine laws to provide for proper quarantine checks on substandard imported produce. This is also about fairness in the economy.

Many of my constituents are family run primary producers and small businesses. They are the hardest working people in our country, yet the former government has given them power price rises of 60 per cent over five years. This is murderous to a dairy farmer who runs refrigeration equipment 24 hours a day, a small business which runs a factory reliant on electricity, or a carrot grower who irrigates using electric pumps 24 hours a day. I generally agree with free market ideology, but that ideology comes to naught if we as a nation cannot sustain ourselves. What protection is there for primary producers who have invested a lifetime in their farms? None. Their revenue is free to go down and their costs are free to go up. That is the free market for them. This is simply unjust when one considers the regulations put in place to support other participants in our economy. This is not just about me standing up for my community; it is plainly about ensuring we have a future in this country where we can feed ourselves. This is a political decision to be made, because at the moment the market is trending in the wrong direction.

The Beaudesert electorate also has a large equine industry. From racing, pacing, showjumping and eventing to polo and cutting, across all breeds and many pony clubs, we have them all. And it is estimated that up to 2,000 jobs depend on equine activities in the Beaudesert region. Beaudesert has a proud history of racing, and I assure the Beaudesert community that I will work for them to see this industry go ahead.

I was raised in a family of four sons on a dairy farm at Marburg. My father and grandfather worked our small farm from around 1927 until 2001. My mother is a teacher, so I can well appreciate the dedication teachers have to their vocation.

Life on the farm when I was young had a fairly strong routine to it. Like many farmers, dad worked long hours and he worked hard. My parents worked hard to provide for their family. Their family was their responsibility, not the responsibility of anybody else. I believe this self-reliance and hard work ethic has been passed down through the generations from my ancestors, most of whom were immigrants to Queensland from a region of Prussia in what is now Germany. These immigrant families were granted small allotments of land which they were required to clear, improve and make productive. Many farms in my home town of Marburg, a town the member for Ipswich West now looks after, like the towns of Boonah and Kalbar in the Fassifern Valley where my wife grew up and where we now live, were settled by these German families, many of whom had fled economic depression, rising militarism of the Kaiser and religious persecution. They set sail to what was then a very remote place all on the chance of a better life. We should pay tribute and remember these pioneers.

Standing in this chamber I look back on generations past, including my great-great grandfather Isaac Ham who served as mayor of Ipswich in 1905 and my late grandfather Victor Krause who served over a decade on Moreton Shire Council in the 1960s and seventies, and all of the pioneers who built this state. I am inspired to make Queensland a success again. We need to reward people who work hard and give them incentives to do so. After attending Ipswich Grammar School, a fine institution where the values of self-discipline, pride and diligence were ingrained by all of the teachers like Jon Snow and the late Dick Rima, I studied law and accounting at the University of Queensland and worked in Brisbane and overseas as a solicitor. Further educational opportunities are in abundance in Australia, but we must ensure we invest wisely in our economy to create an economic incentive for individuals to increase their knowledge. Without that incentive, history shows us that our society will not move forward.

To my parents, Robert and Janet Krause, I thank them for their never-ending love and support and for the sacrifices they made in their own lives to provide my brothers and me with the best opportunities in life. I thank them for instilling in me a sense of right and wrong. There are so many debts to them which I can never repay. I remember my departed grandparents, Victor and Gertrude Krause and Len Ham, who was a farmer and a coalminer. All three of them were staunch conservatives and would be absolutely delighted—and amazed—to see me in this place today. I also remember my wife's grandmother, Joan Philp, a most enthusiastic supporter, who passed away only a week or so after the election. I think she voted for me! I acknowledge and thank my grandmother, May Ham, for her support in my life and who, at 94 years of age, still lives in her home and is an example of love and dedication to family. I thank my parents-in-law, Peter and Janet Philp, for their continuous support and guidance over the years, particularly in the election campaign in Boonah.

My brother David and his wife Emma, who are sitting in the gallery tonight, deserve special thanks for their work on the campaign. He once said to me that politics was a mug's game. A few months later he attended a function, joined the party and was hooked. It looks like he was the mug after all! Thank you also to brothers Paul and Tim and their wives Sarah and Alison. Paul lives in London but

is a terrific media adviser. Through time zone differences, he reads all of the papers in Australia before I awake and emails me if there is anything I need to know. My brother-in-law at Condamine, Luke Philp, and his wife Jennifer deserve a thankyou for their contribution to the campaign.

To all who assisted on my campaign, thank you. There are so many, but I pay special tribute to Sheila and Lloyd Venz, campaign director Bob Harper and his long-suffering wife Rhonda, Mitch Redford, James McGrath, Leanne Allen, Darrell and Brenda Dennis, Liz Dittman, Mark and Bernadette McCabe, Glenn Abbott, Marjorie Yarrow and Kate Seymour, Ken Turnbull, Colin Lagoon, Julian Creighton, Jon Forbe-Smith, John Dunn, Trevor and Jan Pfeffer, Patsy Bell, Ron and Gail Waters-Marsh, Ruth Doyle, Kath Mulders, Laurie Veitch, Greg McKenzie, Robbie and Julanne Murphy, David and Gloria Brennan, Ollie Johnson, Clive and Summer Todd, Phil Lowe, Amy Hanson and Chris McLellan. I also thank Scott Buchholz, the member for Wright, and John Brent, Mayor of the Scenic Rim. David Russell QC gave me the spur on I required in 2010. Thank you. Thank you to National Australia Bank, my former employer, for its indulgence during the long unofficial campaign. To Kate Olgers, Nigel Ward, Scott Mackay, Rukshi Jayawardena, John Lowrey, Ann Choi, Lynda Jardine, Tanya King and Brooke Howard and even Bruce Hollas, thank you for your support. I thank each and every member of the Beaudesert electorate. The people of this electorate have big hearts and will give a fair go to anybody who is willing to genuinely represent them. I am thankful for the frequent offers of cold water while doorknocking in the summer heat. I look forward to working with you all in the future.

I have lived and worked in other places and I cannot think of any place where so many volunteers give so much to their community than in the Beaudesert electorate. Whether it is Rural Lifestyle Options, an organisation which provides a live-in home for children and adults with severe intellectual or physical impairment, or Beaucare, Caddies or Bluecare or Centacare or Quota, Zonta, Rotary or Lions or the many sporting bodies which produce world-class athletes, the list goes on—I could not name them all here in the allotted time. I thank all of these volunteers as representatives of the wider community for their hard work. I thank community groups such as the Tamborine Mountain, Beaudesert and Boonah Men's Shed, the Beaudesert University of the Third Age, the Rathdowney Bowls Club, Jimboomba, Boonah and Beaudesert Rotary and Boonah Chamber of Commerce as well as the staff and residents at Wongaburra, Star Gardens and the Churches of Christ Village, among many others, who were willing to have me visit them.

To all of my constituents, I give you this pledge: I will always listen to your concerns and do my best to address them. You are my first concern in any legislation which comes before this House. I will not pack up my tools and run away if the interests of the electorate are not always addressed—that is politics sometimes—and I will continue to doggedly represent you. All of you understand that you cannot always get everything you need at once, but you can rely on me to keep coming back—like a pitbull terrier attaches itself to the trousers of an intruder—to ensure you have a voice which is heard.

I will not take the electorate for granted, and nor should the LNP ministers now in government take it for granted. I acknowledge there are many issues and challenges which the government must address in my electorate: exploration permits for mining and CSG which should never have been granted, restoring hospital services in Beaudesert, giving real cost relief to families and farmers, upgrading many main roads and building new transport options into growth areas near Jimboomba and Boonah, cutting the cost of doing business so our tourism operators, our owner-drivers in the transport industry—a group of people I know the member for Gregory holds dear—our builders and our small businesses can thrive, and the list goes on. There is so much to do. But if we do not have a plan to tackle these problems, there are opponents of the LNP who will seek to replace the LNP from rural and regional communities, threatening once again to split the non-Labor forces in Queensland. We all know, in the LNP, that such forces do only Labor's bidding, for division only serves to get Labor back in power. There are no prizes for holding the most seats in opposition. I say simply to the Premier and his ministers: if you play straight to Beaudesert, Beaudesert will play straight to you. Today I thank the Premier for leading the LNP to government in Queensland. History will mark you as a truly remarkable Queensland politician. Thank you for visiting and campaigning with me in the electorate. I am sure you and I agree with the following principles enunciated by the 15th Premier of Queensland—

I believe the Government ought to be like a good merchant or a good citizen who always pays his way and never expends more than his income. I say it is this continual borrowing, lending and spending of large sums of money that is sapping the independence of the people of the country and destroying ... self-confidence ...

The 15th Premier of Queensland was Sir Robert Philp, an entrepreneurial businessman and politician who was also my wife's great-great grandfather. I wholeheartedly agree with his statements and sentiments, which are as relevant today as they were when he stated them at the turn of the last century. Premier, not only are you the first to become Premier from outside the parliament; history will remember your courageous decision to give up the Lord Mayoralty to lead the LNP in Queensland—a selfless, determined decision to do what needed to be done to put things right.

I thank our heavenly father for his blessings given to this country and our family. It is my prayer that, with his help, I will be a worthy custodian of his creation—for that is what we all are in this House.

There is one person I must thank above all others for her support, endurance and guidance. She is my mate and the best sounding-board I could ever ask for. She keeps me grounded—incredibly so—and keeps my chin up when things get tough. My wife, Kit, has taken on a lot in the past two years as we travelled through preselections and an election campaign to arrive here today. As I said to my wife on our wedding day, thank you for accepting me as I am. The coming years will be a time of challenge and change for Queensland, for the electorate and for our family. To you and my little boy, Rory, I treasure you above all things and I am privileged to have you by my side as we work together for our community and for Queensland to secure a future for our children and the generations to come. That is what I am here to do—to secure the future for our community, its families, as well as my own, its industries, its environment. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to represent the heart and soul of Queensland which is the electorate of Beaudesert.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.09 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate, I request that you convey to the Speaker my congratulations on her election to that high and respected office. While all members of this place have a responsibility to behave in a manner that reflects positively on the House, the Speaker is particularly burdened with the responsibility of ensuring that the traditional impartiality and dignity of that office is preserved. I would note that, as the first woman to be elected Speaker of the Queensland parliament, another first in a long list of firsts for women from the conservative side of politics has been added to. The first woman elected to this parliament, the first woman appointed to cabinet in this parliament, the first woman to be a Deputy Premier and now the first woman to be elected Speaker is a track record for which the LNP can be proud in terms of the participation of women in politics—and all on merit.

I am truly humbled and honoured to have been returned as the member for Hinchinbrook. I thank the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate for their support. I intend to repay that support by continuing to provide the strong representation to all of my constituents that they deserve and that I have endeavoured to provide since I was first elected. I am pleased and proud for the third time to pledge my loyalty to our most gracious sovereign Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to her representative in the great state of Queensland, Her Excellency the Governor, and to the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate. I am particularly pleased to do so in this the year of Her Majesty's diamond jubilee celebrations. For the third time in an address-in-reply I reaffirm my view that our current constitutional arrangements have served the people of Queensland and the people of Australia well and I am a strong and committed advocate for retaining our present constitutional arrangements in the interests of good government.

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to the people who assisted me in being returned as the member for Hinchinbrook. In the first instance I thank the people who make up the branches and the committees of the LNP in Hinchinbrook. They are dedicated supporters of our party and they helped me enormously during the recent election campaign. I am very grateful for their support. There were also many people who are not members of the LNP who volunteered their time and who supported me during the election campaign. I am also very grateful to those people. It was wonderful to have so many who are not directly connected with the LNP express confidence in me and, once again, I will do my best to repay that confidence.

I would in particular like to extend my thanks to my campaign directors, Nat La Spina and Marc Rowell, whose support and guidance once again proved invaluable. Nat La Spina is well known to many longer serving LNP members in this House and is respected in North Queensland as someone who has stuck with us through thick and through thin, in good times and in bad times, and who has demonstrated unswerving loyalty to our party. Marc Rowell is also well known to many longer serving LNP members in this House and I was very lucky indeed to have him as a mentor of mine, who encouraged me and who has been a great source of feedback and advice. Marc is my immediate predecessor in this place, a person who is well respected by both sides of the House, and I understand that he continues to take a very strong interest in politics and the fortunes of the state of Queensland, particularly North Queensland. I would also like to put on the record my thanks to Bryce MacDonald and Wally Skinner, two members of my party who gave me very strong support during the election campaign.

As always, my family were unfailing in their support for my endeavours. I wish to express my gratitude to my mum and dad, Lloyd and Lorraine, for their love and encouragement. They have made a lot of sacrifices for me in the past and, amazingly, they insist on continuing to make sacrifices to support me in my public life and I am doing everything that I can to make them proud of me. They worked hard to give me the opportunity to get a good education and instilled in me the values and principles that guide me. For that, I am very grateful and I thank them. I also thank my brother and my good friend, Graham, who is a reluctant participant in politics but who is someone whose support I know I can always rely on and who enjoys his self-appointed role of keeping me grounded. All members in this place should understand and appreciate the importance of the support we receive from our friends and family. They make significant sacrifices for us to be able to discharge our duties.

The other source of support without which we could not do our jobs is the support that we receive from our staff. I would like to put on the record my appreciation for the dedication of my staff in the Hinchinbrook electorate office, Leisa Menegon, Jess Exelby and Lorraine Valinoti, who really are dedicated to their jobs and are genuinely committed to serving the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate. Leisa, Jess and Lorraine are fantastic staff and I am truly fortunate to have them. They put up with a lot in their demanding jobs. Indeed, they put up with me—as indeed all of my colleagues do. I also look forward to working with my new ministerial staff, led by my chief of staff, Susan MacDonald, and the many staff and officers of the newly re-established Department of Natural Resources and Mines, led by director-general Dan Hunt. On that note, I ought to say how much of an honour and a privilege it is to have been asked to join the first Newman LNP cabinet as the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and I thank the Premier for that opportunity to accept his invitation to join his cabinet.

I was pleased to listen to Her Excellency the Governor touch on the importance of issues concerning my portfolio in her speech to open the 54th Queensland Parliament. As the Governor mentioned, the resources sector is a cornerstone of the state's economy, particularly in regional areas. As minister, I am indeed determined to ensure that Queensland benefits from growth in the resources sector and that it develops in a responsible and orderly fashion. The LNP recognises the need for sustainable growth in this sector and the importance of it being a safe place to work. The priorities in this area for the LNP are indeed to address pressing skills shortages, improve the efficiency of regulatory and approval processes, restore confidence in the sector's social licence to operate and restore Queensland's reputation as a preferred destination for investment. I will seek to address these priorities by working with my ministerial colleagues where we share areas of mutual interest.

The Governor was right to observe that land and water are the fundamental building blocks of our environment, communities and economy. As the responsible minister, I am determined that the natural resource management policies of this government will plan for the prudent conservation and utilisation of land and water resources. Most importantly, I am determined to ensure that my department will manage our natural resources in a transparent and accountable way based on science and equity. I see as a matter of urgency the need for the management of our natural resources to return to a more balanced approach that affords some respect for private property rights as we pursue our sustainability objectives in parallel.

Perhaps more than in any other area of public policy, the approach of the LNP with respect to land and water management will be in stark contrast to the ideological, politically driven agenda of the former Beattie and Bligh Labor governments and their disgraceful alliance with the extreme Greens. Over the past 14 years the Labor-Greens alliance has waged a relentless and often fanatical assault on the private property rights of Queenslanders who, for over 150 years, have utilised our natural resources to support their families, create jobs, build communities and generate wealth for Queensland. That alliance has undermined confidence and created great uncertainty for industry but, more concerning, has caused great pain, frustration and anger in the lives of good, honest, hardworking Queenslanders. I would note that this has been most keenly felt in rural and regional communities. The Labor-Greens alliance has hammered the bush and I for one have had enough of it. I am looking forward to being part of a new government that will work to heal these wounds.

I share the concerns of the Deputy Premier, the member for Callide, which he expressed during his contribution to this debate, for the welfare of country towns and country people across Queensland. However, it will be no surprise whatsoever to continuing members of this House that I have a significant bias towards, a particular concern for and a major preoccupation with the welfare and circumstances of the towns and people of North Queensland. I was born and raised in the mighty sugar and banana farming town of Tully and for several years now I have lived in the wonderful town of Ingham in the heart of the Herbert River district. Both sides of my family have lived in North Queensland for several generations. I am passionate about the people, the communities and the industries of North Queensland. From the Bohle River and the northern beaches of Townsville in the south to the Johnstone River in Innisfail in the north, the Hinchinbrook electorate and North Queensland is my home; it is the place that I love and it is the place that I will always fight for.

On the evening of 2 February and in the morning of 3 February last year category 5 tropical Cyclone Yasi slammed into the Queensland Coast in the heart of my electorate, with the eye crossing just after midnight at Mission Beach, making its way over the town of Tully before moving out over the Great Dividing Range and further west. Wind gusts of up to 285 kilometres an hour punished these communities. Rainfall totals of almost half a metre in 24 hours were recorded in the same area, compounding the misery of people left without roofs, windows or doors. The town of Cardwell endured the wrath of a five-metre storm surge which caused enormous damage, devastating this wonderful, peaceful, close-knit little community. As I mentioned earlier, I live in Ingham and I spent the evening in my home hoping for the best but fearing the worst. What we experienced that night is something that we never want to experience again. As I stated last year in this place during the condolence motion debate, I was scared. It has been a truly upsetting and difficult experience to endure this period of response,

recovery and reconstruction with my own community. I have witnessed, endured and struggled on with my constituents while they have valiantly held their heads up, helped each other and done everything they can to rebuild their lives. Undoubtedly it has been the most difficult year of my life. I thank in particular the Deputy Premier and the member for Burdekin who have taken an interest in my welfare and circumstances during this time. It has been a harrowing personal experience to witness the violence that was done to the place where I grew up, the sporting grounds that I played on, the creeks and rivers that I swam in and, perhaps the most difficult of all, the schools that I attended. The beautiful rainforests that are a feature of my electorate were stripped bare of vegetation and 15 months later they are only now taking steps towards reestablishing themselves. It is a most welcome development for the local community in my electorate.

I confess that I have regularly felt inadequate and sometimes powerless when faced with what seemed to be insurmountable challenges facing my community in the wake of Cyclone Yasi. The clean-up process and the recovery process, the insurance issues and the countless other challenges have combined together to create a heavy burden on the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate. I offer my sincere apologies to the people of my electorate if I have not been everything that they think I should have been as their local member over the last 15 months. I can fully accept that there may have been things that they wanted me to do or wanted me to say that I could not do or I did not do. And I say to them with all sincerity that it was not for want of trying and working for and fighting for you. I can after 15 months say that I have done my best.

My election as the member for Hinchinbrook in 2006 was a humbling experience. I was equally humbled and grateful to the people of the Hinchinbrook electorate when they returned me in 2009 and for the faith they have placed in me to represent them again in this place following the election in March this year. As I have always acknowledged during address-in-reply debates, while the Hinchinbrook electorate has been held by the LNP since 1960 it has never been a safe seat, with the margin at times being healthy while at others the margin has been wafer thin. The most recent election demonstrated once again that the Hinchinbrook electorate is not a safe seat for the LNP. The people of Hinchinbrook expect strong and effective representation and as such it continues to be my challenge to demonstrate to my constituents that I am worthy of their support. I have never taken their support for granted in the past and I will not take it for granted in the future.

The people of Queensland have elected a new LNP government. I will work hard to be an effective voice in this place for the people of Hinchinbrook. I take this opportunity to reaffirm my undertaking that I will do my best to further their interests and to provide them with the strong representation that they deserve. The new parliament is a very different place from the previous two that I have been a member of. I offer my congratulations to the Premier on his election as the member for Ashgrove for which he campaigned strongly and diligently as a local candidate against what were particularly vicious personal attacks by Labor and the extreme Greens. I note that in defeating the former member for Ashgrove the Premier dispatched a former Labor minister who did much to harm farming families and rural industries in my electorate and in North Queensland and I thank him in that regard. I offer my congratulations to my friend the Deputy Premier, the member for Callide, recognising that the election result has been particularly satisfying for him after 14 continuous years on the wrong side of this chamber, a sense of satisfaction which he understandably has failed miserably to mask since polling day. I compliment the Deputy Premier on his role in that success. I congratulate the Treasurer, the member for Clayfield, on his appointment to that important role and acknowledge the serious burden that he carries to provide leadership within the government, supported by his fellow cabinet ministers, to address the serious financial challenge confronting the Newman LNP government, a legacy of the disgraceful mismanagement, waste and reckless spending of the former Bligh Labor government.

I must say that it is a wonderful thing to have more LNP voices in the parliament from North Queensland to support advocacy for that region of this state. My friends, the member for Burdekin and the member for Mirani, have been carrying that burden in this place, along with myself, for some time. I offer a particularly warm welcome to the members for Cook, Barron River, Cairns, Townsville, Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Whitsunday. Members who know me well will also be aware that I would be being less than honest if I did not express a particular satisfaction with the arrival in this House of the new members for Beaudesert, Nanango, Maryborough and Burnett and the reasons for that particular satisfaction. I also offer these new members a warm welcome. Lastly, I offer a special welcome to the new member for Pumicestone, who is also the Assistant Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The assistant minister has already proven herself to be a great asset to me as the minister and to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines.

Mr Johnson: She's better looking than the minister.

Mr CRIPPS: I take the interjection from the member for Gregory. She is indeed better looking than the minister. The member for Pumicestone will take a particular interest in matters concerning the coal seam gas industry and the state government's interests and responsibilities in respect of abandoned mine sites. In conclusion, I say to all new LNP members of the 54th Parliament: you are first

and foremost representatives of your electorate. That principle is the foundation of our representative democracy. I would say to you also that you have allowed yourself to be identified with the values and the policies of the LNP in the course of being elected, and your constituents have endorsed those values and policies at the recent state election. You are part of a team that has outlined a vision for this state. Let us set about this hard work as a team to clean up Labor's appalling mess and get Queensland back on track.

Debate, on motion of Mr Cripps, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.29 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

ESA Alpha Rho Mackay



Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.29 pm): On Friday, 27 April I had the pleasure of attending the 18th annual changeover dinner for ESA International Alpha Rho Mackay Branch Inc. ESA Alpha Rho Mackay is part of an organisation that started in 1929 in Jacksonville in the United States of America. ESA stands for Education, Service to the Community, and Association and Friends. One of its original goals was to prepare its members to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world. It sought to educate women through studying books. After World War II, it expanded its educational focus to philanthropic work.

More than 80 years later, ESA continues to meet this original goal through educational, leadership and service programs that were born from the organisation's commitment to making a positive difference for its members and the causes they support. ESA was chartered in Australia on 10 December 1963 by Dorothy Banks. Next year it will celebrate 50 years of service in Australia. Across Queensland there are six branches: Proserpine, Redcliffe, Maryborough, Gin Gin, Brisbane South and in my electorate of Mackay there is the Alpha Rho branch.

The Mackay chapter first started in 1992. With an increase in members, it was chartered on 11 December 1993. Four of the current members are foundation members. It is a small but dedicated group of women from the Mackay region who tirelessly fundraise for many causes in Mackay. In the past year, the 18 members have volunteered 5,768 hours. This year they raised \$75,000, which was distributed to various Mackay and Sarina organisations, including the Sarina Chaplaincy, the Mackay Chaplaincy, the Mackay State Emergency Services Volunteer Marine Rescue, the Mackay Base Hospital Oncology Ward, BreastScreen Mackay, Mackay Meals on Wheels, Sarina Meals on Wheels and the RACQ CQ Rescue Helicopter Service. The group has also fundraised for state projects including for the Queensland Cancer Council's Daffodil Day, Biggest Morning Tea and Pink Ribbon Day and the Leukaemia Foundation's Lavender for Leukaemia.

I congratulate them on their fundraising efforts and their donations to worthwhile charities in the Mackay region. I commend the work of the outgoing president, Karen Francis, and her committee and welcome the new president, Rhonda Turner, and her committee who will continue ESA's excellent work in the Mackay community.

Food Relief NQ; Townsville and Thuringowa Transport Solutions



Mr COX (Thuringowa—LNP) (9.32 pm): I reiterate the comments of the member for Barron River about Martin Luther King's words with regard to what you do for others. Basically, that is what I want to talk about in relation to the people of Thuringowa who do things for others. Food Relief NQ is a not-for-profit organisation that supplies food to over 76 welfare agencies throughout North Queensland, including the St Vincent de Paul Society and the North Queensland Combined Women's Services, to name just a couple. The organisation purchases food surplus from local wholesalers and distributes it to welfare agencies throughout the north.

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with the manager of Food Relief NQ, Ray Roberts, to tour the facility and to meet with some volunteers. Like other not-for-profit organisations, it could not carry out this vital service in the community without the dedication of all of the volunteers. One of the roles of the volunteers is to make up the family relief hampers. Each year they distribute over 16,000 hampers to welfare agencies across North Queensland.

In 2007, Food Relief NQ also became a partner with the school breakfast program. They distribute breakfast packages to a number of schools in the region, including schools in the Thuringowa area such as Rasmussen State School and Northern Beaches State School. Kirwan primary school is also looking to join the program. This is an important program not only for providing the most important meal of the day to children but also for providing a chance for teachers to have one-on-one time with

their students. Food Relief NQ volunteers have said they have already seen a marked improvement in the students due to this interaction. Last Christmas, for the second year in row, they distributed 32 hampers to children under the age of 16 who are carers for their own parents.

I will make a quick mention of another not-for-profit organisation. Townsville and Thuringowa Transport Solutions, known as TOTTS, provides alternative transport to socially isolated seniors and people with disabilities. It provides transport to and from work for people with Down syndrome. The organisation provides non-emergency medical transport for Townsville residents, including taking cancer patients to and from medical appointments. TOTTS provides transport seven days a week to 1,440 current members from Cairns to Mackay and even as far as North Queensland.

Currently the service has 15 vehicles in operation, with 50 volunteer drivers. Just last week two vehicles were provided by members of the community. Last year the vehicles made more than 26,000 trips. In March this year they made 689 trips just to the Townsville Hospital. None of that would have been possible without the dedication of the CEO, Garth Harrigan, the operating manager, Allan Wynne, and, of course, their hard-working and dedicated volunteers. Once again I take this opportunity to thank the people who work tirelessly behind the scenes at these not-for-profit organisations that provide services to people in need. Many charities are doing it tough—

(Time expired)

Neighbourhood Watch Queensland

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (9.35 pm): In the words of Darryl Kerrigan, a man's home is his castle. If that is so, who stands watch while we work and sleep? Who stands alert on the ramparts of our precious family sanctuaries? Neighbourhood Watch has been operating in Queensland since 1988. It was an initiative of our side of the political divide that was continued by those opposite. It is both a philosophy and an approach to working together as a community to reduce crime and enhance community safety. The program, organised by the community in partnership with the Queensland Police Service, strikes at local crime. People within our neighbourhoods work together to improve personal and household security and encourage interaction and a sense of responsibility among neighbours.

However, its vital capacity for good has been devalued in recent years through inadequate resourcing. That is about to change under Premier Campbell Newman's leadership. The LNP has committed to its Safer Streets Crime Action Plan to restore front-line services and assist our Queensland Police Service to keep our families safe. Crime Stoppers Queensland CEO, Trevor O'Hara, said the LNP's commitment to channel an extra \$1 million a year into Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers would ensure that those essential organisations can keep on operating. The funding announced by the LNP acknowledged the tremendous work conducted by our community volunteer organisations towards protecting our Queensland lifestyle.

In the past Neighbourhood Watch groups were focused on local crime. This is not the case anymore. With a broadening of the charter as provided by the Queensland Police Service, Neighbourhood Watch groups now focus on matters concerning local safety and welfare. Residents can play an important role by joining a local Neighbourhood Watch group. The various groups in our Mount Ommaney electorate hold regular meetings. Like them, any resident of Queensland who is people focused, who has a commitment to working with people in their neighbourhood to make Queensland a safer place and who is committed to building people's sense of belonging to their community can establish a Neighbourhood Watch group.

Our local Neighbourhood Watch falls in the Oxley district. I mention the following dedicated Neighbourhood Watch groups and their assigned police liaison officers: Central Corinda, Oxley/Sherwood Area 7, Jindalee/Mount Ommaney, Middle Park Area 1 and River Hills Area 4.

(Time expired)

AJ Lucas

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (9.38 pm): Last sitting I asked a question of the Minister for Energy and Water Supply in relation to AJ Lucas, a major contract holder in the electorate of Gladstone. The contract is drawn on behalf of the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Gladstone Regional Council. The contractor AJ Lucas has been failing to pay its subcontractors in a timely manner. I want to thank the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the Hon. Mark McArdle, for his interest in this matter. However, the situation continues to deteriorate where we have small businesses in the Gladstone electorate that are owed substantial amounts of money. There is a long list of businesses—almost 90 families are affected. One company was paid \$147,000 in March and they are owed a further \$2 million.

It appears that AJ Lucas are siloing funds from this project and only paying subcontractors from this project, and that is not working. The Gladstone Area Water Board has a civil engineering group, GHD, who are administering the operation. It is to them that AJ Lucas has to submit their accounts and

those accounts are checked against the work that has been done. The Gladstone Area Water Board has given assurances I am sure to the minister and certainly to me that they are paying those accounts on time and as early as possible, and still these subcontractors in my electorate are suffering at the hands of this company.

Many approaches have been made to AJ Lucas in an attempt to get them to honour their debt to the subcontractors. It is not a problem of this government; it is a problem of AJ Lucas being unwilling—unwilling—to honour their obligations to small subcontracting families in the Gladstone electorate. I have endeavoured to call the CEO, Allan Campbell, on a number of occasions. Initially he would take my calls. He has refused or has been unable to return my calls more recently.

This is a situation that cannot continue. We have a significant number of small businesses in the electorate of Gladstone that are going to fold financially, not because they are bad administrators, not because they are not doing their work properly—quite the contrary. They are doing everything according to their contractual obligations. The problem lies clearly at the feet of AJ Lucas and their unwillingness, not their inability—their unwillingness—to pay on time those subcontractors who have done the work in good faith.

Part of the reason that the small subcontractors accepted the contracts is that government entities were involved. However, I reiterate that it is not the government that is at fault. It is AJ Lucas who need to take the stand and fulfil their financial obligations.

(Time expired)

Morayfield Electorate, Education Week

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (9.42 pm): I rise today to update the House on my recent involvement at local schools throughout Education Week, which commenced 20 May 2012. I was extremely honoured to have been involved in many activities throughout the Morayfield electorate during Education Week.

My week started on Monday when I attended the Morayfield East State School as the 'principal for a day'. Accompanying the school principal, Mrs Menary, I was able to partake in school meetings, meeting and greeting parents and students, visiting classrooms, participating in activities and joining the teachers at lunch in the staffroom with my packed lunch. Thank you to the chappy, Rosie, for updating me on the important role that she plays in this school and the assistance that she provides to the community. I thank Mrs Menary, teachers and support staff for having me at their school. Their dedication to our children's learning outcomes is commendable.

On Tuesday I attended the Burpengary State School. The students at Burpengary State School were undertaking the task of building an outside wood-fired pizza oven. The principal at Burpengary State School, Mr Brad Fox, should be applauded for the effort he has put into developing these types of fun, hands-on learning activities where students learn many skills including teamwork, networking, time management and mathematical calculations through a logical approach.

The highlight I am sure of this event for the children was convincing me to take my boots off, roll up my pants and join them in mixing clay and straw that was used to construct the walls of the wood-fired pizza oven—all done barefoot. I look forward to returning to this great local school shortly to see the final product and hopefully sample a pizza cooked in the oven.

Throughout Education Week I also held a stall at St Eugene College in support of their annual Feast Fair fundraiser. This event brings the school and community together in a major celebration. Throughout the day there were student performances, artwork displays, raffles, rides and activities. I was really glad to see so many community groups also supporting this great local school.

Highlights of the day included a flash mob of preps to year 12s, with staff joining in, along the Keelty Way. This was led by the school principal, Mr Denis Anthonisz. I also participated in the school art auction and purchased a beautiful piece of artwork painted by class 7W. This artwork has taken pride of place on the wall in my electorate office.

Congratulations to the school for conducting this great community event. My sincere congratulations go to them for their efforts in communicating and coordinating this fun fair. These efforts were led by Mark Lynam and Leiza Dunlop, who put in so much work and effort to get this event off the ground. I am advised as a conservative estimate that around \$42,500 net profit was raised and this will be shared between the school and the parish.

Overall I had a fantastic week visiting local schools, talking to hardworking, front-line educators, parents and children. I witnessed the wonderful work being undertaken by our local principals, teachers and teacher aides.

(Time expired)

Hall, Mrs J

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.45 pm): The 30th of March seems a long time ago now. However, this is my first opportunity to speak of a very remarkable teacher who sadly has just retired following 16 years of service at Woodridge State School. It was Harmony Day at Woodridge primary, a day when I delight to be seated in that hall as the many student groups perform to the cheers of their fellow students.

You need to picture a hall filled with excited students from every corner of the globe, many of them in their national dress. Our Aboriginal and Islander children are usually the largest Australian group. We then enjoy Pacific Islanders, Maori, Burmese, Indian, various African groups, Middle Eastern and many mixed groups. A particular favourite is the Burundi drumming group. However, it was a very special day because this was Mrs Hall's last day. Judith Hall was head of the intensive learning support and ESL department in the school during all the years as waves of refugee children arrived at the school, many with no English language at all. Judith is a warm, inviting teacher with a great love for all of her young charges.

At the end of the performances, all of the children who had arrived in the last six months from war torn lands—some 40 or 50 of them—stood in three rows on choir seats and sang in the most beautiful English, with voices like angels, the song *No Matter What* by Boyzone. As they sang the final verses, they held up letters spelling out 'Goodbye Mrs Hall', 'We Love You', 'We will miss you.' They sang their hearts out—

No matter if the sun don't shine
Or if the skies are blue
No matter what the end is
My life began with you

I can't deny what I believe
I can't be what I'm not
I know this love's forever
That's all that matters now
No matter what.

The tissues were passed around and the program wound up, but there were more stories to tell. The former refugee students had no idea what retirement meant and thought Mrs Hall would be returning. When they discovered she would not be returning, one little one came to her to say, 'Miss, how you buy your rice? You can come and live with me.' And other invitations followed. They thought that without her work she would have no money and nowhere to live. We are indeed living in a lucky country. Woodridge primary will never forget the kindness and love and the way you nurtured these young students in a new land, a new environment, many enjoying education for the first time and all looking forward to a bright future—they will always remember Mrs Hall.

Kallangur Electorate, Carbon Tax

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (9.48 pm): I rise to speak in this House and plead with the federal government to not introduce the insidious tax called the carbon tax. This tax will decimate the majority of the base of businesses in my electorate. This tax is a hidden way to introduce income redistribution. I think it is absolutely horrendous that a federal government would pretend to do something that it actually should not be doing.

On Friday, 18 May I had the great pleasure of opening two new small businesses. The first business was called Beadz Bitz & Bobz and the owner is Gay Williams. I am pleased that this business has decided to open up in my electorate. The second business which shares a rental above it is called Promo Base and is owned by Alan Venn. I think that he has a hell of a lot of guts. In the last 18 months I have walked into over 400 businesses in my electorate and every one of them is hurting. One of the problems in my electorate is that after the floods the reconstruction of the AJ Wylie Bridge has only just started.

The Labor government saw fit not to start construction on this bridge for at least 13 months and, as a consequence, many small businesses in my area have seen a downturn of over 30 per cent in their regular intake. Many of these businesses have been around for 20 or 30 years but are now closing their doors. In my electorate, 80 per cent of those who work leave the electorate to do so. Small business is vital to our community.

I call on the federal government to not introduce the carbon tax. I call on the federal government to wake up to itself and realise that it will absolutely decimate small business in my community. These small businesses are hurting hard enough because of the size of the hand that the former state Labor government put in their pockets to withdraw income. They are struggling as it is, and they do not need the federal government to come in and take their businesses to pieces. I call on the federal government not to introduce the insidious carbon tax.

Cairns Base Hospital, Redevelopment

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (9.50 pm): I am proud to have been part of a Labor government that delivered a redevelopment of the Cairns Base Hospital worth more than \$446.3 million. It has already delivered new radiation oncology services and an expanded ED and will deliver more benefits when completed in 2014.

For the past two weeks more than 100 workers have downed tools to highlight concerns they have over the safety of work on the site of the block C redevelopment. The project safety committee, consisting of management and the workers, has raised safety issues with project managers Abigroup. I have attended early-morning meetings with the workforce along with representatives from the ETU, CFMEU, BLF and other unions supporting the stop-work. Since the electrical workers subcontracted to Logan City Electrics have been off the job over safety concerns I have visited them as often as possible to help keep up morale. As of yesterday the boys were back at work to fix the existing safety issues and raise any new ones that have come to light through the safety committee.

There continues to be concern about Abigroup not providing a time frame for health and safety representative training, which is mandatory under the act within a three-month period after the request is made. It is clear that communication is still a major issue on the site. I have, however, made a point of speaking to representatives from Abigroup, as well as the unions, to ensure a better understanding of the issues and to offer any assistance I can to ensure the smooth running of the site. But I will always support workers who are raising genuine safety concerns. Every worker deserves to return safely home to their family each day.

As with all construction sites, there has been some friction between unions and management, and I am well aware that some has been related to the uncertainty over which firm would win the contract for the electrical component of the next stage, block D. It is my understanding that this contract has been awarded to John Goss constructions. There has been some concern over the wages and conditions that may eventuate under the new contractor. For example, there is a potential for a fourth-year electrical apprentice to earn over \$20,000 less per year, including site and tool allowances, than at other sites in Queensland.

This is not about demonising construction firms or subcontractors. The ongoing safety of workers on block C is a real concern, and unions have a decent relationship regarding safety on many other Abigroup sites across Queensland. The argument is simply that there should be no reason a different standard should apply in Cairns. It is about workers in Far North Queensland being treated the same as workers on the Gold Coast or in Brisbane. It is the same regarding wages.

I congratulate John Goss constructions on securing the contract for the next stage, block D, of the Cairns Base Hospital redevelopment. With the likely scuttling of the \$155 million Cairns Entertainment Precinct project, construction work has all but dried up in our region, apart from the hospital redevelopment. The reality is that, given the size of the job, around 80 electrical workers are probably going to be needed for block D and there will be 20 to 25 workers coming off the Mount Sheridan Plaza redevelopment, as well as about 40 coming off the Lotus Glen expansion. The timing is right, and it will be up to the workers also to put their best foot forward and put in applications to the successful tenderer. Very importantly, John Goss constructions needs to know that there are local people who want the work on this job, and I support those workers all the way.

Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools; Leeding, Mr D

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.53 pm): I have some wonderful news to share with the House. The other day I had the pleasure of attending the 2012 regional Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools held at Movie World on the fabulous northern Gold Coast. They put on a lovely spread for everyone as well. On the day I had the opportunity to present the award for excellence in middle phase of learning.

Tonight I have the opportunity to congratulate the principal of Eagleby State School, Suzanne Jolly, and deputy principal and project coordinator Lara Smith, who were the winners of the Network Ten Showcase Award for Excellence in the Early Phase of Learning. You can imagine my excitement, after hearing five or six different schools being announced, to learn that Eagleby State School, with 350 students in the northern end of my electorate, had been crowned the winner of that award. That is wonderful news for Eagleby State School.

Congratulations also go to Woongoolba State School in the wonderful northern Gold Coast and, more importantly, the Coomera electorate. The Woongoolba State School has about 200 students, who strive to be leaders. Congratulations go to those 200 students and their teachers and principal David Cramb for winning the Queensland University of Technology Showcase Award for Excellence in Leadership. This little school out in the cane fields—it has been around for about 138 years—has been crowned the winner of the Queensland University of Technology showcase award for excellence in leadership. It is a wonderful school with wonderful people.

On a sad note, I advise the House that today on the Gold Coast I attended on behalf of the minister a function commemorating the anniversary of Damian Leeding's passing. They have turned a negative into a positive in that they have instituted a golf day that will be an ongoing fundraiser for Police Legacy. Some 348 young people from 200 families have benefited from funds raised for Police Legacy.

Collinsville Power Station

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.56 pm): I rise to speak on the possible closure of Collinsville Power Station. The federal government, under its Clean Energy Future program, a program aimed more at buying Greens votes than reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is negotiating to purchase Collinsville Power Station with a view to closing it down. This has not only caused anger in the Burdekin electorate; it has also sent shock waves throughout North Queensland, which will be without a valuable backup power source.

Collinsville Power Station is a coal fired, 190-megawatt-generating facility which contributes power into the North Queensland electricity grid. It generally operates as a peak load facility, contributing electricity to the grid during peak load periods. Collinsville Power Station represents 30 per cent of the grid connected power-generating capacity in Queensland north of Rockhampton. Through the Energy Security Fund, the Gillard Labor government is pursuing contracts for closure, seeking to support the closure of around 2,000 megawatts of highly emissions intensive generation capacity by 2012 in Australia. Ratch-Australia Corporation is the owner of Collinsville Power Station. Ratch is Thailand's largest independent power producer and it also owns Townsville Power Station and Windy Hill.

I understand that negotiations for the purchase of Collinsville Power Station are to be concluded within weeks, by 30 June. And I understand that the federal government is paying more than its program allowed. Suggested figures are over \$500 million. The power purchase agreement in relation to Collinsville was well out of the money and had to be treated as an 'onerous contract' in Stanwell's books. Stanwell has negotiated and executed a termination of the agreement, not yet unconditional because of a condition precedent which Ratch has yet to satisfy. One cannot help but wonder if this is taxpayers' money being misspent.

The closure of Collinsville Power Station will essentially mean the loss of a reliable backup power supply, with North Queensland forced to rely on Central Queensland transmission lines, equating to an additional cost to consumers in the long run. A decent cyclone could also quite conceivably leave the region without power for extended periods of time. This prospect is also creating justifiable concerns.

Queenslanders are already poised to feel the effects of the job-destroying carbon tax, which will increase cost-of-living pressures, and now the Labor government is negotiating to close down jobs as well as power supplies, with no suggestion of replacement. The closure of this station will have a direct impact on approximately 50 employees, not to mention the additional contractors who maintain the power station. The community wants information, particularly in relation to the 50 local jobs that are now potentially at risk as well as the additional loss of security that the Collinsville plant provides as a reliable electricity supply to North Queensland. It is of concern that this is all occurring without the general knowledge of the local and broader regional communities and without consultation or discussion about what the impacts on North Queensland may be.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.59 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Grant, Grimwade, Gullely, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Rice, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young