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THURSDAY, 7 JUNE 2012



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Interjections During Points of Order



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, from time to time I will issue warnings to groups of members or particular members about matters of order. I have noticed an increasing propensity for other members who have not been the subject of the warning to then interject, usually with some unhelpful advice or comment. I make it clear to all honourable members that the chair does not need the assistance of members when attempting to bring order to proceedings. Members who interject in such circumstances are themselves being disorderly.

Error in Division



Madam SPEAKER: Yesterday evening the Manager of Opposition Business rose on a matter of privilege relating to an apparent error in the tally on the division on the Leader of the Opposition's amendments to clause 7. The tally indicated the presence of the Deputy Premier, and the Manager of Opposition Business alleged that the Deputy Premier was not in fact in the chamber during the division. The Deputy Premier subsequently confirmed to the House that he was not present. I am advised by the Clerk that after consultation with the Senior Government Whip it appears there was an error and the vote should have been recorded as ayes 11, noes 68—not ayes 11, noes 69. In accordance with standing order 105(7), the record will be amended accordingly. Finally, I remind the whips that it is the responsibility of both the government and opposition whips to check the total count of both sides of a division and they certify to that effect on each tally sheet before providing it to the Speaker.

PETITION

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

Queensland Hospitals, Workplace Facilities

69 petitioners, requesting the House to take all steps necessary to ensure designated workplace facilities for doctors in Queensland hospitals [254].

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Report Recommendations, Implementation



Hon. CKT NEWMAN (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.34 am): On 16 March 2012 the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry delivered its final report into the 2010-11 floods. The final report contained 177 recommendations covering a broad range of matters, including the management of Wivenhoe Dam, flood plain management, land use planning, performance of private insurers, management of mines, the emergency response to the floods and dam management. I reiterate my government's previous commitment to fully implement all of those recommendations for which we are responsible. Today I table my government's formal response to the final report.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government Response to Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Final Report [255].

Clearly, the final report recommendations outline a set of actions to be undertaken by all levels of government, including Commonwealth, state and local government, to improve Queensland's resilience to flood disasters in the years to come. This response sets out in detail my government's long-term plan for tackling the many tasks set for us by the commission of inquiry and in particular our plan to support and work closely with local governments on the ground in implementing the recommendations. We have closely engaged with the Local Government Association of Queensland in developing the response, especially on their concerns about timeliness and costs of flood studies and mapping. Queenslanders deserve better flood maps but we cannot send councils broke in developing them. We will aim to develop a sound, properly prioritised risk based flood mapping system across the state of Queensland.

The task ahead of us covers a number of important and complex issues, such as the conduct of flood studies including for the Brisbane River catchment, developing a regulatory framework for levies, management strategies for abandoned mines and the operation of dams. The task ahead of us is enormous and we will take a disciplined and structured approach to our implementation responsibilities. We have divided the program of work into five key streams—planning, building, environment and mines, emergency management and dams. A director-general from a relevant department will be directly and personally responsible for driving the implementation of work within each of these streams.

While the commission has set a comprehensive program of work for the government, the final report also includes many recommendations which cross over state and local government responsibilities. There are many recommendations which will need to be addressed by individual councils. My government will provide funding support to assist councils in this task. The existing Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program will include an allocation of \$40 million over three years for council projects to implement commission recommendations. Additionally, my government is establishing a new Floodplain Security Scheme as part of our Royalties for the Regions initiative which will include a state contribution of \$40 million over four years. This scheme will provide funding for local governments, flood security and mitigation infrastructure.

The Australian government also has a responsibility to contribute to flood mitigation measures, especially in regional Queensland, and we are seeking an equal contribution from the Australian government towards this important scheme. I will say today that it is in their long-term financial interest to make a contribution because it will reduce the amount that they would have to pay in the future under the NDRRA arrangements.

My government does not underestimate the work that will need to be done in delivering on the commission's recommendations. There are no quick fixes to the many problems identified in the report, but my government is strongly committed to better planning and better protection for communities across Queensland. We are determined to learn from Queensland's recent flood disasters and do everything possible to deliver better flood security for all Queenslanders.

Major Projects, Environmental Protection

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.38 am): I wish to advise the House that today just before lunch I will be conducting a special briefing for business leaders from this state—I must say they will be predominantly drawn from the city of Brisbane—on the issue of environmental and regulatory approvals. This will be supported by my director-general, Mr Jon Grayson, and the Deputy Coordinator-General. We will be taking the business leaders through the current approval framework for major projects in this state. I am not just talking about resource projects; I am talking about other major projects that will trigger an Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act action under that federal legislation. I will be pointing out to the business leaders today the very aggressive approach of the federal government in using that legislation. I have talked to members of the federal parliament who were there in 1999 when the EPBCA was originally introduced, and the message I get from them is that what is now occurring is far and away above what was ever contemplated when that act came into force.

What I will be indicating to the business leaders is our approach to work constructively with the Commonwealth to streamline environmental approval procedures. I will be talking about the way that we would like to see that happen and what we are prepared to put on the table with the Commonwealth. For the information of members, it is quite clear that we respect that the federal government has those national environmental matters of concern. We have said to the Prime Minister that we are happy to have procedures and processes that are accredited by the Commonwealth. We have said that we are prepared to have federal officials embedded in the Queensland government permanently to work side by side to give confidence to the federal government that we are undertaking the right assessment procedures. I have also said that we are prepared to subject the Queensland government's processes to regular and comprehensive audits by external parties as designated by the Commonwealth. We cannot be clearer. We cannot be more constructive than that. That is the way we need to go.

The final point I want to make to the business leaders today is that, if they think it will only be resource projects that are affected by the current use of the legislation, they should think again. We have already seen Minister Burke knock back tourism projects on the Queensland coast. We have seen Minister Burke say that koalas are vulnerable, and I can only conclude that he was not happy with the actions of the previous Labor government. What that could mean ultimately in South-East Queensland is that we would see federal referrals for quite modest development projects in the Redlands and indeed other parts of South-East Queensland. Finally, for people on the land, we know that the federal government will use the act to increase the regulatory burden on people involved in the sugar industry, the pastoral industry and other areas as well. There does need to be some sense in all of this. There does need to be a constructive, forward approach. I will be outlining how this government wishes to take these matters forward today with the leaders of business in Queensland.

Premier of Queensland's Export Awards

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I advise the House that applications for the 2012 Premier of Queensland's Export Awards are now open. This program targets businesses which are successfully exporting Queensland products or services overseas, and I would encourage all businesses to nominate for an award. The Newman government recognises the invaluable role our exporting companies have in contributing to Queensland's economic growth and creating jobs, whether they are small family-run businesses or larger companies servicing our resources sector. These awards give these businesses the opportunity to be recognised for their achievements at a state and national level. This year marks the 23rd anniversary of the awards and, with many businesses across the state doing it tough, it is a great way to recognise the outstanding achievements of some of Queensland's top exporters.

Last year's Queensland winner, Brisbane based mining company Sedgman—I am sure many members know of Sedgman—went on to win the nation's top prize, the Prime Minister's Australian Exporter of the Year. I wonder whether she will be presenting that award, Premier, this time around! Sedgman is a market leader in the design, construction and operation of coal-handling and preparation plants in Australia. Tough global conditions and the high Aussie dollar have made export conditions for Queensland businesses extremely difficult. On top of this, many businesses are still recovering from floods and disasters. That is why this year's awards are more important than ever, as they show the strength and resourcefulness of many businesses that not only survived but thrived in such circumstances. It is these businesses that often employ innovative approaches to stay ahead of their competitors and that continue to grow and prosper despite adversity in the market. These businesses will be essential to growing our economy and to providing the jobs—the long-term jobs—that Queenslanders want and need.

The Newman government realises the contribution these businesses make to our great state. We are determined to once again make Queensland a business-friendly place and grow a four-pillar economy—to deliver an economic environment which gives these businesses every chance to grow and deliver the certainty they need after two decades of Labor mismanagement. Applications for the awards close on 27 July and the winners will be announced at the Trade Week awards ceremony to be held on Thursday, 8 November. Winners will then go on to compete against their interstate counterparts at the 50th annual Australian Export Awards national ceremony on 27 November. I encourage all members to let their local business communities know about these awards and encourage all suitable candidates to apply.

Queensland Rail City Network, Audit

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.45 am): Shortly after coming to government, I ordered an independent audit of Queensland Rail's South-East Queensland rail network to find out why reliability under Labor had dropped to a three-year low. Most members would remember two particular incidents on 28 February and again on 14 March that combined to affect 297 services, including 124 cancellations, causing massive morning disruptions for commuters and businesses. Those incidents and the former Labor government's mismanagement led to the lowest peak on time running in almost three years. As a result, people were losing confidence in our rail network—just as they had lost faith in the Bligh Labor government, which, let us remember, had run up such huge debt that it could not afford to replace rail assets that had degraded to such a point that they presented a significant risk to the network.

The audit is examining rail reliability and includes physical assessments of track and civil structures, signalling, telecommunications, overhead line equipment and rolling stock. I inform the House of the progress of the audit ahead of the final report being presented to me at the end of this month. I am advised by the audit team that no immediate issues of safety requiring the attention of the rail safety regulator were identified during the physical inspections of the network infrastructure and rolling stock. That is certainly good news, because the safety of the travelling public must remain our No. 1 priority. I have also been provided with details on the cause of the two incidents on 28 February and 14 March. The 28 February incident was the result of a dewirement about 500 metres west of Roma Street station at 4.25 am. A wedge clamp that holds the overhead wires was found to have been installed incorrectly about five years ago. Queensland Rail has now inspected a further 29 wedge clamps in the Roma Street precinct, issued a maintenance alert for all wedge clamps across the network and reviewed and assessed the installation procedure of this type of wedge clamp.

The 14 March incident occurred at 5.45 am and was caused by three-metre-long bougainvillea canes growing about 300 metres west of Milton station coming into contact with the overhead power equipment. A routine inspection prior to the incident had identified the vegetation growing on the face of a cutting as a potential hazard, but corrective action had not occurred at the time of the incident. Queensland Rail has now removed the overgrown vegetation from the face of this cutting and is reviewing its vegetation management and inspection procedures. Let me reassure rail passengers that, while the previous Labor government had a head-in-the-sand approach towards rail maintenance, the

Newman government does not. We are committed to addressing maintenance issues and restoring public confidence in our rail network as part of our wider plans to make public transport services more affordable, frequent and reliable.

Queensland Health

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.48 am): The LNP government is improving the delivery of health services in Queensland. We are empowering local communities and the workforce and cutting waste. It is about better services and better outcomes for patients. Three weeks ago I announced the appointment of chairs to the new hospital and health boards. The next step is to deliver change at a system level. For too long Queensland Health has been a large and inflexible organisation that has not been accountable for its actions. It was a culture driven by the previous government that refused to make health ministers accountable for their actions also. That culture needs to change. The staff of Queensland Health are dedicated, but they were let down by the former Labor government.

Members will recall the former Premier's rash and hasty announcement following the fake Tahitian prince revelations that she would split the department in two. We opposed that approach then and we oppose it now. Taking one failing bureaucracy and turning it into two failing bureaucracies was never going to be the answer.

Today, as part of the LNP's reforms, the government puts its cards on the table. We present our vision for the future structure of Queensland Health and its central functions. The key is our focus on front-line health service delivery. I want to ensure that Queensland Health is patient focused and not stymied by the red tape that we saw under Labor. Under this government, from 1 July, as power is devolved to local hospital and health boards, our central office will change, too. This keys into internal consultation that predated Labor's visions for an even bigger, more cumbersome health bureaucracy.

Under this proposal, Queensland Health's head office will become a lean and responsive organisation—a system manager to support our state-wide devolved network. It will be a single agency, but instead of the current nine divisions it will be streamlined into three divisions and two supporting units reporting to a sole director-general. We have done away with the duplication proposed by the former government. We will ensure that the system manager is more accountable in its sphere of responsibility. The system manager will step back from the day-to-day operational management of health services that are delivered by boards. Its core roles will be policy development, planning for future needs and funding services. The system manager will set standards such as those related to patient safety and maintaining legislative compliance. It will coordinate disaster and emergency responses and preventive health messages.

Affected staff will have questions about the change, as they should. That is why a consultation process starts today. Supporting materials will be available for consultation for two weeks following which a final decision on the structure will be made. This is an exciting time for the employees of Queensland Health as we build a new organisation that delivers for the people of this state.

Homelessness

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (9.51 am): The Newman government is committed to helping thousands of Queenslanders who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. I am pleased to announce funding of more than \$70 million over the next three years to continue vital accommodation and support services for homeless people. This funding will be distributed to 39 organisations across the state—from Coolangatta to the cape and to Mount Isa.

Homelessness is a complex issue and there are many reasons people find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness. Family conflict, financial stress, domestic violence, relationship breakdowns, addictions, mental illness or other circumstances that are quite often beyond the control of the individual means that sometimes people, along with their families, find themselves facing homelessness. Increases to the cost of living have also put enormous pressure on people.

This funding is part of the temporary supported accommodation initiative to provide a specialist homelessness service to assist people who are homeless or who are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. It is vital in helping to provide temporary accommodation and will go a long way towards addressing homelessness and helping those most at risk.

This government works in partnership with many community organisations across Queensland to help people get their lives back on track. For example, St Vincent De Paul will receive more than \$125,000 per annum for the next three years to provide a specialist homeless service in Warwick. As part of this specialist homeless service, they accept referrals from local schools and state and Australian government agencies. They have also assisted 38 clients over the past 12 months. Further afield, the Lena Passi Women's Shelter on Thursday Island will receive more than \$473,000 each year over the next three years to continue its important work. Additionally, \$234,000 in funding each year for the next

three years will be provided to the Emergency and Long Term Accommodation in Moranbah service. This service helps homeless people find stable and secure housing and works closely with local housing service providers and community organisations. In the past year alone, the service has helped 45 local people and their children to secure a roof over their heads. I am pleased that this funding will enable important services like those to continue. The Newman government is committed to helping the most vulnerable in our community and we will continue to work closely with our non-government partners to deliver services to every part of our great state.

Water Infrastructure

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (9.54 am): During the past two years surplus water pipes from LinkWater's five bulk water projects have been stored at a leased site at Teviot Road, Greenbank in the event that they may be required for maintenance or for future projects. These are legacies from the former government's \$7 billion-plus water infrastructure spend, which saw pipelines constructed at any price because Labor failed to pay attention to infrastructure until disaster was almost upon us. Few will forget 2006 and 2007, when water levels in our major dams fell to under 15 per cent capacity. Labor then threw taxpayers' cash at construction companies, paying multiple prices over the normal construction costs in order to have the water grid in place before dam levels reached critical lows.

Mr Rickuss: Invoiced entry.

Mr McARDLE: I can advise the House that the last remnants of this reckless spending, which is 500 lengths of leftover pipe totalling five kilometres, have now been stored at Teviot Road, Greenbank. During the construction phase of the water grid, this area was used as a lay-down area for pipes being used in the 94 kilometre Southern Regional Water Pipeline, the 8.4 kilometre Eastern Pipeline Interconnector, the 47 kilometre Northern Pipeline Interconnector—stage 1, the 48 kilometre Northern Pipeline Interconnector—stage 2 and the 38 kilometre Toowoomba Pipeline.

The majority of the pipes stored were being kept for the proposed Cedar Grove Connector project, which was originally due to be delivered by 2015. This will now not be required and it is hoped that the balance of the pipes will, in fact, be disposed of by auction.

Finally, we are coming to the closure of phase 1 of the Beattie-Bligh government's disastrous water grid outlay of funds. Indeed, the comment made by the member is quite right: it was payment by invoice. There was no proper process put in place to account for the funds or for the process undertaken. This government will now clean up the mess.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.56 am): The Campbell Newman-led LNP government is committed to establishing agriculture as one of the four pillars of our economy—part of the plan to reinvigorate the state's economy and to get Queensland back on track. Today, I am proud to be here as the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to update the House on our election commitment of creating a stand-alone agricultural department. The structure of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry—DAFF Queensland—is one that all Queensland primary producers can now be proud of. The establishment of DAFF Queensland is the first step of what is yet to come. We want Queenslanders—and indeed all Australians—to recognise that agriculture, fisheries and forestry are priorities for this Queensland government.

I have already announced 15 front-line staff in the regions to tackle the issue of wild dogs, pests and weeds. No longer will our stakeholders be lost in where to find assistance in those and other areas due to the mega DEEDI of the previous Labor government—a government that undermined the importance of our agricultural, fisheries and forestry industries. It is only through consultation with those on the ground in the industry, attention to detail, motivation and persistent application can great outcomes be achieved. This move to have the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry as a focal point ensures that these ends can be and will be met.

The previous Labor government's lack of attention to many issues in both monetary and policy terms is a disgrace. Wild dogs and pest eradication was neglected, while many fine researchers left after being frustrated that their efforts were not being maximised to assist primary producers in any practical way. Now, our department will work with the sole purpose of considering the vast numbers of issues affecting producers to have a positive effect on their practices and their profits.

In engaging with industry groups, I have found that every sector of every area in my portfolio needs help, be it to cut red tape or to attract and keep skilled employees to continue the important work of producing food and fibre. Under my leadership, decisions will be made for the long-term benefit of our great state. That is clearly the case under our 30-year plan for agriculture where we do intend to achieve the aim of doubling Queensland's food and fibre production by 2040.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.00 am): I wish to advise the House that the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection will be absent from the House today. As mentioned by the Premier yesterday, the Deputy Premier and Minister Powell are meeting with the federal environment minister in Sydney to resolve issues in relation to federal government approval of the Alpha project. Minister Langbroek is attending the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment in Darwin.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Auditor-General Strategic Plan

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (10.00 am): I wish to table an update for the Legislative Assembly regarding the work of the Auditor-General. The Finance and Administration Committee is required under the Auditor-General Act to liaise with the Auditor-General with regard to the preparation of his strategic audit plan. The committee will be consulting with the other portfolio committees and the Committee of the Legislative Assembly as part of this process.

The Auditor-General's first strategic audit plan was due to be published by 1 July 2012. The act allows for another date to be agreed between the Auditor-General and the committee. The Auditor-General has requested, in view of the timing of the election, the subsequent reconstitution of the committee system and the government's decision to defer the budget until September, an extension for the finalisation of the plan until 30 September 2012. In line with section 87 of the act, the committee has agreed to this request and the date for the first strategic audit plan will now be 30 September 2012.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Update regarding the work of Auditor-General [256].

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.01 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Education and Innovation Committee's *Report No. 1: portfolio subordinate legislation* tabled between 29 November 2011 and 30 May 2012. This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled on 29 November 2011 which was considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 7 June. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation and recommends that the Legislative Assembly note the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 1—Subordinate legislation tabled between 29 November 2011 and 30 May 2012 [257].

STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 2 of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. This report examines subordinate legislation 233, *State development and public works organisation (state development areas) amendment regulation No. 2 2011* and subordinate legislation 235, *Electricity amendment regulation No. 2 2011*. This subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 20 June 2012. The committee did not identify any significant areas regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 2—Subordinate legislation tabled on 29 November 2011 [258].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

 **Madam SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the schools visiting today: Moreton Downs State School, represented by the member for Murrumba; Enoggera State School, represented by the Premier; and Albany Creek State School, represented by the member for Everton. Time for questions has begun and will go to 11.02 am.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Capital Works Program

Ms PALASZCZUK (10.02 am): My question is to the Premier. The Costello Commission of Audit's terms of reference include 'the adequacy, affordability and deliverability of the capital program over the forward estimates period'. Will the Premier rule out repeating the actions of the Borbidge government which introduced a capital works freeze, cut projects and froze jobs growth?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I have to correct the assertion made in the question about the actions of the Borbidge government. I do not believe that that is correct and I would be happy to provide more material to the Leader of the Opposition to demonstrate that if she so wishes.

Mr Nicholls: What about the upgrade of the M1?

Mr NEWMAN: I will take that interjection. The M1 is a case in point. I know that the former government enjoyed going and opening the M1 and claiming credit for it. They never had much of a stomach for building roads. They never did, because they never built any infrastructure for many, many years and then in great panic they built a whole lot of infrastructure.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: You see, Madam Speaker, they ask the questions and they do not want to hear the answers. What a surprise!

Ms Trad: You can't answer it!

Mr NEWMAN: I am happy to answer the question. What we are trying to grapple with, and members by now know the figures, is that we have a \$2.8 billion deficit right now, we have \$62 billion worth of debt—thank you, sarcastically, to the members opposite—and that is going to a \$85 billion debt at least in the next 2½ years. Listen to the answer—through you, Madam Speaker—because your crime will continue to be exposed to the people of Queensland day after day, week after week in this place. Through you, Madam Speaker, you people opposite are the ones who actually—

Madam SPEAKER: Premier, I ask you to refer to people in the House by their correct titles.

Mr NEWMAN: The opposition are the ones who did this to Queensland. One of the big challenges we have is the forward capital program. What the CBRC has agreed is that we will adopt innovative approaches in funding capital projects. There are all sorts of ways that we can ensure that vital infrastructure is delivered without actually borrowing money and without needing to use public sector financing that has been done in the past. Members will recall that the previous government talked big on PPPs and it only managed to get a couple going. One was Airport Link, and we will see in a couple of months how well that one does. The other one was the Southport TAFE. Those opposite talk about PPPs; what a proud record after so many years!

We are establishing Queensland Projects within Treasury to fund these projects with the private sector and I can confidently say that the infrastructure needs of Queensland will be met, but they will be met in a far more responsible way than those opposite ever achieved.

Newman Government, Election Commitments

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier. Peter Costello is due to hand down his interim audit next week after he returns from Washington and I ask: will the Premier commit to meeting his \$5.7 billion worth of election commitments within budget, within the promised time frames and without any increases in taxes, fees and charges?

Mr NEWMAN: Once again the Leader of the Opposition makes assertions in the question that are incorrect. I have here our plan. We put this out. How many pages of costings did those opposite hand down? I have here their plan and the costings. How many pages is it? Two pages! Feel the weight and the authority of our plan and see how much more detail we gave the people of Queensland—a proper plan—to ensure that our commitments will be delivered. That is unlike the members of the Labor Party who have a track record of saying things before an election and then doing something else. Let us go on a little voyage down memory lane. Shall we do that? Shall we go down memory lane? Would you like to go down memory lane?

Government members: Yes!

Mr NEWMAN: Okay. Before the last election, what did the bloke who has given us \$85 billion worth of debt say about the fuel subsidy scheme? He said that it would stay. He gave to Queenslanders a solemn promise that it would stay and that they would have a great scheme that no other state has. How long did it take to break that promise? Did it take years to break that promise? No. The promise was broken by those opposite within a matter of three months.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I do not know why they are interjecting. They asked whether we would deliver and I have answered the question. For the benefit of those opposite I repeat: we will deliver and we are proud to deliver. We are delivering right now. Perhaps later today I will talk about all of the things we have delivered already, in only 75 days. We have had 75 days of delivery and commitment to the people of Queensland.

Another solemn promise made by those opposite was that there would be no asset sales. How long did that one last? That was a cynical betrayal of the people of Queensland.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I hear the member for South Brisbane interjecting. While the former Premier was busy betraying Queenslanders, the member for South Brisbane was in Peel Street, working the numbers and holding things together. The member for South Brisbane was protecting the former Premier as she betrayed the working people of Queensland, the GOC workers and the people who were losing their jobs in QR National. Who should they be blaming? That is right: they should blame the people opposite, particularly the member for South Brisbane, who stitched them up and delivered their heads on a plate. We will deliver on our commitments to the people of Queensland. Later I will outline how we will deliver on them.

Newman Government, Achievements

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please advise the House of the achievements of the Newman government over its first 75 days in office?

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lockyer.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her timely and pertinent question. I might need an extension of time, because there is a lot to say. My government is well underway in delivering on its commitments. Is everyone comfortable? Let's go!

What have we done in the first 30 days of government? We appointed the gasfields land and water commissioner. We acted to restore the Coordinator-General's power and authority to properly coordinate and facilitate major projects. We have commenced arrangements for improving access to Trinity Inlet for all cruise liners. We have started work on the Toowoomba range second crossing business case. We have commenced the process to identify state planning powers that can be transferred to local government and we have made it clear to the mayors that that is what is happening. We have commenced preparations to open expressions of interest for independent public schools. We have identified the first 150 classes to be funded for more hours of prep teacher aides. We have acted to remove Labor's extra stamp duty slug of up to \$7,000 on the family home. We have appointed a selection committee for the \$10 million Supporting Women Scholarships program. All the other commitments in our 100-day program are on track to be delivered.

Those opposite laugh, but they should hang their heads in shame because they could never do this. However, we have been doing much more. I can outline some of the other things that we have done that we did not even promise but that will be to the benefit of all Queenslanders. We have announced the development of a plan to renew the government administrative precinct. We have called for registrations of interest for the construction of a new office tower of up to 60,000 square metres to consolidate the office holdings we have and save \$60 million a year. We have announced details of the LNP government's Everyone's Environment Grants. We have announced that the government will undertake a strategic assessment of the Great Barrier Reef and refine—

Ms Trad: That's Labor's.

Mr NEWMAN: I take that interjection. We are doing it and we are going to do it better than those opposite ever could. They had 20 years to protect the reef. We have handed Mungkan Kandju National Park, in central Cape York Peninsula, back to its traditional owners.

Ms Palaszczuk: Labor did that.

Mr NEWMAN: It had 20 years to do it, but it did not do it. We announced the new Commonwealth Games Board and appointed a new chairman. We have made a proper decision on the Commonwealth Games site. We have replaced the chairman of the GOCs. Members opposite should ask me a question about that later on. We have reached in-principle agreement with the Brisbane City Council on a number of issues, including starting immediately on upgrading rail crossings, handing back parklands to council and getting the stalled Howard Smith Wharves project going. We have cut corporate boxes and spending on advertising consultancies and travel by 20 per cent. We have announced new measures to crack down on illegal gun crime. We have launched a competition for Queensland high school students to experience the Anzac spirit firsthand. We have a landmark deal with the Brisbane City Council on

graffiti. We have found over \$100 million in savings due to Labor's poor and reckless financial management. We have repealed sustainability declarations and we are consulting with local government on changes to the Local Government Act.

(Time expired)

Mr STEVENS: I move—

That the Premier be further heard.

Mr PITT: I rise to oppose the motion moved by the Manager of Government Business.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Mr NEWMAN: I would not have gone so fast if I had known that people were going to be so generous to me this morning! I thank honourable members and I will keep going. We have commenced drafting an agreement between state and local governments—

Mr PITT: For the benefit of the House and all here, we ask that the remainder of the Premier's speech be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of Opposition Business, a member cannot seek an incorporation on behalf of another member. That is out of order.

Mr NEWMAN: How long has he been here? How long was he a minister? They do not want to hear this and, more importantly, they do not want Queenslanders to hear it. We are developing a port strategy to mitigate the impacts of coastal development. We have approved almost one major project for every business day of the Newman government. We have reached a new EB agreement with our nurses to make sure they are properly remunerated, and I thank the Minister for Health for that.

This government is moving fast. It has hit the ground running. It is working to deliver the things that we promised to Queenslanders. I am fascinated that today members of the opposition would come into this place and ask questions about delivery. We deliver. They do not deliver; they talk, they hold hands and we know what they all sing. What do they sing?

Government members: *Kumbaya!*

Mr NEWMAN: That is right. They sing, they hold hands and they have hugs. When they are not doing that, they work the numbers and have internecine fights. They fight and claw at one another. Ours is a record of achievement. We have restored the Criminal Code provision about lying to parliament and we have established the Commission of Audit. All of the things that were promised are happening.

National Parks

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. I refer the minister to the Costello Commission of Audit and the government's own cost-cutting program, including job losses and cuts to front-line services. I ask: will the minister rule out the imposition of general entry fees to Queensland's national parks?

Mr DICKSON: I thank the member for the question. We on this side of parliament are here to make sure front-line services continue to be delivered for the people of Queensland, and that is what we will continue to do. Under the old Labor government the problems in this state went on for far too long. They burned up to nearly \$85 billion and had to borrow money to pay staff wages. You should be hanging your heads in shame. Every front-line service under national parks will be looked after. We have just over 800 rangers and those are front-line service people. They will be out there continually looking after national parks. You really do not care about national parks because—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Minister, please address members by their proper titles.

Mr DICKSON: The Labor Party will never look after national parks. You would be very aware that you had management plans for only 17 per cent of national parks. In this great state we have 13 million hectares of national parks and you had management plans for 17 per cent. Were you asleep at the wheel? What happened? Tell me: what happened? Answer me that question. What were you doing?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, resume your seat.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for South Brisbane. Minister, I ask you to refer to members by their title and not to use the term 'you'. I call the minister.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. The Labor Party have run this great state into debt. They did not look after our national parks. They did not look after racing. They did not look after sport.

Mr Mulherin: You've already said that.

Mr DICKSON: Everything that falls under my portfolio was left to go to rack and ruin. I would love the former minister for racing to ask a question about racing sometime soon. I really do look forward to that. I do thank the opposition for their question. I look forward to many more coming in my direction.

Credit Rating

Mr GRANT: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer please inform the House of Queensland's debt position and credit rating? Is he aware of any alternative policies?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Springwood for his question. During the election campaign I visited Springwood with the then candidate and councillor for that part of the world down there in Logan. We had a very good discussion with businesspeople, who were shocked to learn of the state of the debt and the deficit that Labor had led Queensland into.

We all recall that Queensland had a AAA credit rating and we all recall that it was lost by the Labor Party in 2009. At that stage debt was \$43 billion and was estimated to reach \$74 billion. Now, under the Labor plan, it is proposing to reach \$85 billion in 2014-15. Members will also recall that I have referred to the incoming government brief, which mentions the fact—and members may even now remember some of it—that Queensland's debt level is unsustainable and requires urgent remedial action in this term of government. I delved further into the independent reports that we received as an incoming government. I thought I would relay to members some information from the Queensland Treasury Corporation incoming government brief. I know members on this side are financially literate, do want to understand the impact of borrowing on the state's finances and know what it means in terms of getting this state back on track. Here is what the Queensland Treasury Corporation incoming brief says. For the benefit of those opposite I will quote from it in the vain hope that they may at some stage learn something. It says—

Feedback from QTC's recent financial markets interactions indicates that market participants consider the State's fiscal position to be unsustainable and are looking for the Government to deliver a credible strategy to address the State's level of debt and ongoing budget deficits as a matter of priority.

I am sure honourable members will find that this sounds hauntingly familiar. It goes on—

Prompt action to develop, implement and communicate such a strategy is essential to support QTC's ongoing ability to access funds.

Mr Rickuss: What would have happened if—

Mr NICHOLLS: Wait, member for Lockyer. It goes on—

The State's debt has reached unprecedented levels. Together with its published forward estimates showing an even greater volume of debt will be required, Queensland is now in 'uncharted waters' with respect to the volume of debt on issue and the resultant interest bill.

It is not simply the fact that Queensland is rated AA+ relative to the AAA rating of Australia's other mainland states ... In light of the current economic and market environment, it is also the State's:

- significantly higher current levels of debt
- significantly higher forecast borrowings, and
- need for a clear strategy to address the deficit and debt levels.

There you have it: we are in uncharted waters as a result of Labor. I also table for the benefit of the House a graph titled Moody's Investor Service's Comparison of States' Debt Burdens. The green line on this graph is where we were heading under Labor.

Tabled paper: Graph, undated, titled 'Moody's Investors Service's Comparison of States' Debt Burdens' [[259](#)].

(Time expired)

Just Futures Strategy

Mr PITT: My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. The Just Futures Indigenous justice strategy was launched in December last year to help reduce the incarceration rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, who are currently 12 times more likely to be in prison than non-Indigenous Queenslanders. With the Costello audit pending, will the minister today rule out axing the Just Futures task force as well as other relevant bodies like QATSIAC?

Mr Nicholls: What about the \$85 billion in debt? Don't you understand that?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Treasurer. I call the minister.

Mr ELMES: I thank the member for Mulgrave for his question. I know that he does have a very real interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. I could not help but hear the comment from the Treasurer, 'What is it that they don't understand about \$85 billion worth of debt?' It is a problem. I hope that the honourable member heard the answer to the question that the Treasurer just gave about where we are in this state in terms of uncharted waters.

I can tell the member that every service delivery operation in my department is under review. It is not under review—

Ms Palaszczuk: In the service delivery?

Mr ELMES: Before the member goes on, this review is not about going out and cancelling these things. What we are trying to do is make them more efficient and ensure that, instead of the service delivery that is undertaken by my department going through all these layers of bureaucracy—as it tends to do—we deliver real services on the ground to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We want to ensure that their aspirations are taken into account so that we can deliver better education and better health facilities. We are also hoping to help deliver a long-held ideal for those Indigenous people living in the communities on the cape—and it is one that is very dear to the Premier's heart. We want to help them have the opportunity to own their own homes and be able to fulfil their aspirations.

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order. Under standing order 113, relevance, I want to find out when the minister will be answering the question.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The minister is addressing issues in his portfolio, but I ask him to address the question.

Mr ELMES: I understand where the member for Mulgrave is coming from, but he needs to understand—and I am sure he does because of his time as the previous minister—some of the difficulties that exist in all of the Indigenous communities not only in the cape but throughout the state. We are going to go through and look at all of the plans that we have. We will look at all of the funding opportunities that we have and we are going to make sure that, dollar for dollar, we deliver as much of that onto the ground to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as we can.

Transport Infrastructure

Mr WATTS: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister please advise the House of the current status of infrastructure projects listed in the Qtrip document?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for his question. Even though he has only been in this House for a short time, I know how committed and dedicated he is to his local community. I say to the House that at the weekend we saw revealed a \$382 million Labor con perpetrated on Queensland, a \$382 million fraud perpetrated on Queensland by Labor. We saw that Labor promised a whole raft of promises—projects in road and transport—that they knew they did not have one dollar to pay for. They had maxed out the credit card, they could not get the lay-by at Harvey Norman, they did not have one brass razoo to pay for them. Did that stop them promising these things? No, they went out and promised them anyway. It was a \$382 million con perpetrated on Queenslanders, a \$382 million fraud perpetrated on Queenslanders and a \$382 million hoax perpetrated on Queenslanders. Labor committed a \$382 million bribe ahead of the election on Queenslanders knowing that they did not have one dollar to pay for it. The reality is that these are many worthy projects. They deserve to be considered. However, Labor knew and the then transport minister, now Leader of the Opposition, knew there was not one dollar to pay for them. They knew the situation.

What is the task for the LNP government? What is our task? Our task is to strive to meet as many of these projects as we can. We have to do the hard yards. We have to find the money. We have look to where we can find savings and efficiencies to get these projects up. But at the weekend when this was revealed, this \$382 million con on Queenslanders by Labor, what else was said? This is what the Leader of the Opposition said about it. The Leader of the Opposition has been reported in the *Courier-Mail* as saying, 'None of this funding was set in stone.' And what was she quoted as saying? What did she say? Here we go, Premier. 'Those projects were always subject to re-evaluation.' And what is re-evaluation code for? Breaking election promises.

Mr Newman: Breaking a promise.

Mr EMERSON: Just like they re-evaluated asset sales, Premier. Treasurer, you would remember when they re-evaluated the fuel subsidy. Let me say again what the Leader of the Opposition said about the \$382 million con by Labor: 'Those projects were always subject to re-evaluation.'

Public Service, Jobs

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the Costello Commission of Audit and to the government's own cost-cutting program including job losses and cuts to front-line services and I ask—

Government members interjected.

Ms TRAD:—will the Premier rule out rationalising the permanent public sector workforce as a result of the Costello review?

Mr Newman: I couldn't hear it.

Ms TRAD: Your own members were heckling.

Madam SPEAKER: I will ask for order in the House. The member deserves to be heard. I will ask the member if she would repeat the question.

Ms TRAD: I refer the Premier to the Costello Commission of Audit and to the government's own cost-cutting program including job losses and cuts to front-line services, and I ask: will the Premier rule out rationalising the permanent public sector workforce as a result of the Costello Commission of Audit?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for South Brisbane for her question. The first thing I need to do is provide some context around any answer that I give. The first piece of context I give is that we are heading for \$85 billion worth of debt and we have a \$2.8 billion deficit. On the projections we inherited from the Australian Labor Party government that was just thrown out of office, next year's deficit will be higher than \$2.8 billion; it will be \$4.8 billion. That is what we know. I do not know what the geniuses opposite think we should do, but we do need to act.

One thing we need to remember is that they had a voluntary separation program that saw 5,500 public servants being kicked out the door. That is what they were doing. Let us be very clear: although they would never admit it, they saw the need to downsize the Public Service. That is what they were doing very, very clearly.

Ms Palaszczuk: People were given a chance. Tell us your plan.

Mr NEWMAN: The interjections again show the breathtaking hypocrisy from those opposite. So what are we to do? Here is what we have committed to do. Again, that question was making an assertion that was untrue. We have made a commitment to maintain front-line services. I made the point earlier in the week that the Labor Party seem to think front-line service maintenance is all about maintaining all the people who are on the front line rather than having any sort of reform, any sort of change, any sort of technology. If they had their way, we would have an army of people in the Public Service writing on ledgers and recording information with quill pens. They would not use computers. These Luddites would not use computers because that would mean that there would be job losses. But I think I have illustrated the point.

So what is our commitment? We have said that there will be no forced redundancies in the general Public Service. That is what we have said: there will be no forced redundancies. We have been faithful to that and we will continue to be faithful to that. We have said that we will maintain front-line services. We have said, by the way, that we are committed to giving hardworking public servants proper pay rises. I know there is a bit of argy-bargy at the moment about the teachers' pay deal. But guess what? We have 2.7 per cent on the table for teachers, whom we respect because they are hardworking public servants who do a great job with our kids. The CPI is 1.6 per cent. What did the previous government—and there are members of the former cabinet opposite—offer public servants? The maximum they would give was 2.5 per cent. Here is an LNP government who has already given more than 2.5 per cent, given more than inflation. So I hope that demonstrates where we are coming from.

There is a huge problem. The Treasurer has spoken today about the debt position. We have a crisis that we have to deal with. We have to turn this ship around. We have to actually get it back on a sound financial footing because the only alternative is to put up taxes and charges and we do not stand for that. They do; we do not.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mrs OSTAPOVITCH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Last sitting week the House was told of the search for legal advice which might enable action against parties on the botched Health payroll contract. Now we know the \$1.2 billion cost of that contract, has the minister made progress in the search for the missing legal advice?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the member for Stretton for her question. I think most Queenslanders would have been absolutely shocked and astounded yesterday with revelations that the Health payroll debacle, which was beset upon the people of Queensland and our hardworking health workers by the failed former Labor government, was fast approaching the cost of \$1¼ billion as a bare bones minimum price. Madam Speaker, you can only imagine people's shock and horror with regard to that.

The question that many Queenslanders are asking today, as they have been asking in the past, is why isn't someone legally or criminally liable for what is the greatest IT bungle in the history of government IT systems in Australia? Why isn't someone responsible? Why isn't the Leader of the Opposition coughing up with this information which she is responsible for giving the people of Queensland?

A couple of weeks ago I wrote to the Leader of the Opposition asking her in the spirit of openness and transparency to make the cabinet documents and the deliberations available. The Leader of the Opposition, the Labor leader, refused to do that. Further last week I asked the Leader of the Opposition, the Labor leader, to make available to the people of Queensland the legal advice which they have with regard to this program and who might be legally responsible. The Leader of the Opposition said, 'If

there's any information you can't get, I will give it to you.' What I have discovered in the last week is this: there is some very interesting advice that we have not received to date and the Labor leader is able to make it available to us.

Madam Speaker, what do you think would be involved in the Mallesons damages options paper on the IBM payroll contract, which was prepared on 19 July and taken to the CBRC on 22 July? What do you think would be in the Mallesons options paper on the IBM payroll system contract, which was prepared on 19 July and taken to the CBRC on 22 July? What do you think would be in the Mallesons, K Bowe and J Swinson—

Honourable members interjected.

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

Mr SPRINGBORG:—memorandum on payroll access to contractors and materials upon termination for orderly disengagement and handover, taken to the CBRC on 22 July? Also, what about the crown law advice to CorpTech in a letter of 20 July on review of Mallesons' previous advice taken to the CBRC on 14 and 26 August? The question is: what is the Leader of the Opposition hiding? The people of Queensland have a right to know who cooked up this little disaster and who can be held accountable for it.

(Time expired)

Emergency Services, Funding

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. I refer the minister to the Costello Commission of Audit and to the government's own cost-cutting programs including job losses and cuts to front-line services, and I ask: will the minister rule out any changes to the funding of ambulance and fire and rescue services in Queensland as a result of the Costello review?

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for Rockhampton for the question. For the sake of members in the chamber, let me paint the picture straight-up. We have heard from the Premier and the Treasurer today that we are heading towards \$85 billion in debt and we have a \$2.8 billion budget deficit. We have three previous ministers sitting on the opposition front bench: 'Debt', 'Deficit' and 'Deceit'. We have three other members sitting up the back over there: 'See-no-evil', 'Hear-no-evil' and 'Speak-no-evil'. Then we have the member for Rockhampton, standing up in hypocrisy, forgetting about the 20 years of Labor in this state, and asking what we have been doing in the last two months.

The Premier has alluded to what this state government is doing for the people of Queensland. He is listening to the people of Queensland. We have a Queensland Ambulance Service that in 2009-10 recorded over 13,000 hours of ramping at the back of hospitals. Last year we had over 31½ thousand hours of ramping at the back of hospitals. We have hardworking Queensland Ambulance Service officers—recently I went to the graduation ceremony for 13 officers at Kedron; they are highly skilled, highly professional people serving the people of Queensland, going above and beyond what they have to do—but did we see the previous government support them? No. We have seen them ramped at hospitals, taken away from providing other services in the community and having to work up to 15 hours without extended meal breaks.

All of this is included in the picture of the state's finances left to this government, with the first paragraph stating that the financial stability of this state is unsustainable. We will make whatever decisions we are advised on, always with the best interests of Queenslanders and future generations of Queenslanders at heart, to make sure Queensland gets back on track. We will work with the Queensland Ambulance Service, the QFRS, the rural fire brigade, the SES and the Police Service to ensure they get a better deal not only in relation to any bargaining in the future but also in relation to their staffing numbers. This side of the government does value them and we will make sure we work together in collaboration to get the best for Queenslanders and make sure the high standards we already have are continued into the future for the benefit of not just the members in this House but all Queenslanders.

Carbon Tax, Electricity Prices

Mr DOWLING: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. My question regards the Commonwealth government's decision to send out carbon tax propaganda with every household electricity bill. Is the minister aware of any electricity retailer who has refused to take part in this waste of taxpayers' money?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. It is a very incisive question. As members in this House would be aware, we are less than four weeks away from the introduction of the dreaded carbon tax. Believe it or not, the federal government is now trying to peddle a line that the carbon tax really has no impact upon electricity prices. My understanding is that it is spending taxpayers' money putting together propaganda to stick into the envelope with people's electricity bill. Can members think

of anything more wasteful than spending more money trying to placate a public who already does not understand the carbon tax and does not want the carbon tax?

What worries me is that we have an ALP rump on the other side who have always supported the carbon tax. They have never stood up—not at this point in time nor under Premier Beattie or Premier Bligh—and said, 'It is a bad tax.' They are doing everything they can to say, 'We embrace the carbon tax.' At the same time, over the past five years they have increased the price of electricity in this state by up to 60 per cent. Now we will see an additional 10 per cent added because of the carbon tax. I remember Prime Minister Julia Gillard not too long before the election campaign saying words to the effect of, 'I will never impose a carbon tax under my government.' Then a grubby deal was struck with the Greens to get them into power.

Mr Johnson: That is the Labor way.

Mr McARDLE: That is the Labor way all right. A grubby deal was struck to ensure they got into power. And what did they do? As with all Labor Party governments the promise went out the back door, and they stuck us with the carbon tax. What I am saying to retailers is: understand the impact of the carbon tax. It will increase the cost of power year in, year out until the Gillard government is dumped from power and a real government is put in place that cares for the battlers of this state and the battlers of the Commonwealth.

There is one retailer—Ergon Energy—which independently assessed what it was being asked to do by the Commonwealth government and said, 'No way, Jose.' They dumped the idea of inserting the propaganda that every taxpayer in this state is paying to have put into envelopes. They have said no. I say to the people in this state: don't believe the propaganda of the Labor government in Canberra. Don't believe the base mistruths of that government. This carbon tax will impact on every single thing we do, every single thing we buy and every single thing we eat, and it will increase electricity prices year in and year out. It is a shameful tax and it should be gotten rid of immediately.

(Time expired)

Nambour, Youth Services

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Earlier this week I spoke about the importance of the government continuing the funding of youth services in Nambour. I thank the minister for announcing that Community Solutions will take over the youth work in Nambour with an annual budget of \$284,000. What is the scope of work that the new provider has agreed to deliver?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for Nicklin for his question. I did note in his address-in-reply speech his very great interest in raising this issue in the parliament. By way of history, there were some issues prior to the change of providers. An organisation named Namtec had been delivering services in the member's electorate. Before the election, the former government put out a tender to ensure that these services were delivered if not by Namtec then by another provider. It was very pleasing to be able to confirm that Community Solutions was successful in its tender to deliver services in Nambour.

The member is right: I have signed off on \$284,000 worth of funding, and that will be for each year over three years. This service will also work in conjunction with the Police Service and youth justice so that it gets the full coverage that Namtec provided. The funding is provided under the Youth at Risk Initiative to young people at risk of homelessness or who have connection to or interaction with the youth justice system, and I know that is of great interest to the member.

In reference to the question about the services that it will deliver, Community Solutions will offer information, advice and counselling to young people and life skills for those marginalised young people, particularly for those young ones at risk of homelessness and who are in contact with the youth justice system. It is good news for the young people of Nicklin that they still have these services available to them. They are important services. I know of the member's great passion to ensure that they are still available in the local area.

While I am on my feet, I would like to advise honourable members of some other youth initiatives that are funded by the department to support young people in trouble across the state. We have the Youth at Risk Initiative, which supports young people aged between 10 and 25 with complex and multiple needs to reduce poor health outcomes, homelessness, offending and the need for interventions. We also have the Youth Support Coordinator Initiative, which supports young people aged between 14 and 17 years who are at risk of disengaging or who have already disengaged from the education system. So we are attempting to engage them so that they can successfully achieve their year 12 certificate or equivalent, or to transition to education or training to gain those skills required to actively participate in the workforce. The Newman government cares about young people and we are committed to revitalising front-line services in this area.

(Time expired)

Gladstone Ports Corporation

Dr ROBINSON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the House of the reasons behind the need for a shake-up in the management of the Gladstone Ports Corporation?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for his question. I reiterate what I have alluded to in recent days: there does need to be a shake-up in the management of the Gladstone Ports Corporation. This is a vital export port for the state's natural resources and, frankly, I continue to have significant concerns on a number of fronts. In the time available today I will very quickly outline those concerns.

The first is the environment. We have seen some very large projects, including the LNG terminals and the new coal terminals being proposed. After meeting with the fishermen in Gladstone, I am very concerned about what has gone on there and the way the whole environment issue has been handled. The information about what is going on with those dredging operations does not seem to be getting out and this is causing ongoing concerns. The lack of answers and clarity from the GPC means that we must as a government act to give the community confidence. I do not just mean the community of Gladstone itself—and I know the local member is concerned about these matters—but I also mean the broader Queensland community, and I also think the eyes of Australia are on Gladstone in terms of the people who care about the environment. That is one big reason why the government is acting.

The other reason is the issue of financial management. I was advised this morning that the former chairman had some things to say about this in the media today. I am sad to have to respond today but I must respond. I have here one little example, and it is a page from their draft statement of corporate intent for 2012-13 and I will rattle off what it says. Last year the 2011-12 budget for sponsorship, advertising, corporate entertainment, donations and other related activities was \$766,775. What they have actually spent—

A government member: Can you give a breakdown?

Mr NEWMAN: I am happy to give the breakdown. The actual expenditure was \$1,047,490—36 per cent above budget. This is the sort of poor and reckless financial management that we cannot tolerate anymore. But here is the thing that really concerns me. The budget that they are projecting for next year in this draft statement of corporate intent—which was only just received by the minister's department—for sponsorship, advertising, corporate entertainment, donations and other related activities is \$1,052,718. This government has said we need to cut these things by at least 20 per cent and they serve this up to the government. It is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. That is why there will be a comprehensive change in the management of Gladstone port.

TAFE

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the Costello Commission of Audit and the government's own cost-cutting program, including job losses and cuts to front-line services. Will the Premier rule out the merger or rationalisation of TAFE colleges in Queensland, particularly the Bremer Institute of TAFE and the Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am sure, given she has mentioned the Bremer TAFE, that it is a subject that is near and dear to her heart. I do need to again deal with the fact that in the question essentially there is a false premise—that is, that front-line services will be cut. Let me be very, very clear: front-line services under this government will not be cut. They are going to be enhanced. There will be more police, firefighters, nurses and doctors delivering the services to the people of Queensland.

What I am saying as well today is that we do have a plan to enhance front-line services when it comes to technical and further education. I am so concerned about this issue that I not only have a Minister for Education but I have an assistant minister who is responsible directly for that TAFE area and associated skills training. We have made a commitment of \$80 million extra on what was funded in the former Labor government's budget for the training of apprenticeships.

Mr Nicholls: An extra 10,000.

Mr NEWMAN: Yes, 10,000 extra. That is a commitment to actually enhance front-line services, so again the premise of the question was wrong, the assertion was wrong.

As to how we actually use the magnificent but underutilised infrastructure we have across the TAFE structure in Queensland, that is an interesting question. What we need to do is revitalise TAFE. Right now, we have given a new skills and training task force the job of actually doing just that. We are going to go forward and look at the needs of industry and the needs particularly of young people, and then we will come up with a way of better training and skilling Queenslanders. As to commitments about what a particular building will be used for or what will happen over there, I am not going to do that. I think that is absolutely ridiculous.

What I promise the honourable member is that we are determined to ensure that people in her community who want a trade and want to be part of the revitalisation of the Queensland economy that we contemplate—whether it be in construction, agriculture, mining, whatever—have access to great training that meets the needs of employers. We will ensure that people going into that workforce are job ready and really know what they need to do. That is what we are going to do.

We are going to revitalise the TAFE system in partnership with industry and with full consultation with the necessary stakeholders. It will be a quiet revolution in terms of the way it happens in Queensland. We will properly utilise the assets that are available. I hope that allays the member's concerns and I hope in future she can spread the good word out in her electorate about how we are particularly committed to people in her electorate.

Local Government

Mr KEMPTON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister please advise the House as to what shape boundaries of possible future de-amalgamated councils may take?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I thank the member for Cook for his question. He is a man who represents an area that was not given a choice on forced amalgamations—

Mr Johnson: Who was given a choice?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Correct. The question relates to unravelling yet another failed Labor legacy. Granted, it is not to the same extent that my good friend the member for Southern Downs has to do—it is not \$1.2 billion worth—but I can tell members that it hurt some communities, and it hurt them hard. They were battered, they were bruised, they were bullied and they were not given a choice. I look across the chamber and I see seven sets of eyes and not one of those people are friends of local governments. They hate local councils and they hate small business. In recent times, they have even hated workers so I am not sure who they love at all anymore.

Let me get back to the question. This is about giving communities a choice that they were denied five years ago. I have to say that we on this side of the House recognise that in many cases de-amalgamation may be even more painful than the forced amalgamation process. In many cases, communities have to their great credit moved on and said that they will try to make it work, but those communities that do wish to pursue it deserve the opportunity to have a go and we will give them that opportunity.

But this will be a de-amalgamation and it will be just that—along the boundaries of those former shires—because I can tell you something, Madam Speaker: I am not going to be the minister responsible for putting local communities through what they went through five years ago. That will not happen under my watch—absolutely no way. I was there as part of that Size, Shape and Sustainability process when we were all told that we were good little boys and girls and that we were doing such a great job and then seven days later we were annihilated. The former minister did not even have the decency to say to us, 'Sorry, guys, it's no go,' or, 'Can you work a little bit faster?' We were denied that.

I ask the House: how long do members think the former member for Mount Coot-tha was the local government minister for? I am sure they would be thinking it was two years, three years or a whole term of council. It was one year. It was one year to the day—one year! Andrew Fraser was to local government what the member for South Brisbane is to honest, integral campaigning.

Mr Johnson: 'Minister for Destruction'.

Mr CRISAFULLI: He was, and he saw it as another notch on the belt—as a bit of a career platform. That is not what it is for me. It is something I believe in. This process is about righting a wrong—not creating more havoc, as we saw from those opposite.

Public Buildings, General Entry Fees

Mrs SCOTT: My question is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I refer the minister to the Costello Commission of Audit and to the government's own cost-cutting program, including job losses and cuts to front-line services, and I ask—

Mr GRANT: I rise to a point of order with respect to the imputations and the inferences embodied in these questions that are constantly coming from the opposition.

Madam SPEAKER: The member will resume his seat. I have accepted the question and I will let the member complete the question. Member for Woodridge, please start again.

Mrs SCOTT: I refer the minister to the Costello Commission of Audit and to the government's own cost-cutting program, including job losses and cuts to front-line services, and I ask: will the minister rule out the imposition of general entry fees to traditionally free institutions such as the Queensland Art Gallery, the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Museum?

Mr Johnson interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Gregory!

Ms BATES: I thank the member for the question. Labor's legacy was a massive bureaucracy weighing on the shoulders of Queensland families and businesses without any accountability. My department, as I have tried to explain to those opposite, is a new department. It is an amalgamation of the policy leaders who will support an innovative and creative Queensland to get our state back on track. In administering around a \$990 million budget, the 3,900 staff in my department will be working to achieve outcomes—something that would be very foreign to those opposite. I am a businesswoman—I am not a union thug—and I am running my department like a business. We have already said that we will not be cutting any front-line services at all in my department.

In actual fact, those opposite, who always want to put bureaucracy ahead of democracy, need to remember that it was the Labor government that plunged us into \$85 billion worth of debt, that it was the Labor government that gave us a fabulous Tahitian prince who allegedly ripped off \$11 million of our own money, and that it was the Labor government that has now given us a record \$1.253 billion debt to fix the Health payroll. It is just extraordinary! Our government, unlike the former government of those opposite, will be judged on the services that we deliver to the people of Queensland. We will employ the number of public servants we need to deliver those services and we will not be setting up new government bureaucracies to do what businesses can do and will do themselves.

I am advised—and I think the other side has been advised on a number of occasions now—that the Premier has instructed the Public Service Commission to undertake a comprehensive audit of Public Service positions performing critical front-line services. This government has been very clear about what front-line service delivery means, and it is only those employees who provide direct and critical services to the people of Queensland. I am not going to accept the front-line service definition left to my department by the previous government. Labor cannot tell the difference between backroom bureaucracies and front-line services, and I look forward to the results of the Public Service Commission audit. But let us talk more about the waste of the former government: a \$15 billion fire sale of Queensland assets without a mandate and that \$15 billion was wasted through Labor's economic incompetencies; a legacy of mismanaging the economy; pouring money into flawed infrastructure programs and poorly designed programs; and, again as I mentioned, the Queensland Health payroll debacle with workers underpaid, overpaid or not being paid at all and the resultant emotional cost to nurses. Those in this chamber well know that I used to run a hospital and one of the first things that I did every fortnight was pay my staff!

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 5 June (see p. 547), on motion of Mr Nicholls—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (11.05 am): I am pleased today to rise to speak in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill shows that the state government is serious and will tackle the problem that is hurting Queenslanders—that is, the rising cost of living. Last week I spoke in this place about my experiences on the campaign trail and the message that the people of Pumicestone gave to me. While doorknocking through the electorate, the message was clear. At community meetings, the message was clear. At listening posts across the electorate, the message was clear. This message was always the same: 'The cost of living is killing us!' This bill will address many of the root problems associated with the rising cost of living that all Queenslanders face. Our government has not taken the easy way out.

This bill amends seven acts and gives effect to our key election promises to reduce red tape and assist families reduce their cost-of-living expenses. This legislation will amend the following: the Carers (Recognition) Act, the Duties Act, the Payroll Tax Act, the Electricity Act, the Queensland Competition Authority Act, the Building Act and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. Just briefly, let us look at what these amendments will do. The amendment of the Carers (Recognition) Act will streamline the information included in agency annual reports; the amendment of the Duties Act will return the stamp duty concession for homebuyers who purchased a home to live in, a move that will put money back into the pockets of homebuyers; the amendment of the Payroll Tax Act will increase the payroll tax threshold, a move that will put money back into businesses; the amendments to the Electricity Act will, among other things, ensure that the minister has sufficient flexibility to set tariff 11 in accordance with the government's decision to freeze tariff 11; the amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority Act will provide the authority with the legislative teeth to investigate and report on any matter relating to competition, industry or best practice regulation; and the amendments to the Building Act and the

Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act will remove a piece of onerous paperwork that increased workload and administration costs on small business. This red tape was an unnecessary increase on the home seller.

Let us compare these amendments with Labor's solution to solving the cost-of-living problems. In the 2011 budget the Labor government abolished a levy that was a previous Labor government imposition on Queenslanders, the ambulance levy; it provided a pensioner subsidy to lessen the impact of rising local government rates; it provided another pensioner subsidy to lessen the impact of rising water costs in South-East Queensland; it provided a discount for pensioners to assist with the rising costs of an urban fire levy; and another subsidy to assist those living in regional and rural Queensland with the rising cost of electricity. Can members see a trend here? The Labor government did not address the root of the problem and these subsidies, while welcomed in the homes of pensioners, did not assist the families or single working people who saw less and less of their take-home pays. Despite offering pensioners these bandaid solutions to Labor constantly rising the cost of living, I have yet to hear a pensioner say that increased costs of living are not affecting them. This is why Queenslanders voted so emphatically and in such unprecedented numbers to support a change in government.

My husband, Chad, and I together with my parents, Ann and Barry, have run a small business on Bribie Island since the nineties. We have seen and know firsthand the effects of poor government policy on businesses.

What Queenslanders have had to deal with week to week as they try to stretch their pays or pensions is the increased cost of basic food and services. In most cases these increases have been the result of poor government policy or the lack of restraint by government. I sometimes wonder at the ways that the Labor government, both state and federal, can find so many methods to tax their citizens. Both federal and state Labor seem to go out of their way to levy more charges and taxes, and when people complain they bring in a budget with subsidies and giveaways to placate them. What they should have done is what this government is doing with this bill. We are looking at the causes of the price rises and addressing the issue at its source rather than just adding another layer of government bureaucracy.

I return to this bill and how the amendments to each of the acts will impact on Queenslanders. The amendments to the Duties Act will reinstate the transfer duty home concession, the previous transfer duty rate structure and the previous phasing-out point of \$550,000 for reducing the rebate for the transfer duty first home concession for transactions entered into or after 1 July 2012. From the first day I opened my electorate office, people came in to ask me when the stamp duty concession for homeowners would be returned. Many thought that the election of the LNP government would automatically bring back this concession. I had to explain to them that legislation was needed and they urged me to remind the government that the reinstatement of the homeowners concession will really make a difference to them. I know that people have been holding off on purchasing their home. That is why the state government has moved quickly to make these changes. What Labor did not understand is that, by taking away the concession to those who wanted to purchase a home to live in, they increased the cost of purchasing a home and that slowed an already sluggish property market. This amendment will put money back into the budgets of many Queenslanders purchasing a home to live in. These amendments to the Duties Act are another LNP election promise kept.

The amendments to the Payroll Tax Act will increase the exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million from 1 July 2012. The lifting of this exemption will make a real difference to businesses by lessening their costs. Fewer costs will ensure that, as confidence grows, businesses will be able to take advantage and take the steps to employ more staff or, indeed, might just ensure that the business keeps its present staffing levels. These amendments are in line with the LNP's Blueprint for Queensland Small Businesses and honours another election commitment.

The arrival of the electricity bill in the letterbox is not something that many of us look forward to. The rising cost of electricity has eaten into every household budget, to the budgets of small businesses and to the budgets of government. These costs all end up being passed on to the consumer. The amendments in this bill seek to provide the state government with another tool to help with these rising costs by giving the minister responsible for energy—Minister McArdle—the flexibility in setting tariff 11. This bill will also implement the government's commitments to require retailers to display the cost of Labor's carbon tax on household electricity bills from 1 July 2012.

The amendments to the Queensland Competition Authority Act will allow the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation with the Queensland Competition Authority. Under the direction of the minister, these amendments will allow the authority to investigate and report on any matter relating to competition, industry, productivity or best-practice regulation, to review and report on regulatory assessment statements and to review and report on existing legislation. Again, this is a practical support for Queensland's economy that will really make a difference.

Amendments to the Building Act and the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act will remove the need for sellers and real estate agents to provide sustainability declarations to potential buyers of residential properties.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mrs FRANCE: I thank the member. The requirement to provide a sustainability declaration for each and every property for sale is a perfect example of Labor's green tape that achieves nothing other than an increased cost to the home seller and the killing of more trees through pointless paper printing. This regulation required a signature and display within the property for sale, but it did not actually require a person to tick all the boxes or fill in answers to all the questions. Abolishing this pointless document will provide a welcome cost saving to home sellers and will be one less pointless document clogging filing cabinets in real estate agencies.

It is only two months since the LNP government was swept into power through a resounding vote by the people of Queensland. Short-term fixes were not working and that is all the Labor Party could offer. Queenslanders had to try to balance their household budgets each week and they were finding it more and more difficult. From day one, this government has made the hard decision to ensure that the future is brighter for Queenslanders. The can-do government is providing Queenslanders with a way forward.

This legislation before the House today is why the LNP government will take Queensland forward and give confidence to businesses and confidence to families and singles alike. This government is doing what it promised by cutting red tape and getting Queensland back on track. I am proud to be part of a government that in fewer than two months has been able to table legislation that will help cut costs for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.15 am): May I start by stating the obvious: the measures in the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will deliver cost-of-living relief to the good people of Whitsunday and, indeed, the people of Queensland. These are people who suffered terribly from endlessly rising taxes, fees and charges under the former Bligh Labor government—hardworking and decent people from all walks of life across the Whitsunday electorate, from Glenella to Glen Isla, Mount Pleasant to Mount Marlow and Blacks Beach to Dingo Beach. These are people who work on the jetty at Shute Harbour, at the resorts throughout the Whitsundays, in the cane fields of Narpi, Buthurra and Strathdickie, in the shopping centres of Mount Pleasant, Rural View and Cannonvale, in the mills at Farleigh and Proserpine and at many other places across the 6,000 square kilometres that I proudly represent as the first LNP member for Whitsunday.

Mr Rickuss: Good blue-collar conservatives.

Mr COSTIGAN: I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. Many of these people work in small businesses.

This bill also delivers on the LNP government's commitment to cut the red-tape burden on small business. Yes, the old cane knife is coming out—the same cane knife that I referred to in my maiden speech to the House. It is coming out because the people of Whitsunday, like the other people of Queensland, have spoken and they have spoken loud and clear. After almost two decades of uninterrupted Labor rule in this state, the people have had enough. Hence, this government is getting on with the job of helping the people of Queensland, firstly by way of providing cost-of-living relief.

The Laborites love reminiscing about the light on the hill. But under Labor, for some people the light went out. Why did it go out? Because battlers—people the Labor Party always claimed to represent—have not been able to cope with the soaring cost of electricity. In fact, in the past five years under Labor the average Queensland family has seen about \$700 whacked onto their household power bills—something members opposite should be ashamed of. Why did the costs go up? The member for Whitsunday has his own theory: firstly, Labor just cannot count and, secondly, Labor loves taxes, charges and levies like Dracula loves the blood bank.

Labor's economic madness will see Queensland saddled with a debt of \$62 billion this year. That is getting close to \$1 billion of debt for every island that makes up the Whitsundays and it is a debt that will rise to a whopping \$85 billion in 2014-15. To put this debt into perspective, the interest alone on this debt is \$100 million every week—\$100 million every week thanks to economic mismanagement of the highest order. Just imagine what we could do with our much maligned Bruce Highway with that \$100 million every week, or how many overtaking lanes could we build in the north, or how much flood mitigation work could be done, or how we could get a ring-road around the rapidly growing city of Mackay, linking the harbour on the north side with the industrial powerhouse suburb of Paget on the city's south side. Just imagine what \$100 million a week could do in terms of building a new Mackay Base Hospital without selling off Mackay Airport to pay for it, or how we could build new and better facilities for our boaties in the Whitsundays in places such as Cannonvale and Dingo Beach, or perhaps put a few extra dollars into Tourism Whitsundays, allowing them to keep open the now-defunct tourist information centre at Proserpine.

Let us not forget that the same Labor government of the past lost our AAA credit rating. Who was in that up to his eyeballs? The former member for Mount Coot-tha! He is no longer in this place, thankfully. He loved telling everybody and anybody that he loved the Whitsundays, he is from the Whitsundays, but sadly did stuff-all for the people of the Whitsundays except make their lives harder. Just ask the lady who owns and operates a clothing shop in the main street of Airlie Beach. She told me on the hustings last year—some time ago—that she had not paid herself a wage in more than 12

months. That is right, 12 months! What about the poor tradies in Cannonvale who now leave home well before dark every day and cover hundreds of kilometres every week commuting to and from their new place of work because the work has dried up locally? People right across my electorate are hurting: pensioners, families, tradies, mill workers, workers in the tourism industry—the list goes on and on. They need cost-of-living relief and they need it now, especially with Labor's carbon tax just around the corner.

The previous local member was not only the minister for tourism but also the minister for small business. In essence, she presided over a disaster. The people in my electorate are still counting the cost. That is despite the rivers of black gold that flow right around the electorate that I represent; rivers of black gold that should have ensured that Queensland would be in a robust financial state, not a sad one. Queenslanders everywhere are now hurting as a result of the situation.

Labor's sins go on and on and on. As we heard earlier, Queensland is now the most expensive state in which to own and operate a motor vehicle. In four years the cost of registering a six-cylinder car has ballooned by more than \$107 to \$443.45. Compare that to our commitment to freeze car rego in our first term of office. It was Labor that also ripped away what many of my constituents referred to as the fuel subsidy. It was Labor that ripped away the stamp duty concession on the family home. And it was Labor that ripped people off by ramping up the cost of power—after the former Premier famously once remarked that nobody would be worse off in relation to electricity reform. Deception indeed of the highest order. There they are, the party of five—or part thereof—that survived a kick up the backside by the people of Queensland. They were the signatories to all these aforementioned matters, and much, much more, impacting on the cost of living for Queenslanders. Did they speak up and say no to Premier Bligh? No. Did they speak up and say these laws would hurt everyday Queenslanders? No. They did not say anything at all. The new member for Rockhampton and the new member for South Brisbane were not part of the former government, but they were cheering all the way when Labor brought in these so-called reforms.

Mr Rickuss: They were some of the faceless men pulling the strings.

Mr COSTIGAN: I will take the interjection from the member for Lockyer who is in fine form in the House here today. I can hear the new member for Rockhampton standing in the streets of working class Park Avenue, a place I know well from my travels across regional Queensland, saying, 'Good work, Schwarto! Good work!' Ditto the new member for South Brisbane, who would have had the pompoms out for her predecessor, that same person who took Queensland towards financial oblivion at the same time that the taxpayer-funded salary of the Premier's husband could have passed for a prize in Gold Lotto.

On the issue of the fuel subsidy there are two members of the previous government who really should hang their heads in shame, they being the member for Mulgrave and the member for Mackay, because it is the people of North Queensland who particularly bore the brunt of that fuel tax, something that Queenslanders once happily lived without. There was a time when Queensland motorists were the envy of those from interstate. The people of the north, west and central Queensland—and regional communities especially—need their cars more than anywhere else.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr COSTIGAN: The member for Mulgrave wants to have a shot at us and that is fine. There is no need for protection at the moment. The member for Mulgrave should know that there is no commuter train running from Gordonvale into Cairns. Conversely, there is no rail link between Slade Point in the northern part of the electorate of Mackay linking the industrial suburb of Paget on the south side where many of the workers of Mackay earn a quid. In the case of the people of Whitsunday, the family car is vital for getting people to and from work, to specialist medical care in places such as Townsville, indeed Mackay, university, shopping, getting kids to and from school, especially in the northern beaches of Mackay where there is still no high school, hence the mums and dads on the morning run, Monday to Friday, and it has been going on for years and years and years. The family car is vital for getting people to local football, even to watch the Cowboys. Even the Cowboys have been affected by Labor's decision to do away with the fuel subsidy. People are not going to watch the Cowboys in Townsville like they used to. Let us not forget that the people were duded after the 2009 state election. Those opposite led the people of Queensland up the garden path.

This bill delivers on our pledge to lower the cost of living for Queenslanders, not just in Whitsunday, but everywhere—from Currumbin to Cook—right across this great state of ours, a state that has gone to the dogs thanks to 20 years of Labor's neglect, waste and voracious appetite for tax. Specifically, this bill will bring back the stamp duty concession on the family home. It will increase the payroll tax exemption threshold, a move that I know will be warmly received and welcomed by those operating businesses across my electorate, those hoping to grow their business, recruit more staff, et cetera.

This bill will also mean the freezing of tariff 11 electricity prices for one year, saving families on average around \$120. It will facilitate the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation, and it will remove the need for sustainability declarations. That is something that people such as Reg Gillen, a respected real estate agent in the town of Proserpine, will be smiling about. There is no doubt about that. As far as Mr Gillen is concerned, and his views are very much shared by people I talk to every day of the week when I am in my electorate, these declarations are a pain in the backside. I could use more colourful language, but I will not be doing that. A pain in the backside, Mr Gillen says, a pain bigger than the one he received when he got a tetanus needle up the you-know-where after falling off a horse out the back of Proserpine many, many moons ago. This bill will bring many benefits to the people of Whitsunday and Queensland. I commend the bill to the House so that we can start getting Queensland back on track.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.27 am): I rise to speak in favour of the bill before the House, the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Cost of living is a big issue in the Beaudesert electorate. In fact, we should make no mistake that it was the single biggest issue in the Beaudesert electorate during the campaign and the single biggest issue that brought down the former Labor government.

People in my community know that the former government squandered the proceeds of a mining boom. I have a simple question for the party of five, as the member for Whitsunday called them: after 10 years of boom and staggering increases in mining royalties, where is all the money? Where is all the money and why have families been asked to pay more and more and more still for the same or lower levels of service? On 24 March Queenslanders called time on Labor's gouging of family budgets. They called time on Peter Beattie's sham electricity reforms. They called time on the deception of Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser regarding the fuel subsidy. There is a sign in my electorate on the Mount Lindesay Highway heading towards Rathdowney which says, 'The last fuel stop in Queensland'. It hails from a time when Queensland was a low-tax state, when we had a fuel subsidy and we did have the cheapest fuel in the nation. The sign is still there but, of course, the fuel subsidy is gone. It is a great travesty on the people of Queensland that in the 2009 election campaign the Labor Party promised it would not scrap the fuel subsidy, but, of course, it did.

On 24 March the people of Queensland called time on the 15 per cent increases in public transport costs in the south-east. Those increases pushed people away from public transport and into cars. That was supported by the now Leader of the Opposition. I did not know that it was Labor Party policy to push people away from public transport, but perhaps it must have been.

The people of Queensland called time on the waste, they called time on the nearly \$3 billion annual deficit and they called time on the \$60 billion debt left to us by Labor. That debt is costing us \$600,000 an hour in interest. Believe me, just a sliver of that \$600,000 an hour in interest could have been put to use in my electorate to properly fund services at the Beaudesert Hospital that, slowly but surely over a period of 10 years, were removed by the former government. It is absolutely shameful that while the former government presided over the fiasco of the health department payroll scandal—which will cost up to \$1.2 billion over the next few years—people in all rural communities, but especially the Beaudesert community, were told that there was not enough money to go around to fund maternity services or any of the other services that had been removed by the Labor Party in the past 12 years. There was enough money to be wasted, but there was not enough money for essential services.

I turn to some of the cost-of-living savings that will be made through the passage of this bill. The first one I wish to speak about is the reintroduction of the stamp duty concession on the family home, saving families on average \$7,000 in transfer duty. Last year the Labor Party scrapped the stamp duty concession. It must seem like Labor wants to make it harder for people to buy a home. It shows the economic illiteracy of Labor, which introduced an increased tax on family homes at a time when the housing market was already struggling. Members can ask any real estate agent in my electorate and probably around the whole state whether that was a good idea to spur the housing market on and to make it easier for people to buy a home. They will find that 100 per cent of agents will say that it was a terrible idea. Labor introduced a \$10,000 bonus for new homes, time limited of course, although I do not think the transfer duty was time limited. Then it took back \$7,000 in stamp duty. Labor gives with one hand and takes with the other. The other \$3,000 probably contributed to the waste that went on in the government departments administering the program.

We want to make it easier for people to buy their own home and to fulfil the great Australian dream that a man's home is his castle. The pain visited on working families—and I use that term advisedly because, unfortunately, it has been co-opted and corrupted by Labor politicians—by this decision, which at a stroke made it immediately on average \$7,000 more expensive to buy a family home, cannot be underestimated. Many families or young couples scrimped and saved for years and years to pull together a deposit for a home, while putting up with all the other gouging cost-of-living pressures visited on them by the former government. They have gone without holidays, new cars, new clothes, takeaway meals, dining out, movies for themselves or their children they have made and many

of the other sacrifices couples and families make in their lives to save a deposit. For the former government to place the family home that little bit further out of reach by gouging from hardworking and hard-saving homebuyers, simply to pay for its waste and deficit, is outrageous.

Clearly, the Labor Party is no longer working for the working people. We saw that on 24 March when, in all parts of Queensland, working people turned their backs on the Labor Party for the first time. In working people, all the Labor Party sees is a source of tax revenue to pay for its waste and debt. I would love to see stamp duty on homes abolished altogether, but recognise that that may be some way off in the future as we have a big hole to dig the state out of.

I commend the decision to scrap sustainability declarations on home sales, to save home sellers the cost and inconvenience of those declarations. I welcome moves by the Attorney-General, not in this bill but announced, to simplify the real estate contract process to make it easier for buyers and sellers to transact, and to cut down on the complexity in the process of buying and selling a home. As somebody who has worked with complexity in real estate contracts in the real world of finance, I look forward to that reform.

I wish to touch on another aspect of the bill, which is the freezing of the domestic electricity tariff 11 for one year. When we talk about the freezing of this tariff, we cannot fail to mention the moves made by the Beattie government that led to the rapid increases in electricity prices over the past five years. There has been a 60 per cent increase in electricity prices over the past five years. The former Premier undertook a reform of the electricity industry. He said that electricity prices would not increase. In fact, I think he may have said that they would go down. However, what we have seen is a 60 per cent increase in five years. I welcome the fact that Minister McArdle, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, has already taken steps to implement reform in this sector. Some people are having to choose between heating in winter or airconditioning in summer. Some people are having to choose between using electricity or other essentials of life. Queensland has an abundance of resources that are used for electricity generation. It is criminal that the Labor governments of Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh have given Queenslanders some of the most expensive electricity in the world, even though we have some of the greatest natural resources in the world that can be used to make electricity. It does not make sense and the people of Queensland know that it does not make sense.

I note the burden placed on dairy farmers like the Dennis family at Tamrookum, south of Beaudesert. Their electricity bill increased from approximately \$10,000 to \$16,000 a quarter. That is \$6,000 out of their pockets every quarter, at a time when revenue for milk is decreasing. I draw attention to the vegetable processor at Boonah whose electricity bill is now \$25,000 a month. That industry has experienced similar cost increases to dairy farmers. That increasing cost comes straight out of the bottom line of his business, which is already suffering from low commodity prices, a high Australian dollar, increasing labour costs and a sea of red tape and regulation, including workplace health and safety regulations imposed by the Gillard Labor government and cheered on by Anna Bligh when she was in office. That business still employs over 50 people, but Labor did not make it easy to create jobs. In fact, it did quite the opposite. I commend all of the brave men and women in small business and primary production in my electorate who have struggled on and continue to advance their businesses and employ locals in the face of the economic vandalism of the former government and the continuing economic vandalism of the Gillard Labor government in Canberra. The carbon tax starts on 1 July and in my electorate the devastation on small businesses in primary producing industries will continue.

Many households are now paying more for using less. They are paying more for water, but are using less. They are paying more for electricity, but are using less. That money comes straight out of the back pockets of families, meaning that they have less money to spend at the footy; they are less able to go to the footy. They have less money to spend in supermarkets, at the newsagent, in other local stores and in all manner of consumer spending. Cost-of-living increases affect the whole economy and are strangling the economy. Wherever I go, small business people tell me the same story: consumers are spending less, because more and more of their income has been consumed by the rising costs of living, particularly electricity costs.

Mr Rickuss: No discretionary money left.

Mr KRAUSE: There is no discretionary money left. Small businesses pay for these cost increases straight from the bottom line and jobs are lost or fail to be created as a result. Small businesses and primary producers in this country are being squeezed to death. There is no protection for them at all. We must work to bring down their cost of doing business.

Labor claims to be about jobs, jobs, jobs. However, let me tell honourable members that there can be no jobs under Labor when all costs do is go up, up, up. Of course, they do not understand that because none of them have ever had to work in a business or make a living in a business. They do not know what it is like to work in a business like Beaudesert Frame and Truss, a roof truss business visited by the Premier and me. That business will be hit by the carbon tax and has been hit by sustainability declarations and the downturn in the housing market. Stamp duty increases affect their business as well, as do electricity price increases, fuel price increases and so on.

The people of Beaudesert and I welcome the move to show the cost of the carbon tax on electricity bills. The carbon tax is a great big new tax on everything. It is an insidious tax on jobs and will achieve little, if any, of its stated aim of reducing carbon emissions. It will achieve great things in sending Australian jobs offshore into jurisdictions which do not have such costs imposed on them by government. I can see the increased carbon emissions coming out of factories in China right now at the expense of Australian manufacturing jobs and Australian workers. There are so many businesses in my electorate which are just hanging on by a thread, and the carbon tax is something which could quite simply send them over the edge.

Queenslanders need to know how much Julia Gillard's misleading of the Australian people will cost them in their electricity bills. The parallels with Anna Bligh and Andrew Fraser are amazing: they say one thing before an election and do something else afterwards. I think back to Paul Keating's I-a-w law tax cuts in 1993. They were already in law before the election, according to Keating. Then what happened after the election? He said, 'Sorry, we spent too much and so we are not going to give you those tax cuts now.' That sounds familiar because the members opposite—the gang of five—were part of a government that did exactly the same thing.

That can be contrasted with the gutsy leadership of steel shown by John Howard, the former Prime Minister. He proposed a GST. Not all Australians supported this tax—and I acknowledge that a good number of people in my electorate would not have supported it in 1998, either—however, John Howard did the right thing, which members opposite do not know how to do. He proposed the tax, took it to an election and he won the election because he showed good faith with the Australian people. He implemented the policy.

Members on our side do not believe in saying one thing before an election and doing another thing after it. That can be compared with the misleading conduct of Bligh, Fraser and Keating, who, incidentally, left Australia with a debt not much larger than that left to Queensland by Bligh and Fraser 16 years later. There is simply no plausible way that anybody in the Labor Party can claim to act with fiscal and economic responsibility. When they get into office they spend, spend, spend and tax, tax, tax and then we are broke, broke, broke. I hope that the independent review established by the Minister for Energy and Water Supply will look at the overall structure of the electricity industry in Queensland and seek out areas where efficiencies can be achieved.

I wish to mention also the change to the payroll tax scales, with an increase in the threshold from \$1 million to \$1.6 million over six years. We on this side of the House know that there is nothing more virtuous in business than to grow and employ more people. That is why we will increase the threshold over six years. I urge the Treasurer to look at ways in which we can abolish payroll tax or phase it out over time because it is a tax on jobs. One would think those in the Labor Party would be deadset against payroll tax because they claim to be all about jobs, jobs, jobs. It just shows again the hypocrisy of members opposite, who see employers who succeed in business as cows to be milked for all the tax revenue they can possibly obtain without actually sending businesses to the wall.

Members opposite cannot have businesses going broke because when businesses go broke they cannot pay tax. I speak of businesses like AJ Bush and Sons in Beaudesert, an employer of nearly 100 people and one of the largest employers in my electorate. Yet every single new employee they put on in that business costs them money. With every single new employee a portion of the employer's income is sent into the coffers at George Street. Payroll tax is a tax on growth and we must look at ways to reduce it where we can. The opposition of members opposite to this bill being implemented as a matter of urgency so that we can ease the burden on business, stimulate local economies and increase employment is simply inconceivable and shows that Labor just does not get it.

I will speak briefly about the freeze on registration for family cars. I make the point that it is also a freeze on registration of utes of up to four tonnes that are registered for private purposes. The cost of car registration increased 30 per cent over the last two years of the former government. Everybody drives a car and in my electorate, as in so many electorates in Queensland, you cannot get anywhere without going in a car. Where has all the money from the increases in car registration gone? Has it gone into roads? Has it gone into the maintenance of roads? Has it gone into research into new technologies to reduce the cost of roads or to reduce the environmental impact of cars? Of course not! It has gone straight into the coffers to service the debt racked up by Labor. In fact, it probably went just to pay off some of the interest.

I welcome the measures in the bill to reduce red tape and to cut government waste, including the establishment of the Office of Best Practice. As the member for Warrego said earlier in this debate on Tuesday night, it is not rocket science. We need to govern with competence, and that is how the Labor Party failed: up to \$1.2 billion on the Health payroll debacle, \$600 million on the failed Traveston Dam—a dam for which the land was acquired before they even had approval to build it—and over \$1 billion on a desalination plant that is not working. We need to remember that every dollar that we take out of the economy is a lost opportunity for growth and jobs. Every dollar taken out of the community is a blow to that community.

I welcome the steps taken by the government, including the proposed plans of the government, to reduce waste and cut red tape for all types of businesses but, in particular, small businesses and primary producers, which are the heart and soul of my electorate. There is a lot of work to be done in reducing the cost of living and the cost of doing business. This bill represents a crucial first step and implements our election commitments to the people of Queensland. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms TRAD (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.46 am): I rise to speak to the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Labor recognises the need to reduce cost-of-living pressures on Queensland families. Many families are doing it tough and we, as members of parliament, should take more responsible steps to reduce costs and save Queenslanders money. We on this side of the House also acknowledge the fact that the LNP campaigned on this issue of reducing the cost of living and, indeed, clearly has the authority of the Queensland electorate to pursue this objective for their benefit.

As has already been outlined, this bill contains five key initiatives to attempt to reduce the cost of living—namely, abolishing sustainability declarations when selling residential dwellings; amending the Electricity Act 1994 to freeze the regulated standard residential retail electricity tariff at 2011-12 levels for one year; amending the Duties Act 2001 to, among other things, reinstate the transfer duty concession for second and subsequent homes; amending the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to increase the exemption threshold to \$1.1 million from 1 July this year; and establishing an Office of Best Practice Regulation. However, it would be remiss of me as an opposition member not to raise some serious questions regarding the deficiencies of this legislation.

Firstly, as has already been articulated by others, I am deeply concerned by the LNP government's decision to bypass the parliamentary committee system in its efforts to fast-track this bill through the House. However, it is apparently not as important or as fast-tracked as the industrial relations amendment bill we debated last night. The LNP government obviously had to fix the outcome of the enterprise bargaining process with the Queensland teachers before negotiations were completed, as was revealed by the Attorney-General last night during the debate.

The policy-to-legislation process is, of course, a very complicated one. The fact that this bill will not be subjected to adequate analysis or scrutiny may result in a deficiency in its application and reach. Questions need to be asked about the application of the bill and any potential unintended consequences. Undoubtedly, these unintended consequences will become evident as the bill becomes enacted and as future budgets are prepared and handed down.

I wish to now turn to the issue of freezing electricity tariffs in particular. The bill gives the Minister for Energy and Water Supply the power to price tariffs and instruct energy retailers on the price for a particular tariff for the financial year starting 1 July 2012. The minister has also announced a review of electricity providers to fund cost savings to undoubtedly find those savings in the distribution and supply of energy. Firstly, I wish to put on record, as has been done earlier in this debate by the Leader of Opposition Business, that the previous Labor government had already done much of the leg work and commissioned the Queensland Competition Authority with the task of reviewing the electricity tariff pricing structure to bring into effect reforms to reduce the cost of electricity bills—a cost that is majorly driven by the distribution of electricity over such a large decentralised state. These reforms would have taken effect in around 20 days time—real electricity pricing reform, real cost reductions to consumers—

A government member: What about the carbon tax?

Ms TRAD: I am coming to the carbon tax—through a well thought out and deliberated approach from an independent authority, not momentarily dictated by the minister of the day while he plays catch up, gets across his brief and wastes taxpayer funds on yet another review.

But then putting all the facts into the public arena is not a particular strength of this new LNP government, is it? Members of the LNP government are running around the state just like Chicken Little screeching that the carbon tax is coming, that the sky is falling in—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! There are too many interjections.

Ms TRAD:—much like their predecessors did 20 years ago when the Mabo decision came down, running around like Chicken Little proclaiming that this was the end of non-Indigenous land ownership in Queensland and in Australia.

Now under section 55GA what we see is the clear intent of this LNP government to politicise government administration in this state. They are not about governing for Queenslanders; they are all about campaigning for Tony Abbott. Section 55GA requires retail authorities to include the cost of the carbon price on the statement of account to the consumer. The cost increase of the carbon price is well published—there is no secret—not only by this government but also by federal Treasury modelling. It will be \$2.44 a week, and I acknowledge that for many people that increase represents a burden to their domestic budgets. But, what is the weekly amount of the federal government's household assistance package? What is it? \$10.10 a week.

Will the government be mandating retail authorities publish this concession on the statement of accounts? Of course not. Will the government be mandating the retail authorities detail the cost to consumers for the government's equity and welfare objectives and tariff equalisation principle which ensures that people in the bush are saved from paying the true cost of supplying electricity to remote and regional locations? Will this be mandated? Of course not. This government is more interested in acting as an extension of the LNP headquarters and using taxpayer resources to campaign for Tony Abbott rather than governing with transparency and in the true interests of Queenslanders.

But at this point I want to go back to the statements made by the Minister for Energy and Water Supply in relation to the independent review panel, a process which has been established to support this government's endeavours in relation to reining in electricity prices. I quote from the minister's press release of 30 May—

... everything that drives prices will come under the microscope of this independent watch dog as it sets about recommending how to make the system work better.

Its scope will be broad in scrutinising all cost pressures on electricity prices, including specific reference to network costs, electricity supply and retail competition.

What this statement clearly signals is the government's intent to find short-term savings by cutting infrastructure investment, cutting jobs, winding back workplace health and safety and perhaps even outsourcing the management of the maintenance of the poles and wires, as was first suggested by the Premier when he became a candidate in March last year. Ultimately, someone has to pay for this bill. Will it be the workers who maintain the poles and wires or the future generations who will suffer from a lack of investment in electricity? Or will it be Queensland households who will see more electricity brownouts? In fact, what is stopping energy retailers from simply passing on the costs next year? Will this so-called freeze just mean a massive jump in electricity prices in coming years?

The only way to reduce electricity bills in the long term is to reduce consumption—full stop. By reducing the amount of electricity we use, we are not only cutting our bills but also easing the pressure on the electricity network and our precious environment. Sadly, the Newman government is failing to see the bigger picture here. Like a bull charging through a china shop, Premier Newman is either claiming credit for Labor's work or rubbishing selective elements of Labor's legacy. This is reflected in the Premier's decision to scrap the ClimateSmart Home Service—an extremely popular and successful Labor initiative—a program aimed at practically helping Queenslanders reduce the amount of electricity they use.

Mrs Ostapovitch interjected.

Ms TRAD: I take that interjection of the member for Stretton that this money was wasted on Queenslanders, that this money was wasted on Queenslanders wanting to reduce their electricity bills. I take that interjection. More than 335,000 households across Queensland had chosen to take up this service since January 2009—335,000—saving each household up to \$480 per year on their electricity bills. Thousands of families in my own electorate of South Brisbane have used ClimateSmart to ease pressure on their weekly budgets. Yet the Premier would rather axe this successful Labor initiative than cut the cost of living for Queensland families further. Rather than admit Labor did some things right, those opposite would have Queenslanders pay more. The fact is that reducing consumption is the only real way to reduce costs—so by scrapping ClimateSmart Premier Newman is denying Queenslanders real savings over the long term.

Any attempt to reduce the cost of living must be well thought out and considered. Cost-cutting measures should be balanced with the need to plan for Queensland's future. As parliamentarians, our main priority should be to build on a stronger, more prosperous Queensland for future generations. Providing for our state's future needs and future growth is a never-ending task and, in an effort to reduce costs in the short term, we must not lose sight of our obligations to the next generation.

Mr Dowling: Apologise to Queenslanders.

Ms TRAD: While on the subject of legacies, I want to take a moment to address some of the hyperbole and inaccuracies that have been delivered during this debate. Firstly, the economy this LNP government inherited indeed had a level of debt—we have heard about it extensively today—but this debt kept our heads above water during the worst global financial—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will take his seat if he wants to interject.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. Firstly, the economy this LNP government inherited indeed had a level of debt, but this debt kept our heads above water during the worst global financial crisis in 80 years and it made sure that we could recover from the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history. Only three months ago ratings agency Moody affirmed Queensland's credit rating and advised of a stable outlook—nothing like what the Queensland Treasurer is claiming in excerpts from briefs he refuses to table in this House in full.

What did the Premier do when he was Lord Mayor in 2008 when Brisbane City Council was threatened with a ratings downgrade by Standard and Poor's? He sacked them. That is what he did. He did not like what they had to say about the council budget, so he sacked them. What sort of a budget did Deputy Quirk inherit from his predecessor? What sort? One with a projected debt of \$2.4 billion in two years, and why? One failure after the next. And, while other countries are still experiencing astronomical levels of unemployment, here in Australia and here in Queensland Labor at a federal level and at a state level have kept people in jobs—kept Australians in jobs. And here in Queensland it was Labor—it was Labor—that delivered 90,000 jobs since the last state election, jobs that the LNP are so eager to start cutting now.

From my reckoning, having a job is the best possible way to meet cost-of-living pressures. It is the best possible way to put food on the table. It is the best possible way to ensure your kids go to school.

What else did the LNP inherit from Labor in terms of the Queensland economy? Economic growth forecast at four per cent at least. The last survey by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland showed that confidence in Queensland business conditions was at a record high of 51 per cent—ahead of the national economy. The payroll tax system inherited by the LNP has the lowest payroll tax rates in the mainland. According to Pitcher Partners, Queensland had the most competitive overall tax regime for small to medium businesses.

What about infrastructure, which the members opposite claim has been sorely lacking in Queensland? I am proud to stand here and say that it was the Bligh-Fraser Labor government that produced the biggest infrastructure program in this nation year in, year out. What did it deliver? It delivered busways—not delivered by the current Minister for Transport but delivered by Labor. What else did our infrastructure program deliver? The biggest hospital modernisation program in Queensland's history—three new hospitals. What else did it deliver? The Gateway duplication and the Kurilpa Bridge—built by Labor and earning Australia an internationally recognised engineering excellence award. What else did our infrastructure program deliver? The Goodwill Bridge, the Cairns cruise terminal and the Forgan bridge duplication in Mackay. What else? The biggest recovery and reconstruction effort ever seen in Queensland's history after the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history. That is what Labor governments do. Members opposite would do well to embark upon their own research rather than repeat the central lines issued by the Treasurer's office.

While on the subject of legacies, let us see how these facts stack up from the last time the LNP or its predecessors were in government. What did Queensland Labor inherit? We inherited a state that was so corrupt and so rotten. Every institution was so corrupt that it took decades to clean up. We inherited a state with a population that had the lowest skill levels in Australia and a state with the lowest education retention levels in Australia. Shame on you! It is a state that Queenslanders—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will take his seat if he wishes to interject.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection from the Manager of Government Business. We inherited a state that Queenslanders left in droves. It was embarrassing. That is what Labor inherited from your predecessors, from the last time your mob was in government.

Yes, history is important. History will indeed record your win, but history will also record that this government, as with all conservative governments, will merely administer and merely manage—not reform, not build this state, apart from beautiful new executive buildings for the Premier and his ministers. But there will be no state building. There will be no concept of social, administrative or judicial reform. There will be no vision for a modern Queensland under this LNP government.

Mr SHORTEN (Algeria—LNP) (12.04 pm): I rise today to speak to the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is useful to remind the House that this bill amends a number of acts including the Duties Act 2001, the Payroll Tax Act 1971, the Electricity Act 1994, the Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997 and the Building Act 1975. The newly elected Campbell Newman led government is moving quickly to reduce the cost of living for struggling Queenslanders, as we promised we would do during the last election campaign. It is extremely disappointing that one of the first acts of the Labor opposition in this place was to try to delay the passage of this legislation. It was as if, after inflicting 20 years of hurt and misery on Queenslanders, the Labor Party still wanted to be part of the problem and not part of the solution. It just did not get the message that voters sent them on 24 March 2012.

This bill does a number of specific things. It reinstates the stamp duty home concession. It increases the payroll tax exemption threshold. It freezes tariff 11 prices for one year. It facilitates the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation and it removes the requirement for those sustainability declarations.

During the last election campaign I had a number of residents contact me in relation to the reintroduction of the stamp duty concession. They wanted to know when this would happen. I am happy to advise that it will be as of 1 July this year. I would like to relay to the House the impact that Labor's

abolishment of this concession had on families in my electorate. I remember as clearly as if it were yesterday being approached by an elderly gentleman at the then Forest Lake markets, where I had my stall. He sidled up to me and asked about the LNP position on the transfer duty home concession. He went on to tell me that he was not asking for himself but for his daughter. His daughter had just had her third baby and their current home was now too small to house her growing family. But with the concession having been taken away by Labor, the family now found itself struggling to be able to upgrade to a larger house. As he told me this, I could see the emotion in his face.

The reintroduction of the stamp duty concession will save Queensland families up to \$7,000 on the price of their home. The Algeester electorate had a vibrant property sector, but under Labor certainly in the last few years it has been doing it pretty tough. I believe this measure will go a long way to stimulating local activity. I was approached by many residents who told me that they have been holding off on purchasing or selling until the concession is reinstated.

Unlike the previous Labor government, we keep our promises made during elections. Unlike Labor, we do what we say we are going to do in government. We do not say one thing before an election and then change our minds after. We should not be surprised by what Labor does, as this would seem to be part of Labor DNA. We see it at the federal level. Do honourable members remember this quote? 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' Who said it? The Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, prior to the last federal election. What happened? The Prime Minister had to pay the piper. So what are struggling Queenslanders going to be slugged with as of 1 July? You guessed it—a carbon tax.

The former Queensland Labor government did nothing but support federal Labor in its push for a carbon tax. We do not support a carbon tax. Unfortunately, we as a government cannot stop it but we can show Queenslanders exactly how much of their hard-earned dollars they are paying for federal Labor's new tax. As part of this bill, we will legislate that the cost of the carbon tax is to be clearly shown on consumers' electricity bills. This will give Queenslanders the opportunity to see the full impact of Labor's new tax on their electricity bills.

I said that we as a government could not stop the carbon tax, but what we are doing to reduce the cost of living for families is freezing the regulated standard residential retail electricity tariff, commonly called tariff 11, at 2011-12 prices for one year from 1 July. Queenslanders were told by former Labor Premier Peter Beattie that no Queenslanders would pay more for electricity than they were paying when he privatised the electricity industry. We all know that Queenslanders have suffered huge increases in prices under Labor in government. I know by living in and being connected to my community that residents in Algeester are hurting under Labor's higher electricity prices. I know that my neighbours in Logan are hurting. I know that our government's measures to freeze tariff 11 will reduce the cost of electricity for my residents, saving them on average \$120 a year.

We all know that small business plays a huge role in all of our electorates, particularly in relation to employing locals and reducing the unemployment queues. As part of the cost-of-living bill 2012, we will be lifting the payroll tax threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million from 1 July while retaining the current \$1 in \$4 rate of reduction. The amount at which the reduction reduces to zero will therefore increase from \$5 million to \$5.5 million.

We committed to provide relief to small businesses and we are delivering on that commitment. Increased charges and red tape had been making it harder to open, operate and be successful as a small business. Excessive red tape is holding back small business. The establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation is an important part of our commitment to cutting red tape by 20 per cent. We as a government are intent on and serious about tackling the cost-of-living issues affecting Queenslanders and building a four-pillar economy.

For the past 18 years, the Labor government decided how this state was run. The legacy that the former government has left us is a debt of \$62 billion this year, building to \$85 billion in 2014-15, and interest repayments of \$5 billion a year, \$100 million a week, \$600,000 an hour. This, honourable members, is the legacy that the Queensland Labor government left us, and one of the architects is the Leader of the Opposition. Yes, the Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table while decisions were made that drove the budget into more debt and more deficit. The Leader of the Opposition was at the table when the decision was made to sell the assets of Queenslanders without their consent. What was the excuse? To pay down the debt that they had run up, and even after the sale the debt rose. There was \$15 billion lost due to Labor's economic incompetence, with no much needed infrastructure built and no paying down the debt. This year alone we have to find \$2.8 billion just to balance the books. You could not run a business like Labor ran this state. Families do not run their household budgets like Labor ran this state. They know the value of every dollar.

In this bill we are delivering for Queenslanders. Unlike the previous government, we will manage the economy of this state. We will grow a four-pillar economy and we will get this state back on track. Under Labor, the litany of failures is just astonishing: \$412 million on a Health payroll system that does not work, \$600 million wasted on the failed Traveston Crossing Dam, the \$1.1 billion white elephant which is called the Tugun desalination plant and \$350 million on a dam with no connection to the water grid.

The cost of living for Queenslanders just skyrocketed under Labor. Household power bills increased on average by \$700 in the last five years. Car owners were sluggish with increased rego costs. To register a six-cylinder car jumped from \$107.55 to \$443.45, making Queensland the most expensive state to own and operate a vehicle. The cost of a driver's licence doubled from \$73.70 to \$152.50. To add insult to injury, the former Premier Anna Bligh broke her election promise and introduced a 9.2c a litre fuel tax.

Members, we have to remember that, even if you wanted to get out of your car and catch public transport, Labor increased public transport fees by 35 per cent over 2010 and 2011 and another 15 per cent in January of this year—50 per cent increases in the last three years. I am proud to be a member of a government that cares for its constituents. We are acting on our election promise to help struggling Queensland families with the cost of living that Labor has saddled them with. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (12.14 pm): It is remarkably refreshing to see such a fine performance by the new member for Algester. The contrast is so clear between the member for Algester and the speaker before him. We saw a hysterical performance by the member for South Brisbane; in the member for Algester, we saw someone talking about his community, addressing the real issues and understanding the challenges, particularly for families, in his electorate. In contrast, the speaker prior to the member for Algester ran away from Labor's record—which is probably why we saw the member being so hysterical in her performance. Let us not forget that the member for South Brisbane is also the shadow minister for transport. I will confine my comments to those responsibilities that Labor had in the area of transport and talk about Labor's record, which the member for South Brisbane was so keen to run away from during her speech in the House. That was in contrast to the member for Algester, who addressed the issues that his constituents face.

Let us have a look at the area of public transport, an area where Labor performed appallingly during its time in government. Let us not forget who the transport minister was in the last period of the Labor government. It was the current Leader of the Opposition. She followed a whole series of dud ministers for transport, but she was the queen of the duds in terms of transport ministers. Look at the record of the current Leader of the Opposition when she was the transport minister. What we saw during the last period of her time as transport minister was record low affordability for public transport. That is what the figures showed. For the first time ever, the view of the commuters in terms of rail was less than 50 per cent—it dropped to below 50 per cent in terms of public transport. For buses and ferries, it was just over 50 per cent. We saw record lows in terms of affordability.

Why were there record lows for affordability? Could anybody who takes public transport forget the endless, ongoing 15 per cent annual increases to fares? This was Labor's plan but they only introduced it after the 2009 election. They brought it in, but did anyone hear anything about it before the 2009 election? There was not one word, not a sentence, not a peep, nothing from the current Leader of the Opposition, nothing from Labor. But straight after the election we saw endless, ongoing 15 per cent annual increases to the cost of public transport. That is what Labor delivered. They re-evaluated public transport and decided to put 15 per cent increases on, and that drove record low affordability.

Labor did not just fail on reliability. We all know that. They not only failed on frequency; they also failed on affordability. What did that record low affordability also produce? It drove people away from public transport because in the last six months of 2011 there were four million fewer trips taken on public transport than in the corresponding period in the previous year. In a growth state, we saw four million fewer trips being taken on public transport as people revolted against Labor's endless, ongoing 15 per cent increases in the cost of public transport.

The contrast is black and white. The contrast is as clear as the difference between the hysterical performance of the member for South Brisbane and the informed, considered, caring comments of the member for Algester. While Labor promised endless, ongoing 15 per cent increases in public transport, what has the LNP committed to doing? I can confirm to the House again today that from 25 June we will have free trips on the city network after nine journeys. I repeat: free trips after nine journeys. What does that deliver for the public?

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I hear the member for Nanango asking what that delivers. It delivers real savings for more than 100,000 extra commuters who would have missed out under Labor. Those 100,000 extra commuters will get real savings that they did not get under Labor.

How will commuters make those savings? I will give members an idea in terms of the figures. I refer to one-, two- and three-zone travel, and the member for Morayfield would know this because we were out campaigning on this issue. I can tell members that commuters in his electorate were revolting over Labor's endless and ongoing fare increases. What will those commuters save under the LNP with free trips after nine journeys? They will potentially save \$200 a year under that policy. For commuters in the electorates of members from the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast who travel to Brisbane Monday to Friday, they will save \$500 a year under the LNP which they would not have saved under

Labor. So that is the first thing. Let us go back to Labor's endless, ongoing, never-ending 15 per cent increases. Let us not forget the financial situation that we have inherited from Labor. Members in this House have previously heard me talk about the projected \$85 billion of debt.

Mr Johnson: Tell us again.

Mr EMERSON: I will tell members again because the member for Gregory says that he wants to hear it again, because he cannot believe the figures. Before this morning we thought we were heading towards a projected \$85 billion of debt, a \$2.8 billion deficit and a \$100 million a week interest bill on that debt. But what did we hear from the Treasurer today? What is the advice that he has been given? We are heading into uncharted waters. That is the advice. That was the advice. He walked into the Treasury office on day one and what did they say?

A government member: Unsustainable!

Mr EMERSON: It was unsustainable; that is exactly right. I take the interjection from the honourable member—unsustainable. But what we are going into now are uncharted waters. We are heading into uncharted waters in terms of debt and deficit.

Mr Choat: Thanks to Labor's ship of fools.

Mr EMERSON: That is exactly right. I take the interjection from the honourable member—Labor's ship of fools in terms of delivering not just a debt and a deficit, but we all know of course that the other thing it delivers every time is deceit. What has the LNP promised? We will halve Labor's increases to give some affordability back to families in particular. Instead of Labor's endless and ongoing 15 per cent increases, we will halve that even given the difficult times with the unsustainable finances that we inherited and the uncharted waters that we have been sent into. We will keep our election promises. We will do that in terms of halving Labor's planned increases with free travel after nine journeys. As well as the hysterical performance by the member for South Brisbane, earlier I also heard comments in this debate by the shadow minister for main roads in terms of car registration. What is so extraordinary about this is the hypocrisy. As the Premier has said over and over again, how do you spell hypocrisy?

Government members: A-L-P.

Mr Pitt: How do you spell CTP? C-T-P!

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the shadow minister for main roads with regard to CTP. One might ask oneself: did Labor come out during the election campaign—yes, it did, at the end as it tried to bribe voters—and promise anything with regard to car registration? Yes, right at the end, even though it knew it did not have any money. It knew what the true state of the finances were. But I heard the shadow minister for main roads talking about CTP. Did Labor promise to freeze CTP? Did it do that? No, it did not. It excluded CTP because it has always excluded CTP. But let us talk about Labor's record on cars and registration.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the honourable Minister for Local Government, and let us talk about its position on cars. We all know that under Labor Queensland was the most expensive state in Australia to own and run a motor vehicle. That is what the RACQ determined—that is, Queensland was the most expensive state to own and run a motor vehicle. Let us look at Labor's record on car registration. How much did car registration go up under Labor since 2008, just a few years ago? It went up 30 per cent. It went up 30 per cent since 2008! That is amazing, and that is why we live in the most expensive state to own and run a motor vehicle. The many new members in this House—those glorious new LNP members in this House, and there are so many of them—may not be aware of a debate that we had in this House last year. When Labor was putting forward its latest increase in car registration when it said, 'We're going to put it up again. We're going to hit motorists once again,' the LNP in opposition moved to disallow that latest increase. We said, 'We'll freeze it. It should be frozen. We can't keep Labor hitting up motorists day in, day out and year in, year out.' What happened in that debate? What did Labor choose to do?

Mrs Frecklington: Remind us.

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the member. It said, 'No, we want to hit motorists again. Ramp it up! Ramp that registration up again!' Who led the debate to put it up? Who argued the case that motorists need to pay more and more and more? Who led the charge? Yes, you guessed it: the now Leader of the Opposition and then transport minister. The now Leader of the Opposition and then transport minister argued in this House to make registration more expensive and make motorists pay more and more and more despite Queensland already being the most expensive state to own and run a motor vehicle and despite having put registration up 30 per cent since 2008. She led the charge. Who was in cabinet when that decision was made? Who was in cabinet, voting for it, saying, 'Yes, hit the motorists again and again and again and again?' Yes, the shadow minister for main roads! He was there. He put his hand up. He said, 'Hit them up again! Hit them again! Hit them again!'

Mr Choat: And the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, too.

Mr EMERSON: The now Leader of the Opposition and the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition were there too—all three at the front: the debt, the deficit, the deceit at the front there. They voted to say, 'Hit the motorist once again. Let's make them pay more and more.' We hear hypocrisy from them now. They say, 'We would've stopped the registration going up. We would've done this, we would've done that.' We all know what Labor's record is in terms of election promises, don't we? We know that you cannot trust Labor, because it will say one thing during the election campaign and straight after it will start to re-evaluate. We saw it with the asset sales. Particularly for motorists, we saw it with the fuel subsidy.

Let me remind the House—again, all of those glorious new LNP members who were not here during the last term—of some of the comments. The then Treasurer—now sadly departed from this chamber but with a wonderful new member to replace him, a wonderful new member who is committed to her community—said, 'No, we're keeping the fuel subsidy.' He said that before the 2009 election. What did the former Premier say in the lead-up to the 2009 election? She said, 'We won't kick Queenslanders when they're down.' They were her words: 'We won't kick Queenslanders when they're down. We'll be keeping the fuel subsidy.' What happened straight after the election? The size-10 boot came straight up to kick all those Queenslanders on the fuel subsidy. Labor re-evaluated the promise and it let Queenslanders down. It re-evaluated those promises and it broke its election promises.

So, in the end, what do we see? What didn't we hear from the hysterical member for South Brisbane in her comments in terms of cost of living for families? We did not hear about the 15 per cent increases on public transport. We did not hear about car registration and this state being the most expensive place to own and run a motor vehicle. We did not hear about the broken promise with regard to the fuel subsidy. The LNP government is committed to delivering cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders. We will keep our promises—unlike Labor. We are committed to Queensland families. We are committed to all Queenslanders. We will keep our promises. We will fight every day to give cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders.

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (12.28 pm): I rise today to contribute to debate on the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I thank the member for Indooroopilly for his kind words, because he did visit me throughout the election campaign and spoke greatly with those in my electorate in relation to offering weekly discounts to regular commuters on our public transport system. I will touch on that a little later.

Today I am proud to be able to stand in this place and speak in favour of this bill and the importance of passing this legislation as quickly as possible to assist those families and small businesses in the Morayfield electorate who have suffered from the endless rising taxes, fees and charges of those who sit to my right. Throughout the election campaign, the cost of living was the singular issue about which the majority of my constituents spoke. It was their No. 1 issue. Those who followed my campaign would understand that I ran a very grassroots campaign and took the opportunity to speak to thousands—if not tens of thousands—of people around my electorate as I doorknocked. In the last 30 days of my campaign when I asked the question, 'If you had my job, what would you fight for? What would make the most difference to your family's life?', funnily enough, the answer I always received was to reduce the cost of living—to reduce things like motor vehicle registration, public transport fares, electricity costs and water costs. It was all about these large increases in expenses that people had to put up with for 10 years under the previous Labor government.

When we look at the record of wasteful spending by the previous government, we see that it is not hard to find out why we have the financial debacle that we have in this state and why the cost of living skyrocketed—on items such as vehicle registration, electricity, stamp duty, water bills, public transport fares, fuel and licensing. I could go on and on all day. The Labor government increased those taxes and revenues to pay for its wasteful spending of taxpayers' money.

I must remind the House that we on the government side of the chamber see taxpayers' money as taxpayers' money, not our own. Unfortunately, Labor sees it as its own to spend wastefully on whatever it sees fit. I will give some examples of that waste. I know that we have heard some of these examples in the chamber already, but I must touch on them. There was the \$600 million that was wasted on the failed Traveston Dam, the \$1.1 billion that was wasted on the Tugun desalination plant and, of course, the Health payroll debacle, which we found out this week will cost taxpayers \$1.2 billion.

Mr Choat: Absolutely disgraceful.

Mr GRIMWADE: I take that interjection. It is absolutely disgraceful. I have named just a few; I will not go through the list. I know that we have already heard about them during this debate. The previous Labor government had a bad track record of delivering dams without pipes and pipes without dams, nurses without pay and, as the member who sits in front of me stated, trains without seats. It was a government that did not have a clue. It was a government that even delivered to Queensland a fake Tahitian prince.

The previous Labor government, through reckless financial management and wasteful spending, has left this state's financial affairs in a mess, to the point at which our forecast debt is \$85 billion.

A government member: Shame!

Mr GRIMWADE: I take that interjection. Shame on them. What will that mean to the taxpayers of Queensland—the ordinary people here in Queensland? It will mean that they will be paying \$5 billion a year, or \$100 million a week, or \$600,000 every hour in interest to pay that back.

A government member: What is it every hour?

Mr GRIMWADE: It is \$600,000 every hour in interest alone to pay for Labor's debt. I say to the people in my electorate that \$600,000 every hour—\$100 million every week—could be and should be put back into building vital infrastructure. I represent an electorate that has the fastest growing urban population in Queensland. Many people are moving there. Infrastructure is critical. Health services are critical. The member for Pumicestone will know the dire straits that the Caboolture Hospital is in at the moment. These are areas of infrastructure that we must address. These areas need these funds in order to secure investment and opportunity and to secure the infrastructure that our people need.

I will take a minute to address the actions that the Newman government will take to ease the cost-of-living burden on families and small business owners alike through this bill. Firstly, the reintroduction of the stamp duty concession will save Queensland families up to \$7,000 on the price of their family home. That will help stimulate activity in our property sector—a sector in my electorate that I know firsthand is suffering. Throughout the election campaign I was joined by the then shadow Attorney-General, and we visited many real estate agents to ask them about the impact on their business of this increase of \$7,000 for the average person to buy a house. As I sat and talked to those business owners I was shocked to hear them tell me about its impact and about the downturn in my electorate. I was shocked to hear the everyday people that Labor claims to represent—the hardworking people in this sector—explain to me why this decision has killed the property market, has killed their sales and has killed their livelihoods. I must say that it was a humbling experience and it is something that I do not want to have to go through again.

Throughout that period I visited many real estate agents. I was told by one of them that it was that single decision, to levy the \$7,000 in stamp duty, that made the biggest difference to them. We also spoke in-depth—and I will touch on this issue very shortly—about the red tape that strangles business and that this bill will cut. In Morayfield there are many hardworking mums and dads, people on double incomes, people on low to medium incomes, tradies, pensioners, seniors and those with disabilities, and they are all doing it tough. Being slugged another \$7,000 to enter the property market was enough to push many in my electorate to the point at which they could no longer afford the Australian dream of owning a family home.

During my discussion with real estate agents, further frustrations were conveyed to me about the increased red tape and unnecessary regulation that was threatening to strangle their businesses. The main area of frustration was the requirement to complete the sustainability declaration—one more piece of red tape that was introduced by the previous Labor government. This bill will remove the requirement for the real estate industry to complete this declaration. That means less paperwork, less red tape and less confusion for those who are buying and selling their house.

The second aspect of this bill that I would like to talk about relates to electricity prices—again, an issue that impacts the Morayfield electorate greatly. Under the previous Labor government, over the past five years family power bills have risen by an average of about \$700 and water bills have increased by about \$200. The residents of the Morayfield electorate will benefit greatly from the Newman government's pledge to freeze electricity tariff 11, saving the average family around \$120 a year. I could give members literally hundreds of examples of the impact and the burden of increased electricity costs on the budgets of families in my electorate.

I wish to share one experience with members today. Whilst out doorknocking my electorate I approached a house in Morayfield. The door of that house was opened by a middle-aged lady who was stunned to see me standing there. She questioned why I was there to listen to her concerns. This was the first time in 20 years that she had had somebody running for election—someone who could represent her—at her door, listening to what she had to say. As I had done with all the residents I had doorknocked in my electorate, I introduced myself as the local candidate and began talking to her in relation to the upcoming state election. I asked her—as I had done with most of the people I had doorknocked—what her biggest concern was. This lady retrieved literally a fist full of overdue bills and debt collection notices. By that stage she was accompanied by her two youngest children, who had come to the door, like most children do, to see who this man was who was standing there.

A government member: The good-looking man.

Mr GRIMWADE: I will take that injection—the good-looking man. With her children gripping their mother's leg, this lady began to explain the pressures on her life associated with the increased cost of living. She told me her story of having to go without to ensure that her children have food on the table each and every night. She told me her story about having to sit in darkness at night as the power had

been cut off. She told me her story about the sleepless nights where she would consider taking her own life to end the pressures placed on herself to get up each day and make a difference for the sake of her children. This lady, who had been employed, had been laid off because the business she worked for had gone broke. It was a small business, a retail outlet, that had gone broke and she cited increased costs associated with doing business and cost-of-living pressures as the No. 1 reason—the same pressures that she was suffering in her life. This was a genuine lady who was suffering in the worst possible way due to the pressures of increased costs on her budget.

Unfortunately, this was not a one-off case. In fact, I had dozens and dozens of people tell me they were in the same situation. To witness this sort of impact across my local community inspired me to fight harder and ensure that this Newman government concentrated on cost-of-living reduction measures and policy associated with reducing the burden on family budgets and small business as a priority.

This bill also delivers on the commitment to provide relief to small businesses across the state, something I have a keen interest in and something that I have a great knowledge about. Unlike those on my right who want to stand here and drivel on in relation to small business and the impacts that small business owners are facing, I truly understand because I stand at the coalface of it every day and I know. I note that the Labor members on my right are finding my speech funny as I talk about the dire impact that the cost of living has on small businesses and that is probably because they have no idea. Those who know me understand that I am a fierce advocate of small business. I understand that small business in this state is the engine room of our community and adding further pressures in relation to cost increases and increased taxation on them only dampens their ability to grow and employ people. What small business does is employ millions of people. When they are cut down with increased taxation and costs they have no money. When they have no money they cannot afford to pay staff. I am trying to make this as easy as I can for those on my right. Payroll tax is a major hindrance and disincentive for small business to grow. This is a tax that businesses are forced to pay to employ staff. The more staff you employ, the more tax you pay. What an incentive for small business! Go out there and grow your small business and employ more people—which is what Labor claims to stand for—and we will hit you with more tax. What an incentive! We wonder why in Queensland small businesses are not wanting to grow and employ more people. This will unlock the shackles in this debate. The Newman government recognises this and this bill will combat this disincentive by increasing the payroll tax exemption from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in our first step to increasing the threshold to \$1.6 million over six years. This means that approximately 1,200 employers who would otherwise be forced to pay this crazy tax to employ people in the 2012-13 year will no longer be liable. Small business people have approached me and told me this is very welcome.

I know firsthand that excessive red tape and regulation is a major source of frustration for small businesses. It is that red tape that has a major impact on profitability and the lifestyle of the mum and dad small businesses around Queensland. The establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation is an important part of our commitment to cutting red tape by 20 per cent. Coupled with other cost-of-living announcements not contained in this bill such as freezing motor vehicle registrations—something that is very welcome from our side of the House as another form of cost-of-living relief to mums and dads who have a family vehicle—and, as I spoke about before, the reduction in public transport fares which will bring relief to hardworking residents in my electorate, these commitments tonight will be welcomed by my electorate, an electorate that made it quite clear to me throughout my election campaign, and still does, that the cost of living needs to be reduced.

It was my commitment to deliver as fast as I could cost-of-living relief. As I approached residents in the streets I told them, I told the papers and I told radio that I would passionately support cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders. I stand here tonight as part of a government that will deliver to those mums and dads, those family budgets, those who are doing it most tough in our community and those small business people. It is for this reason that I will be supporting the urgent passage of this bill through the parliament to provide much needed relief to local residents and small businesses alike in the Morayfield electorate. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (12.45 pm): It gives me incredibly great pleasure to rise today in the House in support of this bill, the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It gives me even greater pleasure to follow the honourable member for Morayfield, a great colleague of mine, who actually understands the pressures Queensland small businesses and families are facing. Not only is this a bill that serves the people in my electorate of Broadwater; it is also a bill that serves the people of Queensland at large. For far too long the hardworking families of Queensland and the hardworking families of my community in Broadwater were ignored. They were continually ignored by the former Bligh Labor government. It was a government that failed to understand their wants and their needs. It is this government, a Campbell Newman-led LNP government, that is committed to ensuring that the people of Queensland and the people of my community in Broadwater are no longer burdened by Labor's many imposts.

This bill delivers on our government's commitments regarding concessional stamp duty for Queensland families who just want to buy a home. This bill honours our commitment to ease electricity prices for Queensland and Broadwater families and it eases the burden of payroll tax for Queensland small businesses. The people of Broadwater were betrayed. The people of Broadwater were failed. They were betrayed and failed by the former Labor government. Those few members who make up the opposition in their small corner over there should be incredibly ashamed of their actions because it is the actions of their former Treasurer, the former member for Mount Coot-tha, Mr Fraser, and the former member for South Brisbane, Anna Bligh, that have resulted in Queensland's fiscal situation becoming unsustainable. It is their actions that have resulted in Queensland facing a current debt of \$62 billion that is expected to increase to \$85 billion. Words fail me when I actually try to understand how a government that was in the midst of a mining boom, a government that broke its promise on asset sales and garnered \$15 billion in a fire sale, and a government that broke its promise on the fuel subsidy could actually rack up a debt of \$62 billion. But then all of a sudden I had a light bulb moment and it suddenly hit me. I understood how such a government could rack up a debt. It was because it was a Labor government! Shock, horror! It was that former Labor government, of which so few members remain, that did not do due diligence on a Tahitian prince and allowed Queenslanders to be defrauded of \$16 million. It was that Labor government that wasted more than \$1 billion on the Tugun desalination plant, something that the member for Currumbin, the honourable minister, has fought against for years. It was that Labor government that spent more than \$350 million on the Wyaralong Dam only to not connect it to the South-East Queensland water grid. It was that Labor government that oversaw the Gladstone Ports Corporation, as the honourable the Premier pointed out today, that spent more than \$1 million on corporate entertainment. I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I do not understand how the people of Broadwater could be satisfied with that government, and they were not.

Even more importantly, but certainly by no means least, it was the former Labor government that wasted more than \$400 million on a payroll system that did not pay people. How shocking! What is worse, when they finally worked out how to flick the switch and start paying people, they overpaid more than 60,000 people more than \$90 million. Shame on them! They should apologise to the people of Queensland.

The LNP went to the election with a positive vision and a positive plan for Queensland. Where Labor had no track record of which it could be proud and when Labor ran a negative campaign that merely focused on the family of politicians, this government committed to restoring Queensland's AAA credit rating after the Labor government threw it away. This government went to the election and committed to growing a four-pillar economy that would have its foundations in agriculture, resources—and incredibly importantly for my electorate of Broadwater and the Gold Coast community at large—construction and tourism. The LNP and this current government went to the election with a positive plan to ease the cost-of-living burdens that are faced by everyday families in Queensland and by everyday families in Broadwater. Our government went to the election with a plan to cut the waste and stop the economic mismanagement that we had become so used to. This government went to the people of Queensland with a plan to get this great state back on track.

Queensland families and the families in my electorate of Broadwater are struggling. Many local families just want to buy a home. Indeed, that is a dream to which many Queenslanders and Australians aspire. The families in my community and the communities of my colleagues are no different. However, clearly Labor did not understand the hopes and the dreams of Queensland families or the families in my electorate of Broadwater. If it did, Labor would not have scrapped the concessional stamp duty rate. Queenslanders can rest assured that this government does understand the needs and the aspirations of Queensland families and the families of Broadwater. That is why this government has moved to restore the concessional stamp duty rate on the family home. This move will save Queensland families up to \$7,000.

The only thing that the Labor Party understands is its own little unionised world, which is incredibly little now. They do not understand the real world, they do not understand the economy and they, certainly, do not understand the property industry. If they did understand, they would not have removed the concessional stamp duty rate against the very public advice of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. Because our government understands the needs and concerns of the people of Queensland, we are reintroducing this rate. This move will help hundreds of families in the Broadwater electorate who are aspiring to everyday dreams and who are saving to buy their own homes.

In addition to Queenslanders' ability to buy their first home, our government is incredibly concerned about the rising electricity prices that we saw under the tired Bligh Labor government. As I said earlier, Labor does not care about families. If it did, its federal colleagues would not be introducing a carbon tax, which is a tax on everyday living for everyday families. It is a tax that six days before the 2010 federal election they promised would not be introduced. As the Prime Minister herself said, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' Members of the Labor Party who sit opposite in their little corner were part of a government that saw the price of most family power bills rise by nearly \$700. Seven hundred dollars is a lot of money.

In the lead-up to the election, I had the great privilege of speaking with many families and many people in my community in the electorate of Broadwater. I was really struck by just how much those families were struggling. They were struggling under the increased cost-of-living pressures and the excessive imposts placed on them by the former Bligh Labor government. I spoke with one woman who lives in Labrador. Her husband works two jobs and she works full time. Together they are trying really hard to raise their three kids. This woman was nearly in tears as she was telling me about the sacrifices that she and her husband have made. They had to make those sacrifices because of the imposts of the former Labor government, which made it that little bit too hard. She said that her family would go regularly to a caravan park for one week's holiday. Last year, it just got a little bit too expensive and this year it was getting even worse. She started crying as she told me that she and her husband had decided that they would rather feed their children meat.

Some might think that this is an extreme example, but it is not. The people of Broadwater and the people of Queensland are struggling and they are struggling on a regular basis. They are struggling under the skyrocketing cost-of-living pressures introduced at the hands of the failed Bligh Labor government.

Debate, on motion of Miss Barton, adjourned.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Nuttall, Mr GR, Referral to Ethics Committee

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I refer to the Clerk's advice to the House on 17 May 2012 that payment of fines for contempt imposed by the Legislative Assembly on 12 May 2011 had not been received from Mr Gordon Nuttall. I have considered this matter, including advice from Senior Counsel and the Clerk, and decided to treat the failure to pay the fines as a matter of privilege and refer the matter to the Ethics Committee. I will be requesting the Ethics Committee to investigate Mr Nuttall's exact financial situation, so that the Legislative Assembly is aware of all relevant information before considering the options available.

TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed, on motion of Mr Nicholls—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Miss BARTON (Broadwater—LNP) (12.57 pm), continuing: As I was saying, on a regular basis the people of Broadwater and the people of Queensland have been struggling under the skyrocketing cost-of-living pressures imposed on them at the hands of the failed former Bligh Labor government. When my constituent had recovered a little, she asked me what an LNP government would do, not only to make her life better but also to make the lives of her three children better. I remember the look of pure unadulterated joy on her face as I talked about our government's plans to ease the cost-of-living burdens for her family, for other families in Broadwater and for families right across Queensland. I told her that the LNP and a Campbell Newman-led government would understand families and the strains that their budgets face, and that we would make the family budgets more manageable. I told her that it would be our government, not a Labor government, that would understand how to balance a budget. It is a pretty basic concept, but we understand that in order to save money you cannot spend more than you earn.

I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that is freezing the cost of the electricity tariff 11 for hardworking families in Queensland and Broadwater, so that they can save an average of \$120 a year. I am also incredibly proud to be part of a government that is committed to ensuring that Queensland families and the families in Broadwater, to whom I speak on a regular basis, know the true cost of Gillard's carbon tax, which is being imposed on the everyday lives of everyday Queenslanders and the people of the Broadwater electorate.

In addition to understanding the burdens that the failed Labor government placed on hardworking Queensland families, our government understands the trials that many small businesses have faced over the past few years. Indeed, as I look around the chamber at the faces of my colleagues, I see small business people. Labor has never understood small business. I look at the opposition and I see union hacks. Small business is struggling. Our government recognises that and our government is committed to helping small businesses. There are many small businesses in my electorate of Broadwater. They provide jobs and they provide choice in the market for my community. It is heartbreaking when I see family businesses, which have been valued members of the community for years, shut their doors

because under Labor it just got that little bit too hard. The cost-of-living burdens on families mean that people are not stimulating the economy and the cost of business burdens, such as the payroll tax, can make it too hard to remain operational.

Our government is committed to ensuring that small business is again recognised as a vital contributor to our economy. I do not believe that anybody can be taxed into prosperity and I do not believe that businesses can be taxed into viability. Payroll tax is one of the most unfair taxes applicable to any small business. We are punishing businesses for their success.

Debate, on motion of Miss Barton, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Nudgee Electorate

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (2.31 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak about one of the many things that is important to me—that is, my electorate of Nudgee. I would like to highlight a few things that have been going on around my electorate, starting with Boondall State School. Under the charge of Principal Chris Campanaris, this school is active in many ways. Chris, who has been principal for some 20 years—and proudly so, may I add—loves to show off the many awards the school has won. Since being elected I have visited the school on several occasions. I visited them recently for their Friday Healthy Options eating program. I also participated in Walk Safe to School day. Just this week I had the pleasure of handing out around 70 efficiency awards to students during Queensland Week.

At St Pius at Banyo I enjoyed a Mothers Day breakfast with students, parents and teachers. I was also fortunate enough to be able to be principal for a day at Wavell State High School. I spent the afternoon with Principal Jeff Major, staff and school captains. It was a great day and from it we managed to commence solving their afternoon school pick-up problem. We also talked in length about the move to bring year 7 students into the school and how that might look and feel.

In other news, given my sporting background I would also like to note some sporting achievements of students from St Joseph's College at Nudgee: Daniel Fletcher, Queensland Schoolboys U16 hockey team; Will Reynolds, Metropolitan North U12 hockey team; and Alex King, 2012 Australian Junior Rowing Team. Whilst I am congratulating people, I congratulate Mr Shannon Hickey, the owner of Nextra Newsagency at Chermide shopping centre, for taking out Queensland Newsagency of the Year 2012.

An honourable member: Again?

Mr WOODFORTH: Again. He does well. In Taigum, just on my electorate border, Terry White opened up yet another Terry White Chemist. It is a credit to Mr White, a former member of this House, whose business continues to grow and grow.

A couple of weekends ago at Burnie Brae Community Centre we celebrated Volunteers Week and awarded over 50 volunteers with badges. So many things happen in our community, and without the support of volunteers so much just would not happen. Some of these volunteers are well into their seventies and eighties. I congratulate all volunteers around the state and country.

On Saturday just gone we celebrated Multicultural Day at Zillmere. The event again was well supported by the community as a whole. My congratulations go to the organising committee, led by Jo, for delivering yet another fine event.

Going forward, I look forward to updating the Geebung and surrounding areas on the Geebung rail overpass. I will conclude by reminding the House—not that we in government need reminding; nor do my constituents in Nudgee who struggle to pay the bills, are losing their jobs and are closing their business doors—that in just over three weeks time the most insidious tax ever to hit us will be here. It is the tax we did not vote for and we were told that famous line, 'There will be no carbon tax under the government I lead.' God help this country from this tax!

AJ Wyllie Bridge, Reconstruction

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (2.34 pm): I rise this afternoon to update the House on the progress of the AJ Wyllie Bridge reconstruction on Gympie Road at Lawnton. The northbound AJ Wyllie Bridge was damaged beyond repair in the floods of January 2011. It is being rebuilt under Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, a joint federal-state initiative.

The temporary pedestrian bridge over the North Pine River was installed in May and demolition work has now commenced on the old bridge. The boat ramp just upstream from the bridge has now been temporarily closed and the waterway under the project area is off limits to all water traffic for the duration of the project. The bridge demolition work is expected to be completed by July and the construction of the new bridge will then commence.

I can assure local residents, commuters and business owners that the member for Kallangur and I are doing everything we can to ensure there is regular communication about temporary road closures, project progress and traffic congestion around the bridge, and we will continue to do so. We are also meeting regularly with project and departmental staff to ensure we have the latest project information to pass on to our electorates. If residents want to keep up to date with project progress they can subscribe to the department's free SMS service at www.northpinebridgesms.com.au.

The AJ Wyllie Bridge project is a case study in what was wrong with the Bligh Labor government and why the people of Pine Rivers rightly showed them the door after years of neglect. The lack of communication, consideration and assistance from the previous government for our community throughout 2011 was appalling. We saw many local businesses shedding staff, closing their doors and relocating to other regions because of the hit that they took to their income after the bridge was damaged. But the former Labor government was nowhere to be seen. This same Labor Party that stands up in this place and claims to be the champion of the working class deserted Pine Rivers businesses in their hour of need and left them to struggle on their own.

The member for Kallangur and I were pleased to be able to provide practical support to local businesses throughout 2011. Through doorknocking, running 'buy local' campaigns and referring businesses to appropriate government departments for assistance, we did what the Labor government would not. We will continue to support our local businesses in practical ways and we will be available to them when they need support from their government.

I am proud to be a part of a government that is getting on with the job and standing up for local small businesses. I renew my commitment to my community that I will work with them to minimise the impacts of the AJ Wyllie Bridge project between now and its completion.

Ferry Grove Railway Station, Park-and-Ride

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (2.36 pm): I rise in the House today to speak about the Ferry Grove park-and-ride upgrade at the Ferry Grove Railway Station. The electorate of Ferry Grove was created in 1992, and since that time the residents of Ferry Grove have been seeking improvements to the public transport services and infrastructure throughout the western and north-western fringes of the electorate. I know that there were numerous references made during the tenure of my predecessor that the park-and-ride facilities would be upgraded and that the feeder transport services throughout the Bunya and Samford Valley regions would be improved. In fact, they were key election points discussed in great length throughout the campaigns of 2006 and 2009.

I do not want my colleagues to think I am ungrateful, as I am sure that there are many in the House who would be very happy to have an upgrade that, when finished, will provide car parking for 1,000 cars. The difficulty is that, when this was first mooted in 2006, 1,000 car parks may well have been enough—just. It is now 2012, though, and I am very confident that the 1,000 parking bays are simply not going to cut the mustard. From the day it opens, we will still have cars parked along Arbor Street and Conavalla Street and other surrounding areas. The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the feeder bus networks are insufficient to provide a real alternative to the people of Bunya and Ferry Grove. Therefore, they are left with little option but to drive over the hill.

One alternative discussed is re-opening the Ferry Grove to Dayboro line. This line was closed on 30 June 1955 by the then Labor Premier, Hon. Vince Gair. Labor remained in office until August 1957 when, at a general election, 25 years of a tired Labor government was brought to an end. It is ironic that at the time of losing the election of 1957, the tired, 25-year-old Gair Labor government had clearly shown little capacity to plan for the future through its decision to close the Ferry Grove to Dayboro line. Similarly, the tired Bligh Labor government failed to plan adequately for the future by refusing to look at alternative options. A multistorey private-public partnership to redevelop that park-and-ride facility was mooted as a possible option and was supported by residents and industry partners. As if in a final act of defiance, to minimise future options and to ensure that the decision of the Labor government in 1955 could never be revisited, the insufficient option currently being delivered includes a station that will be built at the end of the line perpendicular to the rail corridor, ensuring that the extension to Samford is never again possible without first demolishing the 'Taj Mahal' we now call Ferry Grove park-and-ride.

Woodridge Electorate

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.39 pm): I rise today to defend the good name of the people of Woodridge. Since 2001, I have had the honour of representing the people in my electorate of Woodridge. At the March election many of them voted for the LNP because they wanted to send Labor a message. We have certainly received that message. But, as I move around the electorate, more and more people admit to me that they voted LNP but add 'never again'.

In just two months after the election the people of Woodridge are recognising what more and more people across the state are recognising: this government has broken its commitment to them. They will be hurt by this government's cuts to government jobs. It is the LNP that promised not to sack government workers but then did exactly that once it won government. They will be hurt by this government's cuts to front-line staff and services. It is the LNP that said it would focus on the needs of Queensland families. But its first big capital works project is for a new executive building for the Premier and his ministers.

The people of Woodridge are already growing tired of this government's blame game. They do not want a government that is fixated on the past and which blames the previous government for anything and everything that goes wrong. Woodridge is a strong and vibrant community full of families facing the same pressures as families elsewhere in Australia. They want decent jobs and fair wages. They want to do the best for their children's future. They also want a government with the same goals. They certainly do not need a government or ministers who look down on them.

Anyone present in this House last night would know the sneering tone one member opposite used when suggesting that the people in Woodridge were not savers. Those present would know how he had to change tack and cover his tracks when he realised what he was starting to say. The community of Woodridge has many unmet needs and I will continue to assist the people of Woodridge where and whenever I can. I will also defend them when necessary, because what they definitely do not need is to be subjected to the snobbery dished out freely last night by the Attorney-General.

Transit of Venus

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.42 pm): I rise to speak on the most amazing astronomical event that took place yesterday—the transit of Venus. Following on from the Queen's jubilee, this was certainly a once-in-a-lifetime event because, if you did not see the transit of Venus yesterday, you will have to wait another 105 years for the next one in the year 2117.

The transits have been extremely important events in the past as they have been used to calculate the distance between the earth and the sun—which is some estimated 150 million kilometres. In 1663, Scottish mathematician James Gregory suggested using a transit of Mercury to determine the distance, but it was Edmond Halley some years later who proposed a transit of Venus would be more accurate.

The 1769 transit has a strong connection with Australia, as James Cook's *Endeavour* voyage first stopped at Tahiti to try to observe the transit before following secret orders to sail west and 'discover the Great South Land', mapping the eastern coast of our country's shoreline.

North Queensland Astronomy has been fortunate to become a tracking station for the 2012 transit of Venus. Apart from the University of Queensland and Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium in South-East Queensland, the transit was tracked, timed and observed live on the internet at the Home Hill State High School transit of Venus tracking station in the Burdekin electorate. This has been a major coup for the director of the North Queensland section of the Astronomical Association of Queensland, Rob Black, and Home Hill State High School teachers, organisers and students. I really commend Rob for his enthusiasm and the knowledge he has been able to impart to Burdekin students.

Astronomy has been a major part of the Home Hill State High School's science and physics studies. It is a part of the Australian curriculum, and I am told it is not uncommon to see 50 students lying on the school oval and gazing up at the stars on special viewing evenings. During Wednesday's transit, a special solarscope was connected to a video eyepiece and the magical moment was viewed using sophisticated software. Venus started its journey across the sun at about 8.16 am and took about 6½ hours to travel across the face of the sun. Australia was one of the best vantage points in the world to observe the transit, with the maximum effect around 11.31 am.

The year 2012 is indeed a cosmic year as after the transit of Venus there will be a blue moon on 31 August and a total solar eclipse on 14 November, when the moon will fully block out the sun. While to many the transit of Venus merely resembled a black dot on the sun, it was closely monitored by astronauts aboard the International Space Station. The Home Hill observation station in the Burdekin electorate played a major role in the recording of data, with the transit being streamed live via the worldwide web. It is well worth a look—

(Time expired)

Gympie, Volunteer Awards

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (2.45 pm): At the end of May I had the opportunity to once again, as part of National Volunteer Week, recognise some of the wonderful people and organisations in the electorate of Gympie who give of themselves and their time so freely. This is the sixth year that I have hosted an awards morning tea and provided certificates to these individuals, and it is the second year that I have conducted regional morning teas.

We presented 18 awards on the Cooloola Coast covering individuals from Tin Can Bay, Rainbow Beach and Cooloola Cove; 11 awards were presented to those in the hinterland covering Kin Kin, Pomona, Cooran and Traveston; and 57 awards were presented to those who live in Gympie and the Mary Valley. These people do not volunteer for recognition; they volunteer because they want to help—whether it is patrolling the beach with the Rainbow Beach Surf Life Saving Club or renovating facilities at the Gympie Clay Target Club, or it may be by representing our local Indigenous community through the Cooloola Aboriginal Services Inc. or by helping the veteran community like the Cooroy-Pomona RSL Sub Branch. There are over seven billion people on the face of the earth and it is those who choose to volunteer who truly make our communities strong. I am privileged to live in a part of Queensland that has so many people who have that volunteering spirit.

If we simply converted the time volunteered into a dollar estimate, we know that as a community we could not afford it. But that approach is far too simplistic. It does not take into account the intangible value provided by volunteers. It can be as simple as asking, 'Are you okay, mate?' from a bloke at the local Men's Shed, or the independence that a meal provides delivered by a volunteer from Gympie Meals on Wheels, or it is the sense of joy that comes from learning to sail from a volunteer of Sailability at Tin Can Bay, or the compassion and understanding that comes from a volunteer from Little Haven Palliative Care who has also lost a loved one, or it could just be the look on a child's face as the volunteers of the Gympie historical re-enactment group conduct a bushrangers hold-up of the Mary Valley Rattler.

The value of volunteering in my community cannot simply be measured in economic estimates. The value of volunteering is what makes my community. The value of what all of the award recipients and the many others bring to my community can never be truly calculated, but it is what makes our community truly special.

Of course every volunteer will tell you that they value what they personally gain from volunteering themselves. I take this opportunity to thank every organisation that nominated a worthy recipient for this year's awards, my electorate staff, our local community volunteer Tanya Easterby for helping to organise the award morning teas, and the community sponsors for their kind donations. I look forward to recognising more volunteers in my community in 2013.

Police Service, Recruitment

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.48 pm): I rise to address the matter of police recruiting. This government has committed to 1,100 new and additional police officers. Mostly these are likely to be inexperienced junior officers. I am not going to mention the very modest prospects of delivering this number or retaining them thereafter, nor whether the real costs have been revealed in support of this program. I am very concerned about the LNP's proposal to potentially recruit very young people, in the main, directly from school.

I have considerable experience in training young men, particularly 17- to 21-year-olds, to be soldiers. It is no surprise that armies across recorded history are made up in the main of men under 25. The reasons are many and varied, from the role of young males in traditional societies to the fact that young males are the most emotionally malleable. My experiences suggest a few things: firstly, 17- to 21-year-olds are much easier to train than 28- to 35-year-olds. In general terms, the majority of youngsters will believe virtually whatever they are told by their 'tribal masters', and this occurs largely without question. They are desperate to fit in and be accepted, to conform and succeed, whereas men over 30 tend not to accept much on face value and are much more comfortable and likely to question and test positions. Essentially, they are mature and much more aware of their own vulnerabilities and real dangers. The 18- to 20-year-olds possess a reduced sense of personal risk. That is why they are more likely to be irresponsible behind the wheel and take other lifestyle risks. The 17- to 20-year-olds tend to bond with their teams and groups and corporate cultures more willingly, more comprehensively and more absolutely. There are many historical examples of this.

It is the knowledge of these characteristics that must have influenced the Fitzgerald inquiry recommendations specific to this matter. Fitzgerald recommended—

A related issue is the relative youth and inexperience of cadets and some probationaries, many of whom come straight from the classroom. High attrition rates during and in the first year after training, indicate that their expectations of police work do not accord with the reality, and that they are not prepared for the unpleasant aspects of policing.

A better recruitment practice would be to select men and women with more maturity who have education or work experience beyond high school which will give them a better grounding for police work.

There are, therefore, compelling reasons to scrap the cadet system which directly recruits Grade 12 school leavers.

My point is that, if I were seeking to train a battalion of paratroopers, I would go for youngsters. If I were seeking to train individuals to operate in isolation or in small teams in highly volatile situations under enormous scrutiny, then 28- to 35-year-olds or at least more mature people are the best choice.

Nanango Electorate, Road Network

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.51 pm): I rise to speak on the state of the road network in the electorate of Nanango. I have seen firsthand the failure to plan during 20 years of the failed Labor administration, and it has been disastrous for the roads within my electorate. The three major highways that traverse the electorate—the D'Aguilar, the New England and the Brisbane Valley highways—are in a very poor condition. The drive from Kingaroy to Kilcoy is very dangerous, as the terrain does not allow for passing and trucks have no choice but to block the roads, making some motorists do ridiculous things and causing danger to other drivers. Unfortunately, many deaths and avoidable accidents have occurred due to this. I am excited, though, to be on this side of the House because I will be working hard to ensure that the Nanango electorate gets its fair share of road upgrades—

Mr Johnson: And proper representation.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is correct. I look forward to working with the Minister for Main Roads on this issue that is so critical to the constituents of my electorate. I especially look forward to delivering those passing lanes between Kilcoy and Kingaroy and to talking to locals to establish where the best spot for them would be.

I must also mention that the major milestone of the reopening of the two lanes of the Blackbutt Range, which was meant to occur today but due to rain has been prevented from reopening, will hopefully happen next week. This is big news for our community, as this important freight route and road link has been operating as a single lane under traffic controls since January 2011, adding up to 25 minutes to the drive from Kingaroy to Brisbane or Brisbane to Kingaroy.

I thank all road users and nearby communities for their ongoing patience during this time. Reconstructing this part of the highway has been a priority and the work has been ongoing. Regular users of this section of the highway will be very aware of the massive amount of progress that has been achieved in trying to rebuild this road. But there is much more to be done. I received representations from many constituents with regard to the state of the roads, and I would say that this would be the No. 1 issue within the Nanango electorate.

I have been approached by elderly people in Crows Nest asking for a 50-kilometre speed limit through their town and the updating of crossings. As there are many elderly residents within Crows Nest who walk to the shops, I think they would benefit from those improvements. I have also been asked to review the truck stop at Colington. Feedback suggests it is very poorly positioned. We have also had road safety requests from the principal of the Cooyar State School who is concerned about children's safety near the school and on the road between Geham and Hampton.

I believe the Nanango electorate is the inland gateway to the rest of Queensland, so it is my goal to ensure that the roads that take everyone to the rest of Queensland are well maintained. For the people who use them every day to travel—

(Time expired)

Central Queensland, Rail Network

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise today to congratulate the government, particularly the Deputy Premier and the cabinet, on 75 days of putting in place planning for rail lines in Central Queensland. We have had 20 years of mismanagement by the Labor government, \$600,000 a day in interest payments and a plan for rail lines in Central Queensland that was like, as the Deputy Premier said, spaghetti on a plate. We now have a plan to go forward and a corridor which I think most people will agree with. There will certainly be people in the regions who will be unhappy with an established corridor, but it is a far better plan than having rail lines going higgledy-piggledy through Central Queensland's great farming land and grazing properties. The line from Galilee to Abbot Point will be a standard-gauge rail line and it will be a narrow gauge across to Gladstone. That is a great step forward.

Another issue is planning for gas pipelines. Under the Labor government we have gas pipelines going through private land where they could easily have gone along the side of the road corridors. In Rockhampton the gas pipeline is going through an industrial estate. Quite frankly, compensation to landholders has not been adequate. Indeed, it has been an extended and torturous event to get private landholders some sort of compensation for multiple pipelines and corridors going through their properties.

Most members would realise that access to private property and the ingress of rats tail and all the other pests, which have been prevalent under the Labor regime without any attempt to try to control them, are issues of paramount importance to landholders. A single event involving rats tail grass coming onto their property without proper control can make that property virtually valueless. There is a huge impost on landholders and the proponents of gas pipelines to ensure that the spread of weed and grasses is not prevalent on those properties.

Toowoomba North Electorate

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise today to talk about a couple of projects that I launched this week in the electorate of Toowoomba North. There have been two projects, both involving Origin Energy partnering with the community. One was at the Wilsonton campus of Toowoomba State High, where they are bringing a crop of trees forward for a bioproject. Having an energy company come onto the campus has given these students a great opportunity to investigate the science and to do a great deal of research around sustainable energy production. I look forward to seeing more partnerships with the resource companies in Toowoomba.

The other project that I launched was at the University of Southern Queensland, a university that is dear to my heart and a university that I think can play a key role in conducting research into the coal seam gas industry, into underground water aquifers and into growing this industry in a sustainable way. The project that I had the privilege of launching this week was called 'Count me in'. It is a project that is conducting research into how to increase participation by women in the resource sector workforce and its expansion on the Western Downs. The project will be looking to not just see where there might be opportunities for women to be trained to go into the resource industry but also the support industries and other businesses that will develop in the community as the coal seam gas industry expands. It was with great pleasure that I launched those two projects. I think the coal seam gas industry gives us a great opportunity to ensure that the education resources that exist in Toowoomba are expanded and supported using third parties that can come in and work with the institutions that are there to ensure that this resource—coal seam gas—is developed in a sustainable way on the Darling Downs.

Coomera Electorate, Public Transport

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.59 pm): I rise to advise the House about the issues that need to be resolved in the state seat of Coomera. Many of these issues revolve around the area of transport and main roads, and I have had conversations with the minister and his advisers in relation to some of them. There are a few particular sticking points, I suppose, because of the number of people and the usability and usage of various bus services. For example, Jacobs Well is a beautiful, small village on the waterfront in my electorate. It is a gorgeous place, and many people in this House would be very aware that you are able to launch a boat from there and go for a fish.

Members would be surprised to hear that, although a few thousand people live in that area, they only have one bus a week coming out of there and taking people into Beenleigh—that is in the morning—and then there is one bus a week in the afternoon bringing people back to Jacobs Well. Members would think we were talking about an area that was somewhere west of the Darling Downs or out in one of the areas up around Nanango, perhaps near Kilcoy, that was quite some distance away. But not really. We are talking about a small village which has a number of other small villages around it that is only approximately 12 minutes from the M1, 12 minutes from the railway line and 12 minutes from the Ormeau Railway Station.

One of the things I have committed myself to in this next term is to lobby the minister and the department for a permanent bus service—however irregular it may be, perhaps on an hourly basis—from the Ormeau Railway Station into Jacobs Well and Cabbage Tree Point and back out to the Ormeau Railway Station or perhaps a loop going from Ormeau, through those areas, out to Beenleigh, back into the area and back again into Ormeau Railway Station. That is the only sensible way to go. It is the only sensible idea. If we expect people to get out of their cars and onto public transport, we have to provide those services for them. I tell the House today that I plan on fighting for what is right in the state seat of Coomera, and that is just one of the examples of what I am determined to resolve in this next three-year term.

Queensland Health, Pot Plants

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.02 pm): I refer to the Queensland Health memo in relation to pot plants dated 23 May 2012 signed by the director-general, Tony O'Connell, and I table it for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Director-General memorandum, dated 25 May 2012, to Queensland Health regarding cost savings strategies—indoor/outdoor plant expenditure [\[260\]](#).

I also table the Queensland government documents that are readily available on the website in relation to fire ants.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Fire ant movement controls for residents', by Primary Industries and Fisheries [261].

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Fire ant movement controls' by Primary Industries and Fisheries [262].

Once again, Queensland Health has been caught out acting unlawfully in relation to pot plants by not advising its employees of the procedures set out in the act and the regulations. Queensland Health employees who live in the majority of suburbs in South-East Queensland cannot move pot plants from their homes to any public hospital or Queensland Health centre as to do so would breach the fire ant movement controls. The Plant Protection Regulation 2002 defines pot plants as high-risk items in relation to the spread of fire ants, and I table this document for the benefit of the House.

This plant regulation prohibits the movement of pot plants from a resident's property if the property is located within a restricted zone. I table all of the suburbs that are within the restricted zone.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Biosecurity Queensland Control Centre, suburb register' [263].

It seems that every suburb except for Indooroopilly, St Lucia and Tivoli is within the restricted area. So if you live within all these suburbs and you work for Queensland Health, guess what—the only way you can take a pot plant to work legally is to, firstly, believe that the pot plant is not infested with ants and has been repotted in new potting mix and/or treated with the appropriate chemicals and, secondly, fill out a fire ant declaration form. I table that for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document titled 'Fire Ant Declaration—Pot Plants, Declaration for the movement of pot plants', Queensland Government [264].

The form must be delivered to someone in Queensland Health and be on file for one year. What happened to this government's red tape reduction blitz? It has gone out the window. Will we have pot plant police officers in every hospital? Will the government employ pot plant enforcement officers? Who is going to police these pot plant laws within Queensland Health facilities? Who is going to check whether the chemicals—cyfluthrin or chlorpyrifos—have been used before they are allowed to be moved? The Plant Protection Act 1989 provides penalties of up to \$200,000 for anyone breaching these laws, including Queensland Health employees. Let us face it: Bill and Ben the Flower Pot Men are in control of Queensland Health. Watch with mother now! 'Bill and Ben, Bill and Ben.'

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order!

Mrs MILLER: 'Tony O'Connell and Morris Jones.'

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will—

Mrs MILLER: 'Flower pot men'.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba! I warn you under 253A.

Bulimba Child Care Centre



Mr DILLAWAY (Bulimba—LNP) (3.05 pm): I rise here—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! We have seen very poor behaviour. We do not need it continued.

Mr DILLAWAY: I rise here in the House this afternoon to congratulate the Bulimba Child Care Centre on taking out two very prestigious awards during the month of May. This outstanding early childhood centre was recognised to be exactly that—outstanding—when they took out the Queensland award and then followed that up a week later by winning the national award for the early childhood service of the year at the Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards held in Sydney on 26 May.

I have had the pleasure of being shown around this award-winning early childhood centre that has a unique but very effective model of having dual centre directors—the hardworking and dedicated Ms Bev Book and Ms Karen Broomfield. This tour gave me a firsthand understanding of the family friendly working conditions that was a central pillar in their submission and, ultimately, one of many of their winning elements. Established in 1942, this centre prides itself on tailoring care and education to reflect the centre's community approach, with parent involvement being at the core. This fact was highlighted by Ms Anna McCartney, the President of the Bulimba Child Care Centre Parent Management Committee in 2012, who has gladly held a role on the committee for a number of years and I am led to believe for many more years to come. The enthusiasm shown for the centre by the staff and the committee and the aspirations they have for its long-term sustainability is very exciting. Again, this was another key element that the judges used in their criteria in selecting a winner for this award. The centre showed expertise in forward planning and goal setting.

Throughout my tour with the directors and the president, I was briefed on the challenges the centre currently faces and the plans they have in the future to further improve the learning outcomes for all the children. As a father of three young children myself, all under the age of eight, I was especially interested to hear of their willingness to share their plans for success with others. They have asked if I could facilitate a forum amongst other independent early childhood centres across the electorate to ensure that all centres have an opportunity to learn from each other and undertake best practices into the future. This is another example of their fine commitment to the care and education of the next generation.

I would like to again congratulate the directors, Bev and Karen, the staff, the committee and the parents on such an outstanding result for the Bulimba community and, most importantly, an outstanding result for the children who attend the centre to know that they are in good hands. Well done, Bulimba Child Care Centre. The community is very proud.

Volunteering

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise in the House today for the first time since my maiden speech to give thanks to our community volunteers. I found a quote the other day which I loved because it summed up for me why as a politician I find it so important to recognise the contribution of volunteers in our lives. That quote states—

Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year—

or once or twice a term—

but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.

We need volunteers to make our community a place worth living in. The volunteer sector, often unseen but significant, needs our support and recognition. This is one of the reasons I welcomed, as one of the first policies for our new state LNP government, the announcement of the Caring for our Community grants program, which will make available up to \$15,000 in grants to eligible volunteer based organisations.

According to research, in Australia around 35 per cent of us at some time will be involved in some type of organisational volunteer activity on a regular basis, not to mention the more informal ways of supporting others. A 2010 study published by Volunteering Australia found that 20 per cent of adults had in the previous four weeks provided care to someone with a disability, long-term illness or problems associated with old age. These types of volunteer services are the most likely to go under the radar but are just as valuable in our society. Some 49 per cent of people aged 18 years and over had provided assistance to someone outside of their own household during a four-week time frame. It seems that a heart to serve without expectation of reward is in many if not all of us. This knowledge makes me proud to be an Australian and as a political representative it makes me determined to ensure that the sacrifice of time and heart given by volunteers so regularly is met with my own commitment to the community's needs.

I was recently doing a review on volunteer based groups in the Sandgate electorate and noted around 50 groups covering a diverse range of interests—the environment, social networking, welfare, faith, sports, aged care and disability. We also have those helping out at schools, businesses and animal refuges, just to name a few. In the next couple of months I will be holding a special thankyou afternoon tea for numerous volunteer representatives from my electorate, but it is our long-term partnership that I am most interested in, as I know that without them I could not do even a fraction of what I want to do in the Sandgate electorate. Finally, for volunteers everywhere, Winston Churchill summed it up well when he said, 'We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.' I thank volunteers everywhere for what they give.

Hope Foundation

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (3.11 pm): It was interesting to hear the member for Sandgate speak about volunteerism. That that subject came up so often in maiden speeches, particularly from members on this side of the House, shows the value of our community groups—the lifeblood, the heart and the soul of our individual electorates. I want to take the opportunity today to share with the House the achievements of one of the many remarkable community groups that operate within my electorate of Mansfield, and I speak of the Hope Foundation, which is based in Mount Gravatt but operates throughout greater Brisbane, providing much needed help and support to women trying to escape from a life of prostitution or drug and alcohol addiction. Many of these women, because of their circumstances, are also homeless—and I interpose here that it was good to hear from the minister in her statement to the House this morning the steps being taken by the government to continue to increase support for homeless people within our community. The Hope Foundation itself does great on-the-ground work and helps between 20 and 40 women each week. The Hope Foundation also runs a

number of other educational, outreach and support programs which are aimed at raising awareness of the problems faced by vulnerable women and ensuring that those who require it have access to practical and emotional support. There are no other organisations in Brisbane that provide the same assistance to women within this target group.

A remarkable constituent of mine, Ms Bronwen Healy, founded this organisation in 2007 after her own successful transformation from a life of addiction and prostitution in 1999. Her commitment to growing the Hope Foundation is extraordinary. She leads on the ground and also has a significant role speaking publicly about the foundation's work. Her Christian faith is her key motivation but, needless to say, all are welcomed within the doors of the foundation's rooms. Bronwen was a finalist in the Queensland Telstra Business Women's Awards in 2010.

I visited the group's premises late last year and was impressed with the calming and attractive fit-out that immediately makes those who enter in difficult situations feel welcome. As we sat and talked, Bronwen opened my eyes about the extent of the drug problem around Brisbane. She has a simple catchcry: 'every choice has a consequence'. And what simpler call could there be to the basic principle of personal responsibility that is so important to so many in this House. The Hope Foundation encourages people to address this issue and then also helps with practical matters—things as simple as provision of food, toiletries, clothing and toys for children. I urge people to come along on the afternoon of Saturday, 30 June for its Markets of Hope at St Bart's church at Mount Gravatt where handmade artworks, jewellery and other goods will be on sale. I encourage everybody to support this great community event and to get behind the Hope Foundation.

National Reconciliation Week

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (3.14 pm): Firstly, I want to congratulate the member for Bundamba on her rendition of Bill and Ben—quite entertaining! I remind her that there would be several karaoke bars in Bundamba that would enjoy her talents.

Mrs Miller: Did you like my drumming?

Mr GULLEY: That, too. On a serious note, I remind the House that we recently celebrated National Reconciliation Week in Queensland, from 27 May to 3 June. That week represented an opportunity for all Queenslanders to be part of the reconciliation process by considering what they can do to improve employment, health and education opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. I had the pleasure of attending a meeting with the Murrijabree Association to learn about the practical steps being taken by the local Murrijabree Association based in Deception Bay. Both the Murrijabree and I appreciated the symbolism of the meeting occurring on Friday, 27 May, being the start of National Reconciliation Week.

The Murrijabree Association offers a comprehensive approach to address Aboriginal disadvantage. It retains cultural integrity and has a strong ongoing support structure for local Aboriginals in areas of work skills, housing, health and community engagement. I look forward to working closely with this successful community, not-for-profit organisation.

Newman Government, Alpha Coal Project

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (3.15 pm): Former Queensland Labor governments have worked in the interests of Queenslanders with whatever political party was in power in Canberra and with all of the relevant laws that govern our nation, regardless of who introduced them. Let us take, for example, the Clermont coalmine expansion in the electorate of Gregory—a resource expansion approved by the Coordinator-General under the Beattie Labor government and approved by the Howard coalition government without political posturing back in 2005; a resource expansion that delivered 565 jobs during construction, led to at least 450 ongoing operational jobs on-site and supports an estimated further 3,800 jobs throughout the state, mostly in the Mackay region. There were at least a dozen other resource projects delivered by a Labor state government and a coalition federal government in that period of time with not one hissy fit, not one tantrum.

So what happens within 75 days of an LNP government? Let us look at the Alpha Coal Project and get the facts straight in this House. The Deputy Premier stood in this parliament on 29 May 2012 to announce that the Coordinator-General had provided conditional approval for the Alpha Coal Project. Only one day after the report was released, the Deputy Premier again stood in this place to insist the federal government immediately approve the EIS to get the project underway. What the Deputy Premier failed to do was advise the House that the information supplied under his name was incomplete, was flawed and did not meet the basic requirements under the Commonwealth-state bilateral agreement.

If, at best, this was a simple omission or oversight, then the Deputy Premier embarrasses Queensland and his government with his lack of diligence and his management of such an important issue. But this was not the only reason for this sloppy paperwork, given that 48 hours later the Deputy

Premier was again on his feet putting out press releases screaming outrage that the federal minister had not rubber-stamped his request. The real reason became apparent on Tuesday from comments made by the Premier himself when he said—

I intend to campaign absolutely relentlessly in the next federal election if we do not see the Prime Minister move to curb this wayward environment minister.

That is what he told reporters. Even this morning in advising the House of his stakeholder meeting today about this issue, it is clear that he has started the campaign already. This project needs to go ahead. The Commonwealth needs Queensland to competently complete its assessment for the state to discharge its obligations under the bilateral agreement, or EPBCA, which it evidently cannot do under the incompetence of the Deputy Premier and the political agenda of the Premier. After such a performance, the Premier really should add another title to his signature block—'Premier for Queensland and State Director of the "Abbott for the Lodge" campaign'.

Everton Electorate, Teachers

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.18 pm): Schoolteachers play a major role in shaping the formative years of young people's lives. I was fortunate enough to be influenced by some wonderful teachers whilst I was educated in the state school system. One of those teachers was my year 7 teacher at Grovely State School, Mr Perry Morgan. By coaching sporting teams and taking special interest in my development, he had a significant impact on my early education.

On my recent election to state parliament I was delighted to receive a congratulatory call from him, 38 years after he last taught me. I mention Mr Morgan because I want to pay tribute to another long-serving teacher from my electorate of Everton, who has had a similar impact on hundreds of children over many years. In two weeks time Mrs Carmen Kliendiest will retire from teaching after 30 years of service at the Everton Park State School. Over the years Carmen's unusual surname has been very difficult for children to pronounce, so she is affectionately known as Mrs K.

Thirty years of service in the education system as a teacher is a notable achievement, but what makes Mrs K's service even more amazing is that she has spent her whole 30 years at the one school, Everton Park State School. It was always her dream to be a teacher and she started her teaching studies as a mature-age student in 1977. Over the years Mrs K has been an advocate for young people participating in sport. She has been involved in helping train the school's young athletes for their interschool sports carnivals and has also acted as coach and umpire for the school's cricket team. In recent years, Mrs K has been the year 7 teacher preparing students for their transition into high school. She initiated and coordinated the school's leadership program, which received an Order of Australia by the Queensland branch.

Mrs K also coordinates the school's Anzac Day ceremony and I can confidently state that this is the most moving school service I have been involved in. The climax of the ceremony is the floating of tens of memorial wreaths on the school swimming pool—a spectacular and respectful tribute to our returned service personnel. Well done, Mrs K. The community wishes you a long and healthy retirement.

I would also like to acknowledge two teachers from the Mitchelton Pre-schooling Centre. I look forward to attending a function in the near future that will launch a book written by two of the teachers at that centre, Lisa Sonter and Leanne Hunter. After three years of preparation, these talented women have now published their book titled *Progressing Play: Practicalities, Intentions and Possibilities in Emerging Co-Constructed Curriculum*. That is quite a mouthful, but it is an important work that highlights the importance of play within inclusive learning environments. Lisa has worked at the Mitchelton Pre-schooling Centre for 27 years. This is her and Leanne's second book. I congratulate Lisa and Leanne.

Queensland Week

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.21 pm): This afternoon I rise to acknowledge Queensland Week and the celebrations that Biggera Waters State School and the St Francis Xavier school in Runaway Bay held this week. Late last month I was approached by the principals of both of those schools to ask if I could arrange for them to have a Queensland flag and it was with great pleasure that I was able to arrange that for them.

Although, unfortunately, I was not able to attend the Biggera Waters State School celebrations on Tuesday owing to the parliamentary sitting week, I was able to meet with the principal last Friday and pass on to her some regards that I hoped she would extend to the school community. I was informed by her on Tuesday afternoon that she was able to do so and that they were incredibly well received. Luckily, I was able to go to the St Francis Xavier school assembly on Monday morning, where I was able to address the school community and present the school leaders for 2012 with the Queensland flag. I took the opportunity to acknowledge how special and important Queensland Week and Queensland Day is for all of us and, of course, highlight some of the special features of the Queensland flag. The

year 5 students were holding a special celebration on Wednesday to acknowledge Queensland Day. Although I am sorry I could not be there, I am sure that was well received by all and that the celebrations went off without any fuss.

When I was addressing the school community on Monday—both the students of the school and their parents—I took the opportunity to talk about why Queensland Day is and should be so special to us. I said that it is a great opportunity for us to recognise that about 153 years ago Queen Victoria signed what I termed a permission slip—I thought that that might be some language that they would understand—that allowed Queensland to become a self-governing colony and separate from New South Wales and, of course, start great sporting rivalries. I said that it was an opportunity for us to recognise Queensland's great history and the great Queenslanders who have preceded us, and that we can also think about the great things that Queenslanders will achieve not only for our community but also for Queensland, Australia and the world at large. I said that we should also think about the great attributes that many people who have moved to Queensland have brought through their various cultural backgrounds, be it food, language, or dress—although I did point out that those who were moving from New South Wales should remember that it is always a dagwood dog, not a pluto pup and that we will not be adopting that form of language.

As I said, I have no doubt that Wednesday's assembly went incredibly well for the year 5 students. I congratulate the school on its commitment to Queensland Day and for recognising it. I thank the school community for their very warm welcome, Father Barry Grayson, the local parish priest who is associated with St Francis Xavier school, and Mr Peter Anderson, the principal, for the invitation to address the school.

Palm Cove and Clifton Beach

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (3.24 pm): I would like to bring to the attention of the House a matter of great concern to the people of two beach suburbs in the northern part of my electorate of Barron River. Historically, prior to the amalgamation of Cairns city council and Douglas shire council, Palm Cove and Clifton Beach, as northern beach suburbs of Cairns, came under the umbrella of the Cairns city council. In the amalgamation of the councils to form the Cairns Regional Council, Palm Cove and Clifton Beach were classified within the division 10 boundary, effectively uniting them with the Port Douglas-Mossman-Daintree areas, while Kewarra Beach and Trinity Beach were included in division 9.

The boundary line that has been drawn between divisions 9 and 10 divides a potentially cohesive and economically significant region that is otherwise clearly reflected within its shared geography and established tourism infrastructure. Over the past four years, the effect of this boundary structure has been to stifle tourism and economic development in the area, especially compared with the activity in Cairns and Port Douglas. This stifling of tourism and economic development reflects the fact that, while Palm Cove and Clifton Beach share division 10 with Port Douglas, there has been no sharing of the tourism and related funding received by the latter with Palm Cove and Clifton Beach.

Statistics collected from Port Douglas Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Palm Cove and Trinity Beach Tourism indicate that the economic potential of this region is significant. Combined, based on holiday accommodation capacity, this region is only marginally smaller than Port Douglas. Northern beaches and Port Douglas occupancy and income figures are very similar, notwithstanding the imbalance in supporting marketing funding that is available for the two regions. Compared to Cairns totally and Queensland, northern beaches and Port Douglas occupancy rates are lower by up to 20 points and that gap is widening.

Incremental tourism and economic outcomes can be generated in the northern beach region with flow-on benefits to Cairns and Tropical North Queensland as a whole by realigning Palm Cove and Clifton Beach from division 10 into division 9. The inclusion of Palm Cove and the adjoining beaches in tourism funding rounds recognises the significance of the economic potential of this subregion and, over time, formal recognition of this area as a local tourism organisation. Development of this important economic region will be very difficult to achieve without the stated boundary changes being formalised. If those changes are formalised, Palm Cove and the northern beaches region are in a unique position to add incrementally to the economic and tourism performance of Tropical North Queensland, based on the support that it so obviously deserves. I look forward to taking up this matter with the relevant ministers.

Fortitude Valley, Chamber of Commerce

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.27 pm): I rise to inform the House of recent activity of an important and crucial local organisation in my electorate, the Valley Chamber of Commerce. Incorporated in 2001, many of the participants of the Valley Chamber of Commerce have been leading local business identities in the area for decades. In particular, the active participants have led the way towards a new Fortitude Valley, a process that started in the early 1990s. Significant success has been achieved over the past 10 years. As I indicated in my maiden speech, thanks to the efforts of hardworking local business leaders, the Valley has evolved from a sometimes dark and gloomy place into a bright and pulsating district of entertainment and commerce.

As the Valley Chamber of Commerce members highlight regularly, the next stage of that progress for the Valley will undoubtedly be the most exciting. The constant activity and engagement provided by the Valley Chamber of Commerce is astonishing and the participants are to be commended for that. As an example of the activity planned and the interaction with the local community over the next few months, the Valley Chamber of Commerce will be involved in committee work assisting the Valley markets, the police community liaison, the urban renewal task force, the community safety group, the Valley mall advisory body, Chinatown traders and the Chinese museum meetings, their own Valley Business Club activity, the local property owners group, the Valley Liquor Accord and the New Farm Neighbourhood Centre.

The Valley Chamber of Commerce deals with unique and sometimes complex issues and the members of the Valley Chamber of Commerce executive are experts at dealing with the constant challenges of balancing the interests of government requirements, commercial realities and issues involving local residents. I commend the Valley Chamber President Charlie Apostolos, Vice President Jenny Best, Treasurer Carol Gordon and all the executive of the chamber for their tireless work. Their vision for the future of the Valley and its surrounds inspires confidence and drives a spirit of cooperation in this important community.

Further, I am greatly impressed by the forethought and drive present in the newly created Teneriffe Chamber of Commerce, a branch of the Valley chamber. The Teneriffe chamber provides excellent networking opportunities for local businesses to promote and drive local events whilst advocating for the interests of the unique businesses and locals in the Teneriffe area. It is already holding successful breakfasts and other functions. I congratulate chairman Richard Bodley and the team, including Murray Sutherland, Ben Pritchard, Julie Bullen and Lilli Dyer.

Teneriffe is growing and is one of the most exciting areas of the Brisbane Central electorate. It is fantastic that the chamber has started the branch to promote professionalism and commerce amongst its members and supporters—activities which are in line with this government's objectives of growing a diverse economy and reducing unemployment to four per cent. I have every intention of being available whenever possible to support this initiative.

Finally, I must make note of another initiative of the local business leaders—that is, the fantastic Teneriffe Festival, which is planned for 7 July 2012.

(Time expired)

Centenary Suburbs Historical Society, John Oxley Plaque

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (3.30 pm): I rise today to give the House a history lesson on John Oxley, courtesy of the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society. John Oxley, naval officer, surveyor and the first European explorer to discover the Brisbane River in 1824 in his whaleboat the *Mermaid*, camped on the banks of the river overnight and the next morning climbed the place that he named Green Hill, now known as Mount Ommaney. Recently I had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of a plaque named in his honour. This was arranged by the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society. John Oxley, the great Australian, is honoured in many ways by the state. There is a street, a suburb and an electorate and there are monuments at Toowong and Redcliffe—and even a wing at the State Library is named after him. But there is nothing at Mount Ommaney, where he landed on his first trip up the river. This has now been rectified.

What is interesting is how the unveiling of the plaque came to pass. Each year in my electorate the Centenary Rocks Festival is held. It is a fantastic two-day event where the whole community is invited along to enjoy great food, entertainment and fun festive events. It also gives local businesses and community groups the opportunity to hold market stalls to spruik their wares. It was at this festival that the great-great-great-granddaughter of John Oxley, who was visiting the area by chance, wandered into the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society display stall. The great-great-great-granddaughter got talking to the president of the society, Mrs Caroline Hamilton. Through that encounter, relevant family details were exchanged and, after much collaboration and through the dedication, hard work and diligence of the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society, this historical event that occurred in the electorate of Mount Ommaney was commemorated by the unveiling of the plaque.

I congratulate the volunteers of this community group. Historical societies such as the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society should be encouraged and supported to ensure future generations have access to and knowledge of the history of their local communities. This allows our rich past to continue to be enjoyed by all and history has been preserved.

Queensland Rail, Jobs; Homelessness

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.33 pm): It is with regret that I bring to the attention of the House something that is of great concern to me and should be of concern to people here as well. We have had news of job losses in Queensland Rail and have heard that there will be cuts everywhere. There are eight jobs flagged to go in Hughenden and two to go in Mount Isa. This is of great concern and the news has resulted in me taking a lot of phone calls from very concerned people in these towns.

This situation can be directly attributed to the sale of the state asset Queensland Rail. It was a bad decision by the former government that can only result in jobs going from these towns. The people losing their jobs have a regular bar tab at the pub, the grocery store and the hardware store. It will have an effect far beyond those eight jobs in these towns. I saw it happen when the railway stations in Julia Creek and Richmond were closed. I personally knew families that left the area. Families are so very valuable to those small towns. If we are going to accept these policies, we also have to accept that we will drive a stake through the heart of these small towns.

Efficiency along these lines is talked about, but all that happens is that jobs are cut. Some highly paid executive says, 'We will save big money along the line,' and then cuts back maintenance on the line. I have talked to two people who have worked in that area for 30 years. They are now driving trains at 40 kilometres an hour when they used to drive them at 80 kilometres an hour. When I asked them what the problem was they told me that they used to have big work crews maintaining that line but they do not have them now. You do not have to be Einstein to work out that if we diminish that workforce further we will have reduced capacity. That line takes a lot of ore and a lot of wealth back to the coast. I think it is a case of cutting off your nose to spite your face. It is something that is very concerning. I implore the government to reconsider going down that line. We will end up with a bad outcome. We will end up like New Zealand, where the system was privatised, run down and the government ended up buying back a crippled system some years later. It is an asset that the people of Queensland paid for and never gave a mandate to sell; it belongs to the people.

I would like to thank the honourable Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for announcing an initiative to combat homelessness. It was one of the main issues raised by residents in Mount Isa during the election campaign. I look forward to working closely with the minister to assist Queenslanders in my area in need of housing.

Beenleigh Cane Festival; Logan Saints Rugby Union

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.36 pm): It gives me great pleasure today to talk about some of the great things that are going on in my electorate of Waterford, but before I do I must thank my colleague the member for Coomera. The member for Coomera is inextricably tied to my community through his own long history of association. Thankfully, the member also acknowledges some of the great things going on in and across our respective electorates.

It was a great pleasure for me to partake with my colleagues the members for Coomera and Albert, together with the federal member for Forde, in the Beenleigh Cane Festival a couple of weeks back. The cane festival is a celebration of community based on the history of our town and an acknowledgement of its historical roots in the surrounding sugar industry. Of course, both the town and the industry have a history that goes well beyond that of the festival, but the cane festival itself will be celebrating its 50th year next year. That is no small milestone.

It is with a great deal of excitement that our community looks forward to what we expect will be quite the celebration. I know that the member for Coomera, the member for Albert and I will be very involved in that festival and in making sure that our government is well represented. Indeed, that particular approach has been well received by that community for some time with various members of the government.

I was absolutely delighted to be invited along to the opening of the Logan Saints rugby union club on Monday night. It was an honour to have our Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, Minister Steve Dickson, at that event and supporting the club opening. The terrific facility that they have there now is as a result of significant investment by both the state and local government working in conjunction with the local rugby union club.

We need to understand the importance of sport in our community. Certainly I am very excited about the Get in the Game initiative that the government is introducing for our youth. It is important for healthy living and certainly it promotes respect and belonging amongst our young.

Mr Rickuss: People like you and me realise our bodies are temples, don't we?

Mr LATTER: Absolutely. Our bodies are temples and we have to look after them. I congratulate the Logan Saints rugby union club on their opening. I wish them all the very best in the future. Certainly I hope to see the children of that club moving onto a great life in sport.

Morayfield Electorate, Scouts

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (3.39 pm): Today I rise to talk about the contribution that volunteers involved within the Scouts movement are making in our local community. The Scouts Association, which was established over 100 years ago, is one of Australia's largest youth organisations. Its fundamental aim is to encourage and promote the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual development of our young people. I have had the pleasure of visiting all local scout groups in my electorate and seeing firsthand the great programs that they are running.

Recently I visited the Narangba Scout group, which is led by group leader Mr Robin Howard, also known as 'Wombat'. On my last visit I attended their AGM and witnessed the great number of volunteers willing to give their time to make a difference in our local community.

I have also attended the Burpengary Scouts AGM, again witnessing the great programs that were being undertaken in that den. I was offered and gladly accepted the role of being the Burpengary Scouts patron. I thank group leader Mr Matthew McMillan, also known as 'Emu', for this opportunity. I am truly excited about this opportunity and I look forward to working with the group.

In Queensland, more than 10,000 young people aged between six and 26 years are actively involved in a wide range of scouting activities. Over 3,500 adults and uniform leaders voluntarily give up a substantial amount of time as part of their commitment to developing young people as they progress through the program to become the community leaders of the future.

Recently, I was glad to meet some of those uniform leaders at the Morayfield Scouts den. On the day I attended they were holding a community open day, showcasing their den and the activities they offer. I thank group leader Mr Wayne Hooper, also known as 'Koala', for inviting me to the den. A number of scouts from that den will be attending the Scout Jamboree and I wish them well at that event.

Throughout Australia, scouts take a constructive place in society as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities. As a young fellow I was a scout and I know firsthand the difference that Scouts has made in my life and the very important role that Scouts offers through progressive self-education programs that focus on initiative, teamwork and cooperation, community service and spirit. The development of leadership skills is a significant part of the Scouts program, which ultimately helps today's youth become tomorrow's leaders. To all the Narangba, Burpengary and Morayfield Scouts groups, parents and volunteers who give their time to assist in the development of those young people, I say thank you.

Lifeline Darling Downs and South-West Queensland

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.42 pm): I rise to speak about an incredible organisation that cares for not only my constituents but also those of my colleagues from Lockyer, Toowoomba North, Condamine, Warrego, Southern Downs and Gregory. Lifeline Darling Downs and South-West Queensland was established as Lifeline Toowoomba in 1975. Its primary function is to offer counselling and support to those in need, especially in rural and remote areas. In 1990, the state government asked the organisation to offer operational support to drought affected farmers at Dalby, which was the first time it set up an office past Toowoomba. As the years have gone on and the drought subsided, the need to expand was still evident with Lifeline Darling Downs establishing two permanent offices to service St George and Charleville in 1997, and establishing permanent offices in both Cunnamulla and Roma.

Recently I met with CEO Derek Tuffield, who told me that Lifeline's services go beyond the physical. Often people are hurting mentally and personally. It is because Lifeline staff are mobile and are able to travel to meet with people that their services are so effective. They pick up people who do not have the time or the money to travel to access help. Lifeline makes no exceptions. They are there for whoever needs them, regardless of the situation. For people in regional Queensland, who are often ignored, the Lifeline service is just that, a life line.

During the equine influenza outbreak of 2009-10, Lifeline was on the ground at the forefront helping those affected. When the floods struck during the summer of disasters that we all remember so well, Lifeline was offered counselling in the most severely affected areas, and also collected and distributed food, clothing and white goods to those who had lost everything. At the peak, Lifeline had staff across 16 different locations. When the towns of St George, Roma and Charleville were again inundated this year, Lifeline was there again.

Another of Lifeline's incredible programs is its disability services program, which helps families of children with a disability to cope with the never-ending costs of living with that disability, whether it is medical treatment or accommodation needed to attend appointments. Lifeline Darling Downs has achieved its motto of 'Strengthening communities and empowering people' by giving solace and practical help to many who have suffered throughout the region since it was set up nearly four decades ago. I applaud Derek Tuffield, his staff and the 400 selfless volunteers who assist them.

University of Queensland, Gatton Campus

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.45 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise today. I would like to comment on what the minister has just spoken about. I have read the Coroner's report on the 2011 floods. At the back of that report there are some interesting statistics. It shows that where services were introduced around Toowoomba, the suicide rate dropped dramatically to about 20 per cent or 30 per cent of what it was in the past few years. That is quite an interesting statistic.

I am glad that the Minister for Agriculture is in the chamber because I want to talk about the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland. Real concerns have been raised about the fact that agriculture is not being facilitated appropriately at the Gatton campus. Unfortunately, courses are winding down. This is a chicken-and-egg situation where, because courses are winding down, lecturers are leaving and they are not attracting the students, so the courses are not being offered and so it goes on. I am very concerned about this.

Animal science studies and veterinary science studies are very strong, but agricultural studies are winding down. This is of concern, because, as I am sure the minister knows, if we are going to feed nine billion people into the next century it will be done through agriculture. We will not be feeding them cows. Unfortunately, about 50 per cent of the world's grain is now stuffed down cows' throats. We have to work out how to manage appropriately the study of agriculture and animals.

I realise that in some Asian countries diets are changing and they want more protein. Even still, they only eat a very small amount of protein compared to us. We need rice, grains and other vegetable crops. The vegetable industry is struggling. Prices have been very poor. I get a bit frustrated when I hear Coles and Woolies slogans such as 'Down, down, prices are down'. Someone has to pay for that and quite often it is the farmers and the producers, who really do not have any recourse because, in Australia, Coles and Woolies are very big retailers of fruit, vegetables and a lot of other primary industry goods and we cannot cope without them.

However, it is really disappointing when things are sold purely on price. I have seen surveys that show that price is about the third item that a person is concerned about. They need a lettuce and they look at the lettuce to see if it is good quality. Those are the first two things that they think about. The third issue is price. Driving prices down to be the cheapest on the block is not what it is all about. It is about good marketing and ensuring that everyone gets a fair deal. It is not about having the cheapest price on the block, otherwise we would end up with \$2 Chinese shops everywhere and I do not think the community really wants that. We expect high-quality food, which is what we have always had. The only way that farmers can keep producing high-quality food is by getting a fair price.

Commonwealth Games

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (3.48 pm): I am delighted to inform the House that the Gold Coast will be receiving a visit next week, between 12 and 14 June, from His Royal Highness Prince Tunku Imran of Malaysia in his capacity as President of the Commonwealth Games Federation. The delegation from the Commonwealth Games Federation, including the CEO, Mike Hooper, will be here to assess the progress of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games preparation and planning. This is a routine visit by the Commonwealth Games Federation following on from their visit to the Gold Coast last year as part of the Evaluation Commission tour. I am confident that His Royal Highness will be pleased with the progress made so far, but there is still much to be done. With the opening of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games less than six years away, we need to move quickly to ensure this world class event is a highlight of the sporting calendar.

As I informed the House last week, the Newman government has appointed the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games board, chaired by Queensland businessman Nigel Chamier. Importantly, the Commonwealth Games board has made the unanimous decision that Parklands will be the site for the games village, a decision the Newman government fully supports. This decision by the board ends any uncertainty and allows us to get on with the job of delivering the games village. This will no doubt give the federation the confidence during their visit to the Gold Coast that the Gold Coast will be well and truly ready for 2018. The board will now explore the various models of delivery for the village. This is a major infrastructure project. We must get it right so that we leave a positive legacy for the Gold Coast. Our government will ensure that fair consultation occurs with all major parties that will be affected by the relocation of the Parklands facilities.

During his visit to the Gold Coast, His Royal Highness will join members of the Commonwealth Games board and Gold Coast MPs at a lunch hosted by the Property Council of Australia, Queensland division. His Royal Highness, the delegates from the Commonwealth Games Federation and the Commonwealth Games board will also join the Premier and me for dinner here at Parliament House on 14 June. I look forward to welcoming His Royal Highness and the Commonwealth Games Federation team to our beautiful part of the world and to highlighting to them that the Newman government is totally committed to delivering the best games for the Gold Coast, for Queensland, for Australia and for the world in 2018. I encourage all honourable members to get behind this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase our region and our hospitality.

Stretton Electorate, Schools

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak about my recent day shadowing not one but three principals of Calamvale Community College as part of the education department's Principal for a Day initiative. I was very impressed by the politeness of the 2,224 students, especially the little ones in the primary school. It was an absolute delight to go from classroom to classroom and listen to the enthusiastic interaction. I only have two high schools in my electorate and both are unique in that Calamvale Community College and Stretton State College are P-12 state colleges and, I might add, two of the largest state schools in Queensland. Both schools are extremely impressive. I have toured them both and watched great teachers who had the complete attention of their students—students whom I witnessed enjoying what they were doing. These teachers obviously know that the secret to good teaching is engagement through interest with a caring attitude, sprinkled with respect and discipline.

I return to my day shadowing the three principals. I was particularly impressed with Calamvale Community College's unique 'pod' classes. I actually chose Calamvale Community College to specifically understand what the pod system was all about. I have to tell honourable members that I was completely impressed. From the day the little ones start school they are put into a caring community made up of three year levels. The older ones are like brothers and sisters and they move through their primary years together with the same teacher. Pods also allow students to learn at their own pace. I found that this is conducive to harmony and learning, and the proof is in the results these students receive. So impressed am I with the pod system that I would highly recommend Calamvale Community College to prospective residents of Calamvale, Algester and Drewvale.

Gladstone, Seafood Industry

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.54 pm): I rise to speak again in relation to the seafood industry in my electorate and to put on the table a plea from the wholesale sector and also the commercial fishing sector for practical support from Safe Food Queensland. The industry is seeking a declaration that will clear the seafood caught within the original fish ban zone. They feel that, until they have a clear message from government that the fish is suitable to be eaten, they are at a disadvantage. I have spoken with the minister, and I thank him for his interest. The feeling is that after the fish ban was lifted, Safe Food Queensland and, indeed, the previous government put the sole responsibility on the catchers of fish, the commercial fishermen and the retailers of fish to make the determination about whether or not the stock was suitable for human consumption. They were required, not as scientists but as providers and sellers, to make that assessment.

That may have been fine for the first months after the ban, but now—and I am not including the current government because this started under the previous government—it needs attention. The former government was saying publicly that fish and seafood caught in the Gladstone Harbour and its environs was safe to eat. However, when they were challenged, 'What about the fish with the red inflammation? What about the fish with lesions or the disease to the eye?', they were then told that that was an assessment for the person catching the fish and providing it to the markets or for those who run the markets as to its suitability. We are now well down the track after the closure and still these fishermen and wholesalers are being required to make those assessments.

Some of the questions that are being asked are as follows—and these are as of Monday. Was the advice by Safe Food Queensland on the eligibility of scallops being fit for human consumption considered by the industry and Safe Food Queensland? What volume of scallops would be suitable for a person to ingest? If somebody is buying a bulk amount, is there a warning that needs to go with that? What is the permissible level of aluminium present given that some of the readings are 119 times that permissible reading? Can Safe Food Queensland advise where the outstanding prawn metal tests are? They are still awaiting some test results. These people are genuine, hardworking people. They want that responsibility removed from their shoulders. I seek support for them.

Canungra Area Golf Club

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.57 pm): I rise in the House to talk about an issue affecting a golf club in my electorate, the Canungra Area Golf Club, which is located within the Kokoda Army Barracks at Canungra. I have here a letter from the golf club addressed to the federal member for Wright, Mr Scott Buchholz. This letter has been brought to my attention as the local representative in this place. It outlines the fact that the Commonwealth Department of Defence intends to demolish their clubhouse.

This golf club has been situated within the barracks for quite a long time and until a few years ago their greens and lawns were maintained by the Department of Defence. Unfortunately, that arrangement came to an end. For the last five years the club itself has been maintaining the course out of its own funds. It applied for some grant funds as well, but through volunteer labour and its own fundraising it has kept the golf course going in the area for the benefit of the whole community.

In this letter I have it is said that the demolition of their golf clubhouse will cost around \$90,000. However, if an arrangement were made with the Commonwealth Department of Defence to replace the facilities, the saving to the Commonwealth would be substantial and the community would also maintain its facilities. As honourable members would know, a golf course cannot function without a clubhouse. After players have completed their 18 holes in a day they need to have somewhere to meet and socialise. That is a lot of the reason people play golf.

I bring the conundrum of this golf club to the attention of the House and assure the residents of Canungra and the members of the golf club that I will be lobbying the Commonwealth Minister for Defence and working with my federal colleague the member for Wright to bring about a solution which will enable their club to continue. We need to have a healthy society, and people playing golf and walking the fairways is one way that people can stay healthy and active.

It is also an important tourist attraction for the area of Canungra. Canungra is situated at the base of Tamborine Mountain, which overlooks the ocean. It is a beautiful place to visit. If we are serious about promoting tourism in South-East Queensland and in particular in the Scenic Rim, we should be making sure that facilities and clubs like this continue. I will be writing to the Minister for Defence and putting the case that they should enable the Canungra Area Golf Club's clubhouse to be repaired or replaced to enable the community of Canungra and the Kokoda Barracks to continue to have the use of this facility for years to come.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I call the member for Whitsunday. You have one minute.

Hampden State School; Calen District State College

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.00 pm): I rise in the House to pay tribute to two country schools in my electorate which deserve a pat on the back for standing the test of time and for excellence in education. The first school I wish to acknowledge evokes memories of that old Cat Stevens classic (*Remember the Days of the Old Schoolyard*)—a great tune and most befitting when only recently I had the good fortune of attending the 125th anniversary celebrations of the Hampden State School in the cane country of my electorate of Whitsunday, about 25 kilometres north of Mackay. It was a real trip back in time. The school opened on 9 May 1887. I commend the P&C and the school community for putting on a grand show. I would also like to acknowledge Mr Howard Frost for his leadership in the community.

I would also like to pay tribute to Calen District State College on recently being awarded a showcase award for excellence in education. I commend Principal Brian O'Neill and his colleagues for their fine work at Calen.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

MOTIONS

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.01 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- 1 That the Health and Community Services Committee inquire into and report on Queensland's chronic, frail and palliative care services.
- 2 That, in undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider:
 - The capacity and future needs of these services (including children and adolescents palliative care).
 - The effectiveness, efficiency and adequacy of palliative, frail and chronic care services.
 - Examine opportunities for reforms to improve collaboration and cooperation between chronic, disability and other health services.
 - Consideration of segmenting the current Home and Community Service system based on age of the client, needs of the client, their carer and the providers.
- 3 Further, that the committee take public submissions and consult with key industry groups, carers, health workers and relevant experts.
- 4 The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 28 February 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.02 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- 1 That the Finance and Administration Committee inquire into and report on the operation of Queensland's workers' compensation scheme, in particular:
 - (i) the performance of the scheme in meeting its objectives under section 5 of the Act;
 - (ii) how the Queensland workers' compensation scheme compares to the scheme arrangements in other Australian jurisdictions;
 - (ii) WorkCover's current and future financial position and its impact on the Queensland economy, the State's competitiveness and employment growth;
 - (iv) whether the reforms implemented in 2010 have addressed the growth in common law claims and claims cost that was evidenced in the scheme from 2007-08; and
 - (v) whether the current self-insurance arrangements legislated in Queensland continue to be appropriate for the contemporary working environment.
- 2 In conducting the inquiry, the committee should also consider and report on implementation of the recommendations of the Structural Review of Institutional and Working Arrangements in Queensland's Workers' Compensation Scheme.
- 3 Further, that the committee take public submissions and consult with key industry groups, professionals, and relevant experts.
- 4 The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 28 February 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.04 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- 1 That the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee inquire into and report on the future and continued relevance of Government land tenure across Queensland.
- 2 That, in undertaking this inquiry the committee should particularly consider the following issues:
 - ensuring our pastoral and tourism industries are viable into the future;
 - the balanced protection of Queensland's ecological values;
 - ongoing and sustainable resource development; and
 - the need and aspirations of traditional owners.
- 3 Further, that the committee take public submissions and consult with key industry groups, industry participants, Indigenous Queenslanders, and relevant experts.
- 4 The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 30 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.05 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- 1 That the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee investigate and report on methods to:
 - (i) reduce regulatory requirements impacting on agriculture and resource industries in Queensland; and
 - (ii) to further promote economic development while balancing environmental protections.
- 2 Further, that the committee take public submissions and consult with key industry groups, industry participants, and relevant experts.
- 3 The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 30 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.06 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- 1 That the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee review Queensland's current motorcycle licensing process and its alignment with best practice evidence based approaches adopted in other Australian and International jurisdictions.
- 2 That, in undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider:
 - the road safety benefits of introducing enhancements or changes to the motorcycle licensing system;
 - the efficacy of the Q-Ride and Q-SAFE training and/or assessment processes within the Queensland licensing system and whether they aligns with best-practice evidence based adult training/education principles; and
 - whether Q-Ride rider assessment is performed in a manner that aligns with best-practice evidence based adult education and assessment principles.
- 3 Further, that the committee take public submissions and consult with key industry and training groups, motorcycle rider associations, and road safety experts.
- 4 The committee is to report to the Legislative Assembly by 31 October 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TREASURY (COST OF LIVING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 662, on motion of Mr Nicholls—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (4.07 pm), continuing: I am happy to rise for the third time in support of this bill—and, if need be, I will rise a fourth and a fifth time, as that is how much I support this bill. As I was saying, it is our government that is committed to ensuring that small business is again recognised as a vital contributor to our economy. I do not believe that anybody can be taxed into prosperity and I do not believe that businesses can be taxed into viability.

Payroll tax is one of the most unfair taxes applicable to small business. We are punishing businesses for their success. I do not know about you, Mr Deputy Speaker, or my other colleagues, but to me that seems like a pretty flawed concept. That is why it is our government, an LNP government, that is recognising this and is helping Queenslanders who are small business people.

We made a commitment to small businesses around this great state, and I made a commitment to the small businesses in my community in the electorate of Broadwater. We will lift the payroll tax exemption from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in the first year, and it is our government that will lift this exemption even further, to \$1.6 million over six years. Our government is doing this because we understand small business. It is because my government colleagues whom I see in this House are small business people, whether we have run them or worked in them.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is telling us that small business is struggling in this tough economic climate. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry is telling us that it is our government's commitment that will see us tax 1,200 fewer businesses in Queensland and that our government will be saving businesses up to \$40 million. This is less tax for businesses, and this will mean more jobs for Queenslanders and more jobs for the people in my community of Broadwater. This commitment to small business is a vital component of our government's plan to make Queensland a low-tax state, a low-cost state and a state that is back on track with a competitive economy.

This bill is one that honours our government's commitment to ease the burden of the cost of living on Queensland families—a burden that was imposed on them by the former failed Labor government. It is a bill that honours our government's commitment to make Queensland more competitive, and it honours my commitment to the people of Broadwater to make it easier for business to thrive and to create more jobs in my community.

Labor have never been able to manage a budget, so it should come as no great surprise to any of us in this chamber that those economic illiterates who sit opposite us in their small little corner stopped the hardworking people of Broadwater and the hardworking Queensland families and businesses from balancing their budgets because they simply do not understand. This bill sends a message and it is a message that our government understands. We will grow a four-pillar economy and we will get this state back on track for all Queenslanders. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and, more particularly, the amendments it will bring to the Duties Act 2001. These changes are of enormous importance to homeowners throughout the state.

Individuals' and families' willingness to sell their homes has been severely restricted under the impost put upon them in the order of \$7,000 by the former Labor government. This Labor invention was truly an ill-conceived plan. It was a tax imposed on homeowners to pay for a political ploy—a \$10,000 so-called stimulus for the construction industry which has proved to be anything but a stimulus.

When this was announced, it brought immediate harm to our housing industry and to our economy because there was such a long delay from when the \$10,000 stimulus was announced until when it would actually be paid. Virtually everybody stopped signing building contracts until such time as they would receive the \$10,000 bonus. Because of this, the housing industry went into cardiac arrest for an extended period of time.

The other injury done to the housing industry was the roughly \$7,000 disincentive to sell the family home. This bill will remove that disincentive and the marketplace will breathe again. However, there is another menacing blood clot nearing the heart of the housing industry as we speak—once again, another Labor invention: the carbon tax. While Labor is still adding more and more to the cost of living, the Liberal National Party government through this bill is putting \$7,000 back into the pockets of residents in the form of transfer duty concession. Therefore, I commend the bill.

 **Mr DRISCOLL** (Redcliffe—LNP) (4.13 pm): I am very pleased to support this piece of legislation that is designed to bring down the cost of living for the people of Redcliffe. During the recent election campaign we heard an awful lot of talk of that being one of the main reasons it was deemed that the former Labor government had lost touch. The fact is that Labor kept costing voters more money than they could afford. It is our solemn job to ensure that wrong is righted and very quickly. Again, I support the fact that we are putting this bill through the House in a very workmanlike manner to ensure that the benefits are experienced and enjoyed by the people of Queensland as soon as possible.

We all know, and our constituents all know, that they have been putting up with this rise in the cost of living for the last couple of decades and that is far too long. Long-term Labor governments in this state have shown themselves to be big-taxing governments which intrude on the households, small businesses and pensioners of our state in a way that is quite catastrophic to the future of those fine institutions. Those households, small businesses and pensioners are actually thought about and are at the core of the LNP government's actions day in and day out. When campaigning in the seat of Redcliffe over the last 18 months prior to the election, it was my very determined objective to ensure I listened to as many of those small businesses, households and pensioners as I possibly could. Their message was consistent. It was about making sure that that heavy hand of government reaching into their pocket, into their wallets and into their purses was removed. Looking at this bill, it is great to see that our government is able to act so quickly.

When you look at the Duties Act 2001, which was a cash grab of the former Treasurer in this place who has been removed by the good people of Mount Coot-tha for his sins, that attack on the family home being purchased, that tax on the family home being purchased, was abominable. I think every person across Queensland who has ever thought about buying a property and escaping the rent trap was shocked to the core that we would see a government dare go down the path that the former Labor government very boldly did.

I think it is absolutely wonderful that this government is going to reverse that. I have talked to real estate agents in the Redcliffe electorate and they certainly indicated that this particular piece of legislation that the former Labor government enacted decimated their businesses, which was obviously as a result of decimating the dreams and the hopes of would-be homeowners. Not only would-be homeowners; it also decimated the ability of many families to either sell their home, because no-one else could afford to buy it with the price increase, or move to buy another home. This was an oppressive piece of legislation that the former government should be absolutely condemned for even contemplating let alone implementing.

As of 1 July 2012 I am very pleased to be able to inform the people of Redcliffe, whether they be homeowners or in the real estate sector, that we in this new LNP government will make life a whole lot easier for them when they want to go about their business of buying, selling or shifting into their new family home.

I do not think the Labor Party really understand jobs. They bleat and carry on an awful lot about this side of the parliament not being focused on workers. That could not be further from the truth. In fact, in the industrial relations legislation amendments passed only yesterday to ensure that workers rights and workers voices would be heard over the deadpan voice of the union bosses if disputes needed to be taken to arbitration, or if people were to be given a voice as to whether they wanted to take industrial action, they opposed that. They do not like employees being able to be given a say, and it would seem they do not like employees being able to become employees because they do not like our extension of the payroll tax threshold exemption being moved to \$1.1 million.

That will, as we all know, continue to increase over the coming years because this government is focused on jobs and this government is looking after small business. I am intimately supportive of and aware of the plight of small business. This government is interested in and understands the sorts of things that affect businesses when they go about making employment decisions. It is not just about

waking up one morning and responding to a Labor regime's latest wild decision on a policy that somebody came up with out of a focus group and decided was going to be the headline for the Monday morning. Small businesses do not operate like that. Small businesses want certainty. Small businesses need to plan ahead because they do not have endless streams of money like the former Labor government believed they themselves did—even though it was our money and even though it was all on credit. Small businesses do not operate like that. They cannot operate like that because they do not have the sort of luxury that the former Labor government did of racking up debt in someone else's name.

Small businesses operate quite differently. In fact, in the main they go out and take a mortgage on their family home; they make sure they can actually meet the bank's requirements to take out the loan to build their business. Often times in recent years, we have seen absolute tragedies happen to those families and their homes as those small businesses have suffered at the hands of state and federal Labor regimes. We have seen small business families trounced out of their homes by the banks because everything was squeezed to the point that affordability of those lendings was no longer available, given the fact that turnover in the business had basically collapsed. A lot of that comes from the bad decisions of state and federal Labor governments.

We see this right now, here, today, with the federal Labor carbon tax, and we will be waiting over the next few weeks for it. Many members have spoken about the Labor carbon tax over the last couple of days. This is the same Labor carbon tax that the Labor members of this House will applaud when it comes in. I look forward to seeing the revelry that will be experienced by Labor members in this House when they go out and applaud their federal Labor colleague, the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, for this Green tax—this tax that is there to pay the piper for those Green preferences at the last federal election.

It will be very interesting to see whether the Labor members in this House will be prepared to own up to what will be their megaphone diplomacy outside this place or whether in fact they will take some sort of offence at being held to account. It is very interesting to note what they do when they are caught out. What do they do? They cut and run. They dingo out, they run away. They are scared because they do not want to be held to account. They want to coast under the radar. They do not want to be held to account for their terrible decisions, their debt. They want to carry on and allege that the new government of just a matter of weeks, of 10 weeks, is in some way dragging the chain.

The fact we are here talking about this Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 is proof in the pudding that there is no dragging of the chain by this government. We have seen the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer bring about a raft of very, very positive pieces of legislation. We heard the Premier this morning talking about a long, long list of what this government under his leadership has already delivered to this place, and it is all for the good of the people of Queensland.

Let us look at some of the other failures of the former Labor government that are being addressed in this bill, including the cost of electricity following the privatisation of the electricity sector in this state. The former Labor government promised that electricity prices would not go up. This was another lie—another untruth, I should say, Mr Deputy Speaker, although they are one and the same to the people out on the street because Queenslanders essentially know that the word of the former Labor government is worthless. Their code was, 'We're not going to put up prices,' but this was just a promise in an election campaign. When were Labor members telling an untruth? When their mouths were moving during the election campaign. That is the general rule that the voters of this state have learnt the hard way over 20 years.

We will do something about electricity prices for the people of Queensland. I am particularly keen to promote this to the people in my great electorate of Redcliffe because I too, along with other members in this place, have heard a flood of terrible stories from the vulnerable people in the community who have been forced to spend money that they do not have just for the essentials—things like electricity. The freeze on the standard residential retail electricity tariff—tariff 11—will be an extremely positive move for the people out there in the suburbs and towns across this state, not least of whom will be the people in my electorate of Redcliffe.

I look at some of the other implications of this excellent piece of legislation and see that the Queensland Competition Authority Act will be amended to facilitate the establishment of an Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority. This is all about protecting the consumers of Queensland. This is all about a government doing what a government should do and making sure there is the right balance between commerce, consumers and the greater community at large. Everyone's interests are looked after when we have an independent umpire like this making sure that the consumers actually have their rights protected as well. We all know that the majority of small businesses and businesses in general want to do the right thing, but there will always be a rogue or a group of people out there who want to flout the law or the rules and that is why bolstering the Queensland Competition Authority is an excellent move by this government. Again, this will protect the average, every day mum and dad consumers out there across Queensland.

I talked briefly earlier about the impact on real estate agents of the ridiculous tax that the former government put on purchasing a family home. If it was not bad enough that those people who facilitate a great big essential part of the economy—the transactions of real estate across this state—were basically attacked in their offices for trying to get people into their family homes, we then saw this absolute raft of paperwork and red tape thrust upon them by the former government. I do not know what deal was made and what this was the pay-off for, but I am sure the passage of time will help us identify that. That was another piece of legislation that made absolutely no sense to the common man and woman out on the street across this state. All it did was create more burden, more cost and more implications on the ability to facilitate smooth and proper real estate transactions in this state.

The Johnny-come-lately, latter-day converts of the 'Magnificent Seven' down there talk about doing the right thing by the community and looking after the workers. They prophesy about what will happen when we have taken forward the plight of workers, the plight of small business and the cost-of-living issues that we are addressing—the full list of things that the Premier outlined.

I want to take a moment of the House's time to look at some of the other areas of neglect that occurred in my electorate of Redcliffe over recent years under the Labor regime. Our government has recommitted itself to building the Redcliffe railway line, as we did at the election prior to this last one. This is something that is so far overdue and it is a disgrace on the previous government. In fact it is more specifically a disgrace on the former member for Redcliffe, because she stood up in a public meet-the-candidates forum at not the recent election campaign but the one before that and said, 'It's not a priority.'

The former member for Redcliffe made that comment in full view of the public and put it on the record that she did not believe that the Redcliffe rail line was a priority. What we saw thereafter was an absolute nonsense. There was an agreement at three levels of government—state, federal and council—to build this well-overdue piece of infrastructure. In the spirit of that working together, there was a document put together by the local chamber of commerce to hail this great achievement. What happened when it came my predecessor's turn to put her name to this agreement? What did she do? She refused. She started talking about the impact that it might have on frogs or lizards or something. When this became known, she was told by her lords and masters back in Peel Street of the embarrassment that she was causing and they insisted that this rubbish be put aside. But the heart was not in it. The heart of the Labor Party was never in looking after the people of Redcliffe. It took them for granted.

Only six or eight months prior to the election there was another ridiculous scenario which demonstrated that cost-of-living pressures were not understood by the previous government—certainly not by the former Labor member for Redcliffe, because what happened to ensure that she was kept in the comfort that she wanted to become accustomed to? The former Labor member for Redcliffe moved herself out of the office in the electorate formerly used by a Liberal Party state member and by other Labor state members, including a former Speaker of this House. Where did this former member want to move to—at no cost to herself, of course? She moved into the most expensive commercial office space on the Redcliffe Peninsula—upstairs, with water views, away from the people, to make sure that complaints about the cost of living really could not reach her ears too easily.

When I was elected by the good people of Redcliffe, one of the first inquiries I made was about how on earth we could get out of paying this absolutely onerous cost to the people of Queensland being incurred as a result of the ridiculous decision by the former member for Redcliffe. I found out to my great disappointment that the commercial lease that had been entered into was for 10 years as a minimum—and it gets worse, in fact. The real kicker is that the lease on the previous office is still in place and will remain in place until the end of this year. That cost has been loaded on top of the cost for the office with the water views that the former Labor member for Redcliffe decided she needed and which she locked in for 10 years.

My staff and I are now in a situation where we are trying to work in an office that basically has not been fitted out correctly. Obviously the former member knocked off at about five o'clock at the very least each day, because we do not even have control of our own air-conditioning system. The former Labor member obviously wanted to enjoy the view and take in the seaside, probably from about 10 o'clock to one, on a good day and hide upstairs away from the people of Redcliffe. That is not good enough. My staff and I are spending an awful lot of our time out and about across the electorate. That is what we will do to combat the waste and the disregard that the former Labor government showed for the people of Queensland and the people of Redcliffe. That is why this cost-of-living bill is important. That is what this government is concerned about: cutting the costs for the people of Queensland.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.33 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The explanatory notes to the bill provide that the purpose of the bill is to implement a number of election commitments: to reinstate the transfer duty home concession, the previous transfer duty rate structure and previous phasing-out point of \$550,000 for the reducing rebate for the transfer duty first home concession for transactions entered into on or after 1 July 2012; to increase the exemption threshold

from \$1 million to \$1.1 million from 1 July 2012 for payroll tax; to freeze the regulated standard residential retail electricity tariff, tariff 11, at 2011-12 prices plus the cost of the Commonwealth government's carbon tax for one year from 1 July 2012 and to display the carbon price impacts on electricity bills; to facilitate the establishment of an Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority; and to remove the requirement to prepare and provide a sustainability declaration prior to the sale of a residential dwelling.

The opposition recognises that the reality of the global financial position is such that Queensland families are really doing it tough, so we would support any proposals that effectively reduce the cost of living. But we believe that, in spite of the rhetoric, this bill will not have the desired effect of reducing costs for Queensland families. I have news for the Premier and Treasurer: there is more to being in government than rhetoric and media releases. Just putting the words 'cost of living' in the long title of a bill does not make it address cost-of-living issues. Just putting out a media release saying that you have cut rego costs does not mean that rego costs go down. Let us take the electricity tariff amendment, for instance. We have very real concerns that this bill will not reduce electricity bills for many Queensland families, and we are not alone in holding that concern.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr MULHERIN: What about network charges, honourable member? As the *Brisbane Times* reported on 24 April, Queensland Premier Campbell Newman conceded that some households will actually be worse off under his power price freeze next financial year, and this leads to another concern about rushing this bill through the House without adequate consultation. In the first sitting week of this parliament we objected to the bill not being referred to the relevant committee for public consultation and stakeholder input. We were howled down by the government for wanting to delay the implementation of its cost-of-living changes. But this bill will not take effect until 1 July this year and the committee could still have had time to deliver an expedited report and have the legislation passed within that time frame. The Industrial Relations (Fair Work Act Harmonisation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 was introduced on the same day as this cost-of-living bill and it has been to the committee, the committee has reported and the House suspended standing orders to enable the bill to be debated without the committee report having lain on the table for seven days.

When the government suggested that this bill not go to the committee, my first thought was, 'The lady doth protest too much, methinks,' and I was wondering what it had to hide. The bill fails to take into account the fact that the Queensland Competition Authority has found that Queensland household electricity bills will not, as promised, reduce by \$120 per year, because if you have an electric hot-water system, air conditioning or pool filter your bill will actually rise by \$70 per year. My rather cynical view is that the government was frightened that the reforms Labor had proposed might actually reduce costs by more than the government has done and to more Queensland households—and, lo and behold, that is what has occurred.

We on this side of the chamber also had some concerns about the stamp duty proposal. There is no information in the explanatory notes to the bill, the second reading speech or in fact the LNP policy before the election as to the financial costs to Queensland taxpayers. The people of Queensland deserve to be given full details of the impacts of any proposal by a government—again, good reason for this bill to have been referred to a committee.

As well, the former government's Building Boost was introduced to encourage growth in the construction industry by providing an incentive to build new homes, because the reality is that you cannot pay the bills if you do not have a job. So I ask the minister whether any information has been provided to the government about the likely impacts of the legislation on the construction industry in Queensland. I would appreciate his advice in his reply.

There are a number of cost-of-living issues that the Premier claims in his media release to have addressed but which are not included in the bill. Some of these can be done by regulation, including the promise to freeze car regos. However, the ALP proposal announced before the election would have seen a rego freeze on trucks and utes in addition to the family car. We also want the government's assurance that the cost freeze will relate to all aspects of a registration bill.

As we all know, car registration includes third-party insurance. Can the minister explain why the freeze on car registration does not include the freeze on the CTP component of any registration bill? The government has been big on talk when it comes to reducing the costs of government. Some decisions, such as the scrapping of the Premier's Literary Awards, have been criticised because they are only very small cost cuts. The Premier has responded by saying that, basically, by taking care of the pennies the pounds will take care of themselves.

But the government has increased spending on itself and its mates. The Treasurer in his second reading speech stated that this bill was about lowering the cost of living for families by not promising one thing and then in government doing and saying the opposite. But that is exactly what the Treasurer and his government are doing. They are not practising what they preach. While many public servants are worried about the security of their jobs and their ability to pay their bills—with very good reason—this government has made changes that will cost the taxpayers and families of Queensland more for little to

no benefit in return. For instance, take the commission of audit. Within the first week of the LNP government we saw the appointment of Peter Costello—one of many jobs-for-the-boys appointments. Costello is being paid nearly \$160,000, plus there are two commissioners at a total of \$240,000 based on two days per fortnight work for each between April and when the final report is due to be handed down in late February 2013. This is a total of nearly \$400,000 plus GST that the government is spending whilst public servants face the knife. There are the additional ministers and assistant ministers. Queensland has to foot the bill for the increase in the number of ministers from 18 to 19 and an increase in the number of parliamentary secretaries, who are now called assistant ministers, from six to 11. That is an additional \$84,877 for ministers in wages and an additional \$122,860 for assistant ministers in wages, totalling \$207,737. This expenditure does not include the costs of support staff and office expenses for the additional minister and the five assistant ministers.

The unjustified spending continues, with the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier being assigned two ministers: one assisting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and one assisting on multicultural affairs. We acknowledge that this is an important portfolio, but we still find it difficult to see how the government can justify having two assistant ministers assisting a minister who is assisting the Premier on a relatively minor portfolio. This arrangement is just another example of how the government is already out of touch with Queensland families when it comes to spending taxpayers' dollars.

If that is not enough, we have the cry from the Premier, 'But wait, there's more.' In the first sitting on the 54th Parliament we saw this government arrogantly use its numbers to push through the Parliament of Queensland and Other Acts Amendment Bill without even a meeting being held of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. This bill increased the number of members on each of the portfolio committees by two, meaning an additional cost to taxpayers of at least \$115,038 in members' salaries. This is an increase in salary by stealth. I am sure that if the taxpayers of Queensland were asked if they wanted to pay the newly elected members of parliament more money, the resounding answer would be no. This cost does not include the extra cost to run the committee—for example, travel costs when the committee sits in regional areas or goes interstate. All of this cost is in addition to the cost of an additional whip for the government at a cost of \$8,217.

These changes alone, estimated to cost over \$730,000, do not even include the refurbishments that are being undertaken to the purpose-built opposition offices on level 6 of the Parliamentary Annexe or the conversion of the historic Bernays Room into one of a number of offices for the Deputy Premier. Then there was the announcement last week of the construction of the 'tower of power', the monument to the Premier that will be built at the expense of infrastructure projects throughout Queensland, particularly regional Queensland.

As we have noted already, this government is prepared to talk the talk on reducing the burden of cost of living but it is not prepared to walk the walk. It is finding ways to cut costs by slashing Public Service jobs, slashing public servants' travel entitlements, disbanding the Sentencing Advisory Council, cutting funding to Sisters Inside, abolishing the Workplace Rights Ombudsman, abolishing the Premier's Literary Awards and even slashing the tea and coffee for the Queenslanders who make this state run whilst lining its own pockets at taxpayers' expense. It is a government that is not fair dinkum about the cost-of-living cuts for Queensland families.

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (4.44 pm): Let me get straight to the point. Because of the former Labor government, many people in my electorate, especially those hardworking families like those living at Rocklea and Salisbury where I live, are desperately struggling with cost-of-living pressures. It is a known fact that the former government had a frightening addiction to reckless spending. Labor is responsible for plunging our state into record debt, pushing up the cost of living in Queensland. Furthermore, despite the posturing and promised compensation, the federal Labor government's carbon tax will unquestionably add to the burdens recklessly imposed on Queenslanders by the former state Labor government.

Of concern, the former Labor government's economic mismanagement will see Queensland saddled with a debt of \$62 billion this year, which is projected to rise to \$85 billion in 2014-15. The Treasurer has reported that this level of debt will amount to an interest repayment of \$5 billion a year, \$100 million a week, and \$600,000 an hour in 2014-15. On a more personal level, and based on the 4.6 million people who are already living in Queensland, by 2014-15 every man, woman and child will in essence have a financial burden of more than \$18,000, because of the former state Labor government. This is what those opposite have caused. For a young family comprised of a father, a mother and a new baby, this financial burden amounts to \$54,000 of debt. For a family of two parents and two children, it amounts to over \$72,000 debt. For a family of two parents with three children, it amounts to over \$90,000 of debt. These numbers are frightening for people, essentially families, and Labor is to blame—not the GFC, not the floods, not the cyclones, but Labor.

The Labor legacy of record debt is a significant consequence of failed projects that Queenslanders now have the burden of paying for through increased fees, charges and taxes. Those failed projects include the \$600 million that was wasted on the failed Traveston Dam, the \$1.1 billion

that was wasted on the Tugun desalination plant and the Queensland Health payroll debacle, which is going to end up costing taxpayers more than \$1.2 billion. Ultimately, because of such waste under Labor, Queensland lost its AAA credit rating and the cost of living has skyrocketed. The average Queensland family has seen about \$700 added to their household power bills over the past five years and Queensland has become the most expensive state in which to own and operate a vehicle. These are costs usually incurred by parents each day in taking their children to and from school and going to work—working people who Labor claimed to represent. Excessive increases in public transport fares are yet another example of how Labor has impacted on good hardworking people, which it claims to represent. These everyday cost-of-living increases effectively amount to the Labor government reaching into the hip pocket of hardworking mums and dads and taking money from their wallets and already tight family budgets.

Through this bill, the Newman government wants to make it easier for Queensland families to balance their household budgets. We also want to make it easier for businesses to survive and thrive so that Queensland can prosper and the unemployment rate can be reduced to four per cent. To the end, this bill will deliver on the Newman government's commitment to provide relief for small business across the state. Very significantly, the new payroll tax exemption threshold provided by this bill will mean that approximately 1,200 employers who would otherwise be paying payroll tax in 2012-13 will now not be liable. That means more jobs—something that the Labor Party aspires to achieve but simply lacks the understanding to deliver in a real way.

Sadly, the former Labor government failed to build an economy that can produce real jobs on a permanent basis. Instead, it built a bloated bureaucracy of false jobs on temporary contracts. Notably, under Labor Queensland had the highest unemployment rate out of any mainland state in Australia. Unlike the former Labor government, the Newman government will create real jobs and deliver both cost-of-living relief and red tape reduction for thousands of families and businesses across Queensland.

Through this bill the Newman government will offer a stamp duty concession, saving Queensland families up to \$7,000 on the price of their home and, significantly for real estate agent and property owners alike, this bill will introduce measures to scrap the ridiculous sustainability declaration. There is no doubt that the measures will help stimulate activity in our property sector, a sector which together with the construction industry represents the largest number of small businesses in my electorate. Overall I am confident that the measures in the bill will bring real cost-of-living relief to families and improve business and employment in my electorate and throughout Queensland. Accordingly, I am pleased to support the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.50 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 on behalf of the constituents of Chatsworth. There is a compelling reason I am so passionate and pleased to speak in support of this particular bill. It is demonstrated on page 1 of the incoming government brief for the Treasury portfolio of the Newman government received back in March 2012 which stated—and we have heard the words—Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and its restoration must be an urgent priority for this term of government. I feel compelled to speak on this bill as the Chatsworth electorate demographic comprises many families, individuals and small businesses that have had enough of the reckless economic maladministration that we experienced under the former Labor government.

The measures in this bill will bring cost-of-living relief to the residents of Chatsworth who, along with other Queenslanders, suffered from endless rising taxes, charges, licences and fees under the former Bligh Labor government. In addition to relief for families, this bill also delivers on the LNP's election commitment to reduce the red tape burden on small businesses within the Chatsworth electorate. Many of these local businesses are hurting as their customer base has little discretionary spending due to the cost-of-living pressures on family budgets being faced.

During the state election campaign I paid visits to several medium and small businesses scattered throughout the electorate of Chatsworth. The Ingleston Road precinct at Tingalpa is home to many manufacturing, industrial and corporate businesses and is a classic example of an area of the Chatsworth electorate that will find relief by the amendments proposed in this bill. Indeed, many businesses in Chatsworth, such as Uncle Bobs Bakery at Belmont, Fancee Fruit at Carindale, the WineGum Cafe at Gumdale and Brisbane Metal Products at the Tingalpa light industrial precinct, stand to gain from the positive benefits that will flow from the introduction of this important bill.

The people of Chatsworth, as did the people I might add of Queensland from Coolangatta to Cooktown, used their democratic right to reject Labor's abject fiscal waste and management. The people of Queensland voted to afford the Newman government a mandate to ease their family's budget and make the tough decisions to benefit Queenslanders for generations to come. In fact, one only needs to look around the chamber here tonight to see plainly that the LNP received an overwhelming mandate to urgently address cost-of-living pressures for everyday Queenslanders, and I am confident that this bill will do just that. I will do the sweep the proper way, with pride: it goes from there, all the way to this corner, across the chamber and all the way back down, right down to there.

The Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will increase the payroll tax exemption threshold; reinstate the transfer duty home concession, which is of intense interest to many Chatsworth families; freeze tariff 11 electricity prices for one year; facilitate the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation; and, of keen interest to many real estate agents in my electorate and many others, the removal of the requirement for sustainability declarations—a classic example of the Bligh Labor government's red tape obstructing small business.

A government member: Shame!

Mr MINNIKIN: I agree, and I will take that interjection. This bill will strip the bureaucratic mess from business in Queensland and is delivering on the forefront of the LNP's election commitment to get Queensland back on track. Unlike the previous Bligh Labor government, the current LNP government will make it easier for Chatsworth families to balance their household budgets. It was quite amazing when one considers that Labor's continuous reckless spending and waste of hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money has caused our state debt to fast approach \$85 billion. What I find staggering is that this record level is increasing despite the former Labor government pocketing \$15 billion for selling off Queensland's assets. What is even more damning than the decision to sell off assets without a mandate is the unbelievable fact that no extra infrastructure was developed, nor was there any paying down of state debt. This is unforgivable, not only for current taxpayers but also for the younger generation of Queenslanders who will also bear the brunt of this unjustifiable debt. It is simply unforgivable.

At this staggering debt level rate, the constituents in Chatsworth and Queenslanders state-wide are facing an interest bill of around \$540,000 per hour. When I consulted with residents of my electorate during the recent campaign and raised the concern that we were staring at a future interest only bill of \$9,000 per minute, the look on their faces said it all. Let us follow the clock: \$9,000 per minute. We are now paying the price for Labor's economic train wreck. There is always a price to be paid for economic recklessness. Many community groups in the Chatsworth electorate are screaming for much needed state government funding. Groups such as the Whites Hill Swimming Club, Carina Meals on Wheels, the Mayfield Primary School and many sporting clubs at the Clem Jones Centre would benefit tremendously from financial support from their state government.

A government member: Good clubs in the Chatsworth area.

Mr MINNIKIN: Absolutely. They are tremendous Chatsworth clubs and there are many others like them throughout the state. Regrettably, the poor fiscal legacy that the Newman government has inherited from the Bligh Labor government means that these important community groups may miss out on maintaining their facilities or supporting their high achievers in ways they should have available to them. In the 10 weeks or so that I have had the privilege of being the member for Chatsworth, I see community groups that are hurting and in need of much needed funding almost daily.

As my other colleagues have commented, the previous Labor state government's legacy to Queensland is a myriad of bungled and failed projects. Simply put, it raised the level of maladministration in government to new heights. Speaking of maladministration, let us refresh ourselves this afternoon of some of them, because they go to the very heart of why the people of Chatsworth had their costs of living go through the roof. We are going to go through them again and again and again.

Who could forget the \$1.1 billion white elephant that is the rusting Tugun desalination plant; the \$600 million wasted on the failed Traveston Crossing Dam, which ripped apart the people of the Mary Valley; making it more expensive for Queensland motorists after breaking their election promise not to introduce the 9.2c a litre fuel tax—we keep going—the absolute joke known as the Queensland Health payroll debacle, which is going to end up costing taxpayers potentially more than—and I am sick of using white liquid paper here—\$1.25 billion and still rising; the \$350 million spent on the Wyaralong Dam, which Labor then decided not to connect to the Seqwater grid, to name but just a few because I am getting so tired. We have heard it all—pipes without dams, dams without pipes. It sounds like something out of Monty Python to laugh at if it was not so severely damaging to Queensland. These poorly targeted schemes, which Queenslanders paid for through increased fees, charges and taxes, have led us to our current economic predicament which is why I am proud to support the Treasurer's bill this afternoon to address this malaise.

As Assistant Minister for Public Transport, I am acutely aware that members of the Chatsworth community using public transport had fare increases of 35 per cent over 2010, 2011 and another 15 per cent increase in January 2012. Many were starting to question whether it was even worthwhile using public transport at all as it has become just as expensive as paying for parking. That is unbelievable considering we pay more for parking in Brisbane than is paid in London. The lack of real world experience amongst members of the previous Labor government, who were indeed economic illiterates, goes to the heart of why this state's once glorious AAA credit rating was lost. Many people I had conversations with in the Chatsworth electorate during the state election campaign commented on how this once great state, blessed with nature's bounty, could be so comprehensively run into the ground economically.

I am so pleased to be able to speak in support of this bill as it goes to the core of restoring the confidence of the business community, families, individuals and community groups of the Chatsworth electorate. There is always a human element to Labor's waste and the massive hikes in public transport fees, car registration fees, electricity and water utility bills. Power bills rose around \$700 on average over the past five years and water bills increased from around \$200 a year for Chatsworth families, like my neighbours in Lychee Place, Belmont. I recall my visit to Uncle Bob's Bakery on Belmont Road during the campaign with the now Premier. The owner of the bakery informed us that over the past few years his electricity bills had increased by 70 per cent. How can small business survive with those sorts of input cost increases? As has been eloquently stated by my colleagues already, small business is the backbone of our economy and the Labor Party simply do not get it. That is their real DNA.

Through this bill, the LNP government will deliver on our election commitments to bring cost-of-living relief to Queensland families. We will introduce the stamp duty concession, saving Queensland families up to \$7,000 on the price of their home. This will also help stimulate activity in our property sector, a sector that did it tough under Labor as many real estate agents in my electorate can attest to. This bill will introduce measures to scrap the ridiculous sustainability declaration, which has become the bane of real estate agencies throughout the electorate of Chatsworth. Throughout the course of the campaign I received from various real estate agents a staggering number of calls for change on this ridiculous policy alone.

The residents of Chatsworth will benefit from the freezing of the standard residential electricity tariff, tariff 11, saving them an average of \$120 a year. However, the gorilla in the room is the looming threat of the federal Labor government's insidious carbon tax.

A government member: Shame!

Mr MINNIKIN: Absolutely, shame. To remind the constituents of Chatsworth of this impact, the LNP will also deliver on our election commitment to show the full impact of federal Labor's toxic carbon tax on people's electricity bills. That is an important development as Labor is just as clueless at the federal level as it was at the state level under the former Bligh government. They just do not get business at all.

Electricity costs have become so expensive. It makes a complete mockery of former Labor Premier Peter Beattie's inane comments of a few years ago to the effect that 'Under my government, electricity costs will start to decrease.' Genius! Of intense interest to me and to many small business people in Chatsworth is that this bill will also deliver the LNP's commitment to provide relief to small businesses right across the state. Small businesses have been doing it tough throughout the Chatsworth electorate—businesses such as the various tenants at the Lunga Street shopping centre on Stanley Road at Carina, the Belmont Road Shopping Village and the Twin Parks Shopping Centre at Tingalpa, to name but a few. All of those small businesses have faced an exorbitant increase in government charges and bureaucratic red tape.

I am very pleased to rise to support this bill this afternoon, as the Newman government will increase the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million. This will be the first step in our overall commitment to increasing the threshold to \$1.6 million over six years. As an unabashed champion of small business, I am delighted that the new payroll tax exemption threshold will mean real demonstrable cost savings to approximately 1,200 employers who would otherwise be paying payroll tax in 2012-13 and now will not be liable.

From the business doorstep meetings that I have conducted throughout the Chatsworth electorate, I wholeheartedly understand that excessive red tape is a major source of frustration for small business which, of course, impacts on their bottom line. I congratulate the Treasurer on his move to establish the Office of Best Practice Regulation, as it is an important part of this government's commitment to cutting red tape by 20 per cent. It is a shameful fact that this state has the largest number of regulatory provisions in the country. I find it quite interesting that a business unit I led many years ago actually won the inaugural state government red-tape reduction award in 1997, yet here I am, many years later in state parliament, speaking in support of a bill to once again reduce Labor's cost-of-living mess.

The genesis of the need for this bill is the fact that from 2005-06 to 2010-11 general government expenses grew at almost double the rate of revenue—I repeat, double the rate. The people of Chatsworth know that, if one's home budget expenses grow at double the rate of one's income, one will eventually enter into debt spiral. It is kitchen table economics 101. Labor simply spent well beyond its means and had to borrow money to even pay the wages of public servants. Why is it that the ALP, which purports to be the party representing the needs of the worker, has in effect hurt those very people it claims to represent? From Carina to Tingalpa, from Ransome to Camp Hill, I hear the same story over and over: 'It's about the cost of living, stupid!' But Labor stopped listening years ago.

While the most negative campaign in Australian political history secured its demise, the selling of Queensland's assets put the previous Labor government on the back foot with Queenslanders, and its economic illiteracy over the past three years was the icing on the cake for many Chatsworth electors. The saying used to be 'Queensland: beautiful one day, perfect the next'. It has become 'Queensland: bankrupt one day, on eBay the next'. It is time to stop the rot and stand up for all Queenslanders.

Unlike the seven lonely ALP souls sitting across from me in this chamber, the LNP is serious about tackling the cost-of-living pressures on the people of Queensland. The Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will help the people of Chatsworth and Queenslanders across the state. It is part of building a four-pillar economy. Through the adoption of this bill, the Newman government will deliver on our election commitments to bring cost-of-living relief to Queensland families.

I congratulate the Treasurer and I am pleased to speak in favour of this bill. I look forward to seeing the positive impact this legislation will have on the lives of the people of Chatsworth. I came into this esteemed House to play my part as a team player, to make a difference. I am proud to stand before you this afternoon and represent the people of Chatsworth on this important piece of legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Before I call the member for Gaven, I remind members of the House that this week Madam Speaker introduced a precis that identified the correct protocols for addressing the chair, entering and leaving the chamber and crossing between the member speaking and the chair. I ask members to please observe those courtesies.

Dr DOUGLAS (Gaven—LNP) (5.07 pm): 'Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink'. I paraphrase Samuel Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. So it seemed to many in my electorate of Gaven, and I am sure throughout the state, when it seemed that under the previous Labor government there was money for all sorts of government approved initiatives but none for them, if only just to put food on the table. Their desperation for just a few crumbs from the plate of governmental excess was one of the reasons for the wipe-out of the Labor government in the most recent election and also the rapid delivery of this cost-of-living bill.

Despite some adverse comments from opposition speakers that this is very minor legislation, it is more than a good start after 7½ weeks. Interestingly, Coleridge, a romantic, had much to offer in *The Rime*, because for many he was really talking about salvation. Rather than being strictly biblical, I think he seemed to be talking about hope. Hope is what this cost-of-living bill is offering and the beneficiaries are many and diverse. Coleridge was also a follower of Aristotle, who, amongst other great quotes from *Metaphysics*, stated, 'The whole is greater than the sum of its parts'. So it is with this bill. When considered as individual items they are small changes, but when considered together they deliver a great synergy. They restore confidence that things can be made good, wrongs righted and equity restored. This continues the core beliefs that have remained constant from Aristotle, through Coleridge and to democracy itself today.

As stated, this bill is about implementing those policies that the LNP took to the election. All previous speakers have spoken to the specifics of the bill, the critical amendments being to reinstate the transfer of home duty concessions, the freezing of electricity tariff 11 for one year, the removal of the offensive sustainability declarations and the establishment of the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority. All of these changes, and plenty of others that one would hope would also be implemented, are the key reasons behind this overwhelming vote of confidence by the public in this new LNP government. I have stated previously that it has become difficult here in Queensland to just exist. I quoted one of my residents' statements in response to newsletters mailed to constituents.

Locally on the Gold Coast things have never been tougher economically and there are compelling signs that it is only going to get worse. It is no wonder that Labor lost every seat on the Gold Coast in the face of what had happened and what every Gold Coaster felt was ahead of them. House prices fell 10 per cent in the last quarter and significantly lag behind the rest of the state. In *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens the opening statement was the timeless quote, 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.' This is exactly where we stand now here in Queensland. Despite all the sadness of what has gone wrong, there is tremendous enthusiasm and hope for not just righting those wrongs of the past—and that is in the new LNP government coming in—but actually building a better life for Queenslanders now and in the future. This bill is the first of many focused on making the lives of families in Queensland better so that they can build their lives and not merely exist. This initial bill focuses on some very small changes, as I said, but they will make big differences in people's lives, for surely it is from little things that big things grow. That is actually from TS Eliot; Paul Kelly merely borrowed the line.

From 1 July 2012 Queensland families will be saving up to \$7,000 on the price of their home and \$120 on their average yearly electricity bills; car registration will be frozen; and, for those long-suffering employees, the threshold for payroll tax will be increased to \$1.1 million, as was discussed earlier by the member for Chatsworth. That affects 1,200 employees. The threshold is going to be raised to

\$1.6 million over the forthcoming six years. Finally, this bill will rid both homebuyers and sellers of this absurd sustainability declaration which, however it is dressed up, is a major impediment to a free-flowing housing market. I congratulate Nicolee Dixon on an excellent review of that issue. For those who have not seen it, I speak of the Library review of the implications of both the sustainability declaration and the freeze on car registration. As simple as it is, it is quite well done.

In practice, we are hoping to see that people who would ordinarily put their homes up for sale as families upgrade and older residents downgrade in response to their needs can afford to sell in the market. Even though the amount of equity they have in their home has been diminished as a result of a lack of confidence, they believe they might be able to sell their home in the market. Remember, on the Gold Coast—and I cannot specifically speak for every market—the average mortgage is in the order of \$400,000. So people have very little equity left in their homes when they go to sell it. With rents rising at three times the rate of CPI, the alternative for the public is very limited if they want a roof over their heads and that of their families.

At this stage I would like to table an article about the impact on one of the local food banks in my electorate. They have had to cut back their expenditure on food boxes and they have actually had to take things out. That is how tough it has become. It has become difficult, even for the charities. I have heard many, many stories from a variety of people within my electorate of how these spiralling costs were really hitting families. I actually went to see one of the local primary school principals to discuss concerns about children who were being sent to school without any food for lunch. Of course, the children were not willing to tell people that they were routinely not being provided with food by their parents because they did not want that impacting their family. Nonetheless, that problem has been addressed and we have tried to get through it. In real life, this is what has been going on.

Tabled paper: Extract from article regarding charity food boxes [265].

There was also a family who came to see me. They had been forced to make a repayment of the first home owner's grant, which has occurred for some people, because they were unable to comply with the conditions of the grant due to a Residential Tenancies Authority hearing through no fault of their own. They had to make a repayment and, unfortunately, they just were not able to afford the basic necessities of life. There are many other examples. It is jobs that pay wages. They pay the bills. Jobs come from investment. Investment comes from savings and confidence. This bill addresses that problem but responds to one level of the equation. As earlier speakers have noted, other bills are being debated—we had one yesterday—and they will address each level of that equation of how people will actually rebuild their lives.

At this stage I would like to discuss the impact of the carbon tax. From 1 July the carbon tax will only compound the public's misery. This bill will ensure that the carbon tax will be displayed on the electricity account. Typically, the impact of democracy is that very occasionally we have to swallow a policy—a taxing strategy—such as the carbon tax. There are many ways of looking at the carbon tax. It was described in yesterday's *Australian* as a giant tax and welfare churn, yet in reality it is an environmental tax, a negative tax, and it is very similar to an excise tax. In part, it is also an effective federal consumption tax, the GST equivalent. A federal estimate of the weekly cost-of-living increases to everyday people is \$9.90, with a compensatory package of \$10.10 for the average household. However, Wesfarmers made a statement recently—and they own Coles, as people know—that, in fact, the true cost is 40 per cent greater than the return.

The federal government has budgeted \$22 million to sell it in an advertising campaign—and I think this has been mentioned by a number of speakers in different ways—on top of the \$14 million already spent in 2011 and early 2012. The impact on average families will be heavy and proportionately greater on those on very meagre incomes. They need to be concerned for the tax has close parallels to excise taxes such as those on tea, stamps, whiskey et cetera that produced revolts throughout history. That is what we are seeing at the moment. People might not know that the tax on tea led to the US War of Independence from Great Britain. In India a salt tax implemented by Great Britain led to Ghandi's Salt Satyagraha, which was a seminal moment in his war of independence from the UK. These things have happened.

It is not surprising that this tax has led to such community outrage and polarisation from all levels of government. Defiance alone is not the only outcome and it is wrong to dismiss community reaction as trivial or to demean opposition, as has occurred to those who are actually climate change deniers. The carbon tax is theoretically neutral, addressing the basic tenet of a consumption tax. Therefore, that is why I am justified in calling it, in part, a federal consumption tax. Significantly, it discourages economic growth, which GST does not. GST increases capital stock; productivity increases the size of the income by not disfavoured investment. The carbon tax does none of these. Therefore, it is the very worst of all negative taxes because its aim of creating diversion of expenditure is strongly counteracted by its point of application.

This is also why people revolt against it. At \$23 per tonne—\$13 above the nearest European comparison—it could be argued that it is also not market driven. What else can a state do other than display it as their act of lawful defiance, as Queensland is doing, on the electricity accounts and, of course, as Gandhi did effectively? Eventually the public will prevail in defeating this—as Gandhi did—such are the lessons of accurate history.

This bill has been discussed at great length by a wide spectrum of speakers. It is part of the initial critical series of steps and, incrementally, should assist Queenslanders dig their way out of this problem. This state has a realistic target of four per cent unemployment levels and, hopefully, we will make it. There is some good news. Queensland saw a 0.9 per cent rise in retail sales in April compared with the nationwide average of a 0.2 per cent fall. Building is down five per cent and engineering is up over the quarter by 1.3 per cent. As people know, the economic outlook of four per cent is possibly on the back of a \$50 billion increase to our national debt, which is now nearly \$300 billion.

This is what is giving the economy oxygen and soaking up the available pool of workers. For too many the changes are coming too late but such are the vagaries of the electoral cycle. But the cost-of-living bill, by being introduced in an early phase of the government, has a chance of restoring confidence to the market and improving these figures.

Every time fees, charges and taxes are wound back all the doubters emerge and threaten everything from fiddling around the edges to sowing the seeds of disaster, which is what we have heard. In fact, this bill is none of these things. It purely removes much of the nonsense that characterised a dying Labor administration and the changes will make the cost of living cheaper.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and believe that previous speakers have well encapsulated the challenges that are facing Queenslanders today. It seems untenable in a state where we have such rich resources that we have people struggling to the extent that they are. Indeed, there have been many costs that are not easily identified that have increased over the last few years. The cost of renewing your licence, the cost of renewing your weapons licence, the cost of renewing applications for environmental issues—all of those costs have gone up. When the amount is totalled, the increases have certainly been higher than the CPI in most instances.

This bill, as the Treasurer outlined in his introductory speech, is an attempt to address some of the cost-of-living issues facing Queenslanders and is in line with the LNP's election commitment. There are a number of issues that I want to address and I will go through those in order.

I welcome the return of the transfer duty situation to what it was pre-August 2011. The introduction of higher fees for the transfer duty for your primary place of living lacked logic. One could understand and perhaps justify it if it were on investment properties—they are there to make income, and there are also some tax thresholds and relief available for people who can afford investment properties. This increase in transfer duty was on the primary place of living. Whilst for many Queenslanders that piece of dirt and the house—that has been the Australian dream for decades—is becoming out of reach, we need to do as much as possible to keep it within the purview of our Queensland families. So the potential saving of \$7,000 on purchasing your primary place of living is welcome.

I know that in my electorate the purchase of a home is a significant purchase in anyone's thinking. In Gladstone the prices have escalated quite markedly. They have been a little flatter in the last month or so, but they are certainly at a greater level than they have been previously. So that \$7,000 saving, and potentially more, is certainly welcome in tight economic times.

The bill also increases the threshold for payroll tax exemption, and I welcome that. The payroll tax thresholds that move businesses between levels can be the greatest determinant in whether a company, especially a small business, puts on an extra worker or two. In fact, a number of businesses in Gladstone have approached me over time—and I remember raising it in debate with the previous government—to highlight again that the reduction in the threshold to encompass more companies into the payment of payroll tax reduces employment opportunities for people. If we are going to stand in this place and talk about full employment being a desirable outcome, then payroll tax threshold limits are a factor in achieving that. I certainly congratulate the government for the changes that they have made.

The previous government did a lot of things that disadvantaged Queenslanders—we had the payroll tax initiatives, we had the transfer duty raised and other members have talked about the sale of Queensland Rail. To new members, I encourage you to investigate the impact of the sale of QR on your community. There are a lot of things hidden in that deal that unless a group comes and talks to you and you do some investigating you will not realise the implications. I will use Gladstone as an example.

QR was privatised and within a couple of months the CWA hall and the Gladstone Musical Society hall—they are on contiguous blocks of land—received notification from QR National to say that their properties were being considered for disposal because they were non-core—'excess to need'. Nobody knew that those blocks of land had been included in the QR sale. Indeed, there are very few

blocks of land in the electorate of Gladstone that were owned by Queensland Rail that are still owned by the people of Queensland. They were bundled into the asset sale to QR National. The Queensland Railway Institute was another one whose land was bundled into that privatisation.

So I say to new members to be aware in your electorates as there is every chance that those community groups who do so much—like the CWA and the musical society and, indeed, the QRI—could be disadvantaged, if not now then in the future. I would defy anybody to mess with QCWA ladies. I said to the government at the time, 'They will leave you bleeding in the gutter.' They are nice people—don't get me wrong—but they are pretty resourceful. Once the QCWA ladies have dealt with you nobody is going to come to your rescue. Thankfully under former minister Rachel Nolan and Kate Jones some of that was fixed, but it was at additional cost to the people of Queensland and it was an unnecessary cost. So all of that asset sale did nothing to reduce the debt in Queensland. I certainly welcome the initiatives that this bill introduces.

This bill will also freeze tariff 11 electricity prices. When the electricity changes occurred a couple of years ago, there was strident debate in this place about how cheap electricity would be for the people of Queensland. Numbers were not actually bandied about, but it was certainly the platform of debate by the proposers of the changes in the electricity structure that it would result in cheaper electricity for Queenslanders. It became patently evident that that was wrong. People have been paying exponentially more for their power ever since. So this freeze on tariff 11 is welcome. I have a question for the minister, however. These price rises are blocked until 2012-13, and I wonder whether there is going to be a massive hit at the end of that time and an increase in power costs as a result. That would be as bad as the current situation, prior to the passing of this bill, where power price increases have been regular, repetitive and too high.

There is also a proposal in this bill to establish an Office of Best Practice Regulation under the Queensland Competition Authority. I am sure that that is a welcome initiative providing it does not become, with due respect, just another layer of government and that it will actually achieve outcomes for the people of Queensland. The minister's introductory speech states—

To facilitate this—

that is, the freeze on tariff 11—

it is proposed to insert a one-year transitional provision into the Electricity Act to give the Minister for Energy and Water Supply the power to make a regulation in relation to Energex's network charges for 2012-13.

That is welcome but, again, I just seek clarification that this will not result in a whack at the end of that 12-month period. I would appreciate that clarification.

The bill also proposes to remove the sustainability declarations. When the sustainability declarations were introduced into this parliament, I supported them and I say that because that is the truth. I am pleased that they have been reviewed. If that review has shown them to be unsustainable, unnecessary, unproductive or too difficult, then the rescinding of those declarations is certainly welcome. At the time, I felt it would give homeowners and sellers an opportunity to talk up their property, but the introductory speech rightly says that there are other opportunities for sellers to place the sustainability benefits of their properties into their market sale.

There is a lot more that I could talk about but I am conscious of the time and the fact that it is getting late on a Thursday evening. I would like to say this. My community struggles. We may be a resource rich state and we may be a town with a lot of industry, but a significant part of our community in the electorate of Gladstone is struggling under the cost of living. I have talked to many ministers asking for additional infrastructure investment in the city and I will continue to do that, even though I know that the minister and the Premier have stated that Queensland is hugely in debt. The fact is that the people of Gladstone are part of a great contribution to the state's economy and deserve to have the infrastructure that they need to meet those population and industry challenges. I welcome this bill because it addresses some of the personal costs to those people who are great Queenslanders in relation to their day-to-day living costs.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.31 pm): We will support these moves to try to help address the cost of living for all Queenslanders. However, it must be noted that cost of living is becoming a tool for conservative politicians to be seen to be doing something while in effect providing little relief to those who really need it. It is time we did the right thing and started telling the truth about the cost of living. Members can see that, while clearly there are many people who are struggling, the majority are benefiting from a strong economy—yes, Australia does have a strong economy, whether this LNP government likes it or not.

Whilst the conservatives love to use phrases like Howard's memorable 2004 statement that 'interest rates will always be lower under a coalition government', we now know this to be a myth. We know that the conservatives carry on and try to make out that they are better at being in charge of economics, but it is clear that this is a false presumption. As Wayne Swan, the Treasurer of Australia, recently pointed out, the average Australian with a standard variable home rate on a loan of \$300,000 is today \$3,500 a year better off under Labor. Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan are better 'mythbusters' than Adam and Jamie on SBS.

The reality is that we as members of parliament need to be honest about this. We need to acknowledge that those on low incomes, those many Queenslanders who are underemployed, are doing it very tough and these measures do not address their inequality. This does not give them an opportunity to buy a house because that is simply out of their reach, particularly so in the Ipswich area. They do not have air conditioners to feel the benefits of electricity savings. They need assistance. They deserve a fair go to sustain a reasonable lifestyle because they work hard and sometimes find themselves in a position to need a hand—a hand-up that most of us are lucky enough not to need.

Whilst it is not simplistic, popular politics to say this, and whilst it might be hard for some to acknowledge, the truth is that many in our community are doing okay. According to the report of the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling titled *Prices these days: the cost of living in Australia*, many people in the community are better off than they have been for some time. I table that report.

Tabled paper: AMP.NATSEM report titled 'Prices these days!: The cost of living in Australia', Issue 31—May 2012 [266].

Their study found that the average household is \$224 better off a week than just six years ago. They found on average that in terms of the cost of living we are 20 per cent better off than in the past six years. The common denominator here of course is that in the last six years we have had Labor state and federal governments. The report found that it was lifestyle, travel, airfares and the 'keeping up with the Joneses' syndrome that has put economic pressures on families. There are many people in the community on reasonably high incomes claiming to be doing it tough, whilst others struggle through and survive and do not complain much about being on lower incomes.

The fact is that some people know how to manage money better than others. Some people know how to budget and they are quite good at it. Some simply say 'no' when they know they cannot afford goods and services and some save their money—in fact, the banks are complaining because Australians are saving money at record rates—yet some still cry poor. We as members of parliament should speak the truth, not pander to the myth. We should encourage people to live within their means and not look to governments, the Salvos, St Vinnies and other welfare agencies to bail them out when they overspend.

I often talk to welfare groups in my electorate of Bundamba, and they have said that a number of people who are seeking assistance from the welfare agencies are considered to be quite well off because they earn decent amounts of money. Some of them are what we would call high-income earners yet they go to the welfare agencies looking for handouts. The welfare agencies in my area used to look after people on low incomes in rentals and housing commission homes but they are increasingly being called to suburbs with high incomes and expensive homes and this should not be happening. In the Bundamba area, people are being advised by the welfare agencies that they are not automatic teller machines—that the Salvos, St Vincent de Paul and the Smith Family are not ATMs—and that they need to take personal responsibility for their situation.

I want to talk briefly about electricity tariffs. Ipswich is hot in summer and electricity is used for fans, air conditioning and pool pumps et cetera for those people who have got pools, and Ipswich is very cold in winter so we use electricity for heaters, air conditioning and electric blankets. Many households have many more appliances these days than they did 10 years ago. This is just a fact of life. Many people have got great, big, huge, enormous plasma TVs, DVD players, radios, huge sound systems, washing machines as well as dryers and dishwashers that go for a couple of hours at a time. Some have got electrical security systems and fire alarms, and it all adds up. The more equipment you buy and the more electrical goods that you put in your house, the more it costs. It certainly costs more than a decade ago.

I had the ClimateSmart officers through my home and I know that other people in the House did as well. Generally, my home was already energy efficient and I just needed a couple of new-style light bulbs installed, but we have to wonder why this scheme has been stopped. It is just plain stupid. The scheme allowed people to see how they could practically save money by using less power as well as giving the environment a boost at the same time. Queenslanders should not be hoodwinked into thinking that all electricity rises are due to the carbon tax—that is simply nonsense that members over there talk about all the time. It will be interesting to see whether they falsely blame the federal government for the increases in electricity prices that were announced last week.

In relation to car registration and public transport costs, public transport fares were a very important matter in the recent state election. This affected nearly everyone in Ipswich but it is not addressed in the bill. The government said it can be done by regulation, but why not put the principles in the bill or at least put in the guiding principles in relation to future rises? In my view, the issue of car registration could turn out to be the biggest con of this LNP government because it only applies to sedans. Car registration is the king con of this LNP bill. Lots of people who own utes and bikes, including me, miss out. Many workers in Ipswich bought a ute or a bike to travel to work to reduce their cost of getting to and from their workplace. I have a 20-year-old Subaru Brumby ute and I have to tell members that it is my favourite.

If you own a ute, you are being duded. If you own a motorbike, you are being duded. Small business operators who use utes for delivery vehicles will also be unfairly stung. I want this government to include utes and motorbikes in any freeze on rego. Another con for the people is not including third-party insurance as part of registration. People expected a freeze on the whole cost of registration, not just a part of it—con, con, con! People just look at the bottom line—that is, what is the total cost of car registration? They expected all of it to be frozen, not just part of it—and this is part of the LNP's king con.

In relation to sustainability declarations, real estate agents and lawyers and sellers all had difficulty grasping the concept of sustainability declarations. Maybe our Labor government brought it in before time. Maybe it was too early for us to bring it in. Sometime down the track maybe they will come back in when the people of Queensland are ready for them.

In relation to stamp duty, in the newer suburbs of Ipswich such as Redbank Plains, Springfield Lakes and Augustine Heights, builders and developers all supported the Building Boost as it provided a significant boost to the construction sector. I just wonder what this stamp duty policy will actually mean to the construction sector of Ipswich. Will more people now be purchasing older, more established homes compared to the construction of new homes? I want to know what this will mean to the builders, especially the smaller builders in my electorate. The government has been very quiet on this aspect and this is important to the local builders, the carpenters, the roofers, the plumbers, the concreters, the landscapers and the fencers who are all part of local housing construction.

I want to give the people in my electorate and indeed right across Queensland a cost-of-living quiz—the quick quiz that will go for the next three years. From the election date this year, put all of the electricity bills, the gas bills, the car rego bills, the water bills, the go card top-up rates and the rates bills in a 2012 file. Do the same in 2013 and do the same in 2014 and have a look at them just before the next state election. Add them up and if the cost of living has increased in these areas during this time then the LNP government will have failed—a big fat 'F' for fail! The people of Queensland gave this LNP mob a huge mandate and they genuinely believe that their cost of living will be significantly lower, but only time will tell. I believe that they will be very disappointed and in the end they will come to the conclusion that they have been duded.

Of course, you actually have to be earning a living to be concerned about the cost of living. Across Queensland over 40,000 public servants are now under threat, and we now see QR National workers and their families in similar pain. Whilst it is early days yet, from speaking with the unions who represent workers at the Redbank Railway Workshops in my electorate, three shops look like being moved out of Redbank—losing or moving, on a conservative estimate, about 250 jobs. So that is at least 250 workers in Ipswich—250 families in Ipswich and the surrounding areas—who have to make hard decisions about their family's future because they will not have a job. It will also have an effect on future employment and the development of skills important to maintain the rail network in Queensland. It will affect the employment of apprentices at Redbank, with fewer tradespeople and fewer roles undertaken there and most likely put out to contract, putting our local jobs and the future of training of local people out to tender. Shame, shame, shame—and that would be a great shame for Ipswich.

But where are our newly elected LNP MPs for Ipswich and Ipswich West, both of whom speak of or even used to work for Queensland Rail, particularly the member for Ipswich West? I understand that the member for Ipswich West used to work for Queensland Rail. His silence is deafening, so where have they been? Have they lobbied their new government to stand up for our workers who are going to lose their jobs? It is time for the training wheels to come off, member for Ipswich and member for Ipswich West.

An opposition member: It's the 'member for Manhattan'!

Mrs MILLER: Yes, the 'member for Manhattan'! Oh dearie me, how could I have forgotten the high life that he aspires to in New York and Manhattan in particular! But, really, they need to get to work to help Ipswich workers and their families. I can tell you what I think about them: they do not give a stuff about the 250 workers at the Redbank Railway Workshop and they do not give a stuff about the 40,000-plus public servants who, on a daily basis, are being marched out the front door of government departments and government agencies right across Queensland. Many of these public servants are Ipswich people and it is a disgrace that the member for Ipswich and the member for Ipswich West are not standing up for them. They are weak and gutless MPs who conned the people into voting for them and now they have walked away. They are on their bikes; they have walked away!

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. That language is unparliamentary.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Member for Bundamba—

Mrs MILLER: He said it is unparliamentary, but he did not ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, the words you have used are unparliamentary and I request you to withdraw them immediately.

Mrs MILLER: I seek guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker, as to which words were unparliamentary. Was it 'weak' or 'gutless'?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is 'weak' and 'gutless'.

Mrs MILLER: No, it cannot be 'weak' and 'gutless'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have asked you to withdraw it. Do you withdraw it?

Mrs MILLER: I will withdraw 'gutless', but I think the term 'weak' is okay.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will say it for the last time: you have been asked to withdraw it. If you do not withdraw it—

Mrs MILLER: In deference to your request, Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unqualified?

Mrs MILLER: Unqualified. May I say that speaking the truth in this House obviously upsets the LNP members in this place. You poor, precious little petals! It is about time that the LNP members, particularly those who have public servants and railway workshops in their electorates, stood up for the workers. That is what they need to do. They need to stand up for the 40,000-plus public servants who are having their jobs done in and their families ruined, their houses put on the market—and those men who have to send their wives out to work when they are looking after young families. You precious little petals! You make me sick!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, it is unparliamentary to say 'precious little petals'. Do you withdraw it?

Mrs MILLER: Dear, oh dear! In terms of your request I withdraw the term 'precious little petals'.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I have asked you to withdraw it unqualified. This is the last time I will ask you. Do you withdraw it unqualified?

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw it unqualified.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (5.48 pm): I rise in support of the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and to support the benefits that it will bring to Pine Rivers businesses and residents. It is actually quite a relief to be speaking after the member for Bundamba, because after that performance I could stand up here and recite nursery rhymes and add more to the debate than she added in that performance! The member for Bundamba made an interesting statement that the people of her electorate are actually better off now than they were a number of years ago. I would love to see her take that to the people of her electorate and actually ask them whether they are better off, because I am sure that she would get a far different story if she actually took the time to talk to her constituents about it.

We have an unfortunate situation in this state where Queenslanders have been paying the price and continue to pay the price for the Labor government's addiction to debt and its inability to balance a budget or to cut waste. Every Queenslander knows that in their family or business budget they cannot sustain a pattern where they continue to spend more than they earn for a prolonged period. The unfortunate reality for the families and residents of my electorate is that, instead of reining in the spending, instead of cutting the waste from its budgets, Labor continued to dive straight into further debt. Rather than making the hard decisions, Labor just decided to keep spending and take the easy option of hitting the hip pockets of Queenslanders to compensate for its economic ineptitude.

We now have a situation in this state where we are paying \$100 million a week in interest on the debt that that government accrued. The residents of my electorate would know that \$100 million would get them a bridge over Youngs Crossing. But how many years will they have to wait to get that bridge because we have to pay off the debt first? We have ended up seeing hardworking residents in Pine Rivers, many of whom have been struggling to keep their heads above water, taking hit after hit from the previous Labor government. Day after day, residents and businesses in Pine Rivers have been caught up in the crossfire caused by the inept previous Labor government.

If that is not enough, in a display of solidarity from Labor around the country, which we usually see only when they are out ousting a Prime Minister, in a display that is in Labor's DNA to increase the cost of living for no good reason, we currently have a federal Labor government running flat out towards a future that revolves around the carbon tax that is of questionable benefit to anyone and is of questionable benefit to our environment—all so that it can just be seen to be doing something. So rather than doing the right thing, rather than taking action that will benefit the environment and benefit Australian businesses and residents, Labor just charged towards bringing in a tax that will hurt businesses, hurt residents and hurt our country. It put up the smokescreen of compensation that it says will ease the impacts of the carbon tax on Australians. I do not know what dictionary it is reading from, but my dictionary says that you do not need to pay compensation if you are not hurting people. The carbon tax is a bad tax. It is being implemented poorly. It is just another example of the inability of a Labor government to effectively manage our economy and keep a check on cost-of-living increases.

My side of the House understands the cost-of-living pressures that are facing Queenslanders and we are willing to make the tough decisions to get our economy back on track—to cut the waste and to ease the cost of living for all Queenslanders. As I was campaigning in the lead-up to the recent election, I regularly took the opportunity to meet with commuters at railway stations and bus interchanges to talk

with them about the cost-of-living issues that were hurting them. There was anger from many commuters but, more than anger, all too often there was a resignation from commuters that they would just have to get used to the fact that public transport fares would keep going up under a Labor government without their services or facilities improving noticeably to justify the increases. The increases in their fares were just disappearing into that Labor economic black hole. But it was not just commuters who I would talk to. I would talk to seniors, I would talk to other residents around the electorate—people who could not afford anymore to leave their homes more than once a week just to get their groceries. They could not afford to catch the bus anywhere, they could not afford a taxi, because for them the cost of living was just getting out of hand.

It is for the sake of residents like those that I am pleased to support this bill today. My government colleagues who were part of the previous parliament in this House rightfully opposed the disgraceful cost-of-living increases that Labor members sat in this House and voted for. Our government understands the cost-of-living pressure that is constantly felt by residents such as those in my electorate and in others. That is why we went to the last election with a plan to ease the cost of living for all Queenslanders. We went to the election with a plan to reduce the red tape that is strangling so many businesses in my electorate. We outlined a plan that will support and empower businesses. We were the only party that went to the election with a fully costed plan to reduce water and electricity prices for residents in my electorate and in others. We went to the election with a plan to reinstate stamp duty concessions because their removal was crippling the real estate industry and crippling homeowners.

What we see in this bill before the House is a plan to help Queensland businesses. This bill is the first step in delivering on our commitment to provide payroll tax relief to Queensland businesses. The raising of the payroll tax exemption from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in our first months of government is a positive step that will improve the prospects of many small businesses across my electorate. We also see in this bill a plan to support our real estate industry and homeowners.

Prior to the recent election it was a pleasure to have the now Attorney-General and Minister for Justice visit the Pine Rivers electorate to talk with local real estate agents about the pressures on their industry. It is no surprise that these real estate agents were delighted to see a future minister taking the time to listen to them. The desire to listen and to consult was something that they had not seen from the previous Labor government in many years. Those Pine Rivers real estate agents were telling us how the bottom fell out of the market the very day that Labor's tax on the family home came into effect.

A government member: They are good people, too.

Mr HOLSWICH: Absolutely. It was a bad decision from an economically incompetent Labor government and I am pleased to support this important legislation that overturns this counterproductive tax on the family home. I am also pleased to support legislation that will save Pine Rivers residents an average of \$120 a year on their electricity bills. Again, we are delivering on a commitment to Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living and reverse some of the hurt that was inflicted on them by the previous Labor government. As part of that commitment, we will also ensure that all Queenslanders know the full impact of the carbon tax on their electricity bill. There will be no hiding for Labor when its carbon tax starts to bite. This legislation will ensure that this flawed tax will be exposed for what it is: just another attempt to squeeze money out of the pockets of everyday Australians to cover up Labor's economic flaws.

This bill is an important step forward for Queensland. The measures contained within this bill are the first steps towards the delivery of our commitment to Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living. Only the now Newman government went to the election with a plan for Queensland. Only the Newman government has the economic credentials to reduce waste and debt in Queensland. In this House, only the Newman government is acting on behalf of all Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living. So while Labor members of this parliament continually refuse to apologise or try to correct the legacy of debt and waste that they presided over, our government is getting on with the job of building a strong economy, cutting waste and reducing the cost of living for residents and businesses in Pine Rivers and all across Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise in this House to join in this debate on the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I congratulate the Treasurer on introducing this bill as one of the first pieces of legislation that this, the 54th Parliament, will debate. For far too long the people of Bulimba and in other areas of Queensland have been hit hard by the rising cost of living that the additional taxes, fees and charges introduced by the previous Labor government has had on their household budget such as the increase in household power bills where under the former Labor government in the past five years the average Queensland family has been hit by an extra \$700, or the fact that Queensland is now the most expensive place in which to own and operate a family motor vehicle. This has come about through Labor breaking an election promise in 2009 to not introduce the 8.2 cent per litre fuel tax. Then we have the cost of registering a six-cylinder motor vehicle, which under Labor has skyrocketed by \$107 to \$443. And digging even deeper, we have driver's licence fees that will double from being a little over \$73 to \$152.50 to cover the cost of introducing a smart card licence system that is just not smart at all.

On top of making our state the most expensive in which to own and operate a car, the former Labor government then hit the public transport users as well. Over 2010-11, fares increased by 35 per cent, plus we had another 15 per cent increase in January and two more 15 per cent increases were scheduled. All of those rising costs have been a factor due to the incompetence of the successive Beattie-Bligh Labor governments, which lurched from disaster to disaster. Let me remind the House of just some of those disasters: the Traveston Crossing Dam, \$600 million; the Wyaralong Dam, \$350 million; the Tugun desalination plant, \$1.1 billion; and the water recycling plant, which just racked up another couple of million. It scares me and it scared the people of Bulimba and the rest of Queensland that these project failures were just rolled out one after the other after the other and that not one minister in the former Labor government was ever held accountable—not one. But the failures and the incompetence did not stop there. No, not at all. Twenty minutes is just not long enough to discuss and outline all the failures and poorly designed programs that have cost each and every taxpayer in Queensland.

I have not even touched on the IT bungles, like the Health payroll debacle that will now cost over \$1.2 billion as reported by the Minister for Health yesterday. All up, Labor left Queensland with a debt legacy of \$62 billion this year that will rise to \$85 billion in 2014-15. This debt will cost the taxpayers of Queensland \$600,000 in interest payments alone every hour of every day. Imagine what that money could do for our front-line services—the extra nurses, the extra teachers, the extra police on the beat. All of Queensland is still waiting for the apology from what is left of the Labor Party in that corner. I doubt, however, that those who are left of the Labor Party have it in them to apologise to each and every Queenslander, young or old.

It surprises me that some circles could even suggest that those so-called popular Labor members who lost their seats on 24 March were hard done by. They were an equal party to the position we are faced with today, a massive debt on the back of a resources boom, the loss of our AAA credit rating and the only state that has had that important measure of credibility taken away from us. They had a duty to protect the people of their electorates, and it does not matter how hard it appears they may have worked: the simple fact is that they voted for each and every one of those cost-of-living increases, be it a new tax or a new fee, or they voted on those white elephants of flawed infrastructure projects or poorly designed programs that are costing hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest payments alone every hour of every day.

I look forward to doing my duty as the member for Bulimba and delivering the cost-of-living relief that we, the LNP, promised during the recent election campaign. The Newman LNP government has been given a very clear and overwhelming mandate from the people of Queensland to urgently address—I repeat, urgently address—the cost-of-living pressures and constant attacks on the family budget that people had to endure under the former Labor government.

Debate, on motion of Mr Dillaway, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.01 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 19 June 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (6.01 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Sisters Inside



Mrs SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (6.01 pm): The contrast of largesse shown by this government in its plan for a new 'Taj Mahal' for the Premier and his ministers on the one hand and the disdain and complete lack of empathy and human kindness shown to the most marginalised, disadvantaged group in our state on the other is staggering. I refer to the Aboriginal women incarcerated in the Townsville Correctional Centre. I have toured many Aboriginal settlements in my time as a member. I have seen the look of sadness and despair in the eyes of some of the women, some with severe disfigurement who have suffered domestic violence often due to alcohol abuse by their partner. They are mothers and grandmothers who want the best for their children, but due to a lack of opportunity or education or due to their place of birth sometimes women have the cards stacked against them.

It is in the Townsville Correctional Centre that you will encounter a high number of Aboriginal women who may have been imprisoned for prostitution, petty crime or violence defending themselves against the abuse of a partner. Whatever their crime, they are not worthless and they are certainly not beyond rehabilitation. Sisters Inside has a very long history of giving practical support, loving care and understanding to women prisoners and it offers them education, counselling and support, particularly following their release. They ensure these women have every opportunity to turn their life around.

Twelve months ago, in response to a tragic suicide, Sisters Inside was granted \$120,000 to provide specialised services to these women. The statistics show that 80 per cent of the women in this prison are Aboriginal and 90 per cent of those women cannot read or write. This means they suffer isolation and they are often victims of sexual and physical violence which sometimes commences in their early teens. Some drown their despair in alcohol and end up in prison. Debbie Kilroy, CEO of Sisters Inside, has walked in their shoes.

By the first quarter of this year, 188 women had been assisted. I believe that many in this House would have seen the report by Jessica van Vonderen on *7.30 QLD* where a former prisoner, Renee, was interviewed. Imprisoned for a third time on drug and prostitution charges, her life has now been turned around thanks to Sisters Inside. In my estimation there is little to surpass the story of a life rescued and a family reunited. Renee is not alone.

If the Premier is truly looking for savings in his budget bottom line, he should look at the savings in reducing the incidence of recidivism, the reduction in police and court time and, for his personal satisfaction, to know he has reduced the trauma caused to the children and, finally, the sheer joy of seeing one more family rehabilitated and living back in the community. Accept the challenge, Premier, and fund this vital service.

Crackerjack Carnival

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.04 pm): I rise to pay tribute to a sensational community event held in the electorate of Chatsworth—the famous Crackerjack Carnival. In fact, last weekend was the 38th consecutive annual event and it is held rain, hail or shine. The weather over the last weekend dampened the oval and grounds but not the strong community spirit that this event attracts. The annual Crackerjack Carnival unites several thousand people over three festive days to raise funds to support a bedrock institution of Brisbane, the Clem Jones Centre. The complex at the corner of Creek Road and Stanley Road, Carina, lies in the heart of the Chatsworth electorate and has played an important role in Brisbane's recreational and sporting culture for the past 55 years. It is a hub for countless sporting and community groups, supporting over 7,000 registered players across various sports in addition to attracting more than 100,000 visitors to the facilities each year.

The Crackerjack Carnival was born of a dream of former Lord Mayor Clem Jones, who envisioned an affordable community festival that showcased the best of what our local Chatsworth area offers. Simultaneously, it financially benefits the more than 20 clubs that call the Clem Jones Centre home by assisting in the ongoing maintenance and upgrade of facilities. This fantastic sporting complex, under the auspices of the Camp Hill Carina Welfare Association, is a nursery of sporting talent and there are clubs to cater for a wide variety of sporting and leisure pursuits including the Carina Leagues Club, Southern Districts Basketball Association, Mayfield Netball Club and Thompson Estate Athletics, to name just a few.

The true heart and soul of any electorate are its people and the Crackerjack Carnival is the annual showpiece which brings all of these fantastic Chatsworth sporting and leisure clubs together. Over the last 38 years, hundreds of volunteers have willingly given up their time and services in order to bring the Crackerjack Carnival to life around late May or early June. Indeed, the community spirit of the Chatsworth electorate continues to shine. I would like to publicly acknowledge Mr Steve Heald and the Clem Jones Centre management committee for the excellent job they do year after year.

It is important to note the social aspect that this annual Chatsworth event provides families. The Crackerjack Carnival affords a low-cost alternative for many families with young children who may not necessarily be able to afford the Brisbane Ekka, which is held a couple of months later in the year. Given the strain on family budgets over the last few years with cost-of-living pressures, the Crackerjack Carnival brings families together.

As evidenced by the LNP's Get Back into the Game Program, we encourage young people to play sport as it is an important community health objective. It gives boys and girls the opportunity to learn sporting and social skills and, most importantly, the essence of good teamwork which assists them with life skills long after they hang up the footy boots or sports shoes. I salute the efforts of all those members of the Chatsworth community involved with the Crackerjack Carnival and long may it reign once the smell of dagwood dogs and fairy floss has gone.

Busways

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (6.07 pm): When the next stage of the Northern Busway from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to Kedron opens on 18 June, it will be another piece of world-class public transport infrastructure delivered by Labor. When the Labor government was elected in 1998 there was not one single kilometre of busway in Brisbane. Thanks to our investment over many years there are now more than 26 kilometres of dedicated busway in Brisbane. The new \$444 million extension of the Northern Busway from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to Kedron will complete the existing South East Busway to Eight Mile Plains and the Eastern Busway from the University of Queensland to Langlands Park. For people in the northern suburbs of Brisbane this new piece of infrastructure means bus services will be more frequent and more reliable.

The new Northern Busway was conceived, funded and delivered by Labor. The new services that will run on the busway were designed, planned and funded by Labor. However, sadly, this may be the last piece of busway opened for some time. The future growth of the busway network is at risk under the Newman government. We all know that the Premier's passion is building road infrastructure for private vehicles, except on the Warrego Highway. Despite spending billions of dollars building tunnels and road bridges that nobody used during his time as Lord Mayor, the Premier did not contribute a single cent to the construction of Brisbane's busways, which carried more than 70 million people in 2010-11. In fact, one of his major contributions was to remove bus lanes from Coronation Drive and Ann Street, meaning buses sit for longer in traffic.

The Minister for Transport and Main Road's recent announcement that he would strip funding out of QTRIP has put at risk \$182 million in critical capital funding for busway projects, including \$10 million in critical maintenance on the South East Busway, Eastern Busway and Inner Northern Busway; \$23 million to extend the South East Busway to Rochedale; \$39 million in planning and land purchases for the extension of the Northern Busway from Kedron to Bracken Ridge; and \$110 million for the construction of the busway station at Carindale, as well as busway approaches.

The Premier and the minister cannot spin these facts and the record speaks for itself. Only Labor can deliver public transport infrastructure like the new Northern Busway.

University of Southern Queensland, Underground Water Research

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.10 pm): I rise to inform the House about the University of Southern Queensland and some of its attributes. The University of Southern Queensland has a proud history of providing tertiary education on the Darling Downs. In fact, it has been one of the largest providers of distance education for people all over the world, which has proven great for a lot of people who are first-in-family attendees at university. The university has many divisions. One area in which it has been very successful in recent years has been fibre composite research. They are conducting research into alternative forms of structural supports and many other things as well, such as incorporating bird feathers into skin and incorporating bird feathers into bridges. It is a fascinating area of research. Hopefully it will provide some very sustainable options for the construction industry and other industries in the future.

One area of research that is not being done at the University of Southern Queensland is underground water research. Some minor underground water research has been done, but I believe that with the coal seam gas industry expanding in the Darling Downs area we need to set up an institute for underground water research at the University of Southern Queensland, so that this critical resource of the people of the Darling Downs and Toowoomba can correctly be understood. Its impacts must be truly understood and communicated to a society that is very concerned with growing the coal seam gas industry.

This will be a great opportunity, as the University of Southern Queensland is the only university in the country where its state, federal and local government boundaries cover underground water in terms of the Great Artesian Basin, the Condamine alluvium and other aquifers, the headwaters of the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as the coal seam gas industry, open-cut coalmining, irrigators and cotton farmers. There is no better place in Queensland to base research into underground water.

I will be working hard with the minister and others to ensure that underground water is fully understood and that its implications are understood to ensure that we can get the full benefits from the coal seam gas industry and minimise any impact it will have on our underground water. I condemn the Labor Party for all it did in charging ahead with that industry without taking care of this critical resource for the people of the Darling Downs.

Disability Services

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.13 pm): I put on the record my appreciation to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for her recent visit to the electorate of Gladstone. It was a pleasure to have her up there. The minister visited, in part, to join with us in highlighting domestic violence and its removal from our communities. The celebrations were hosted by the Department of Communities, I think very successfully.

The minister took the opportunity to meet with her departmental staff and to visit a wonderful service called Mainstay, where people with disabilities can have respite. Judy Young, from our community, has a young adult son with a disability. She started Mainstay because she understood the pressures on a family with a child with a disability and how much respite can mean to the survival of the family in the longer term. The Mainstay facilities are fully utilised and there is a long booking list. During that visit I spoke with the minister about the need to duplicate that service to provide a greater opportunity for respite. Often families with disabilities have to go to Rockhampton or other places to have even a few days break.

We also need greater opportunities for people to access independent living facilities. I spoke with the disabilities minister in the previous government about an opportunity that arose when a slab-on-ground motel came on the market. It needed modification, but it was a great opportunity to provide some independent living facilities for people in the electorate and the district to access as they reach adulthood so that they can live independently but with services provided. That opportunity was lost, but the need is still there.

I will use the example of one family, although I will not identify them. They have a young adult son. He would be in his 30s. He has some challenging behaviours, but nonetheless is a wonderful young man. To access independent living, he had to go to Rockhampton. So committed are his parents that his mum has to travel to Rockhampton each time he has a medical visit, because the son feels disadvantaged and a little afraid because of the medical procedures. She drives a lot of kilometres to get to Rockhampton. If we had an independent living facility in Gladstone, many families would benefit from that opportunity. We have a number of other facilities that help people with intellectual disabilities as well as physical disabilities: the Haven, Rosella Park School and the Gladstone Community Hub provide assistance. Again I thank the minister. I look forward to working with her to provide these much needed facilities.

Carers Queensland

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (6.16 pm): Tonight I rise to speak about a group in my electorate. Many members will be familiar with its work; perhaps they are one of these very special people. I refer to Carers Queensland. Recently I was notified by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice that Carers Queensland had received funding under the Gambling and Community Benefit Fund, round 71. Carers Queensland had requested and received funding for a wheelchair lift and computers to continue its excellent work and allow better access to its facilities in Camp Hill. The Gambling and Community Benefit Fund provides one-off grants to not-for-profit community organisations.

Since 1994, over \$534 million has been given to groups to purchase items and help expand services to reach members of our communities who may require extra support outside the traditional government programs. In many instances, those groups work with government departments to assist the members of our society who need extra support. Carers Queensland is the peak body that represents the diverse needs and interests of carers in Queensland and is dedicated to advancing the recognition of the carer's role.

Carers Queensland contacted my office to express how thrilled they were to receive this money and outline the huge benefits it would provide to the organisation. It is incredible how, in relative terms, such a small amount of money can make such an enormous difference to those wonderful community groups that provide so much support to members of our community who often get overlooked. This group has operated for over twenty years, but the work of some of the people in the organisation has gone on for a lifetime.

Many people will become carers over the course of their lives. For some it is a temporary situation; for others it goes on for far longer. In a lot of cases, the work of carers is unpaid as they provide support for family members and friends who have a disability, chronic condition, terminal illness, are frail or have intellectual/mental impairments. Here are some quick statistics: in 2009 in Queensland, 536,000 people or about 14 per cent of the population were carers; 20 per cent of carers are aged between 45 and 54 years, which is the largest proportion of carers; and there are 78,000 young carers in Queensland.

These statistics are likely to increase as people in Queensland now live longer and our population ages. Many of the people who work in the Carers Queensland office are also carers themselves. As the policy document for the organisation states—

Carers are everybody's business and communities need to recognise how important they are as the chances of us all becoming a carer is increasing all the time. By valuing and understanding carers, we are also valuing and increasing our understanding of the people that they care for.

I am proud to have such a wonderful group in my electorate of Greenslopes. They take their role in the community very seriously and use funds in an efficient and careful manner. I commend Carers Queensland.

Horizon Foundation

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (6.19 pm): Right across this state of Queensland there are many amazing not-for-profit groups that provide vital services for those with disabilities, their families and carers. Tonight I would like to commend to the House the fabulous work of a well-respected community organisation in my own electorate, the Horizon Foundation. For those members who are unaware, the Horizon Foundation is one of Queensland's leading and most respected disability organisations. Based in Capalaba for more than 30 years, Horizon has a workforce of over 120. Recently, *Business Review Weekly* recognised Horizon Foundation in its 'Top 50 great places to work' list.

The Horizon Foundation is one of the gems of our community, assisting over 1,300 people with disabilities each year through a diverse range of services and programs that include employment and training, family and individual support programs, business enterprise centres and post-schooling support services. In particular, I would like the House to take note of two programs that Horizon provides. First, Clear Horizon provides the very important transition from school to adult life for those with disabilities. Operating in the Redlands and the wider Brisbane region, Clear Horizon provides a range of innovative and customer focused, post-school programs delivered via friendly four-person groups and one-on-one services that are tailored to meet the particular needs of the individual.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the innovative Baby Bridges Program, which is currently expanding across the state and which aims to fill the gap in support services for families of young children with disabilities. The program, the brainchild of Horizon Foundation staff member Geraldine McKinnon, actually started as a pilot project almost seven years ago. This project has been so successful in meeting the challenges faced by families with a child with disabilities that it is now operating in seven—and soon to be nine—other locations around the state. Baby Bridges is aimed at families with children of up to five years of age who have been diagnosed with, or are under diagnosis for, recognised disabilities. The 12-week program consists of play and therapy sessions for the children and information, training and networking sessions for parents to help them negotiate the disability sector maze. Baby Bridges is free for eligible families and provides a vital service that 'bridges' the service gap for parents of babies and young children with a disability.

Horizon's Baby Bridges Program operates in Logan, Ipswich, Carrara, Warner, Dalby, Mackay and Noosa, with Townsville and Cairns soon to join the list. I respectfully request members for these areas to seek out this program and see for themselves the wonderful work of the Horizon Foundation and give them their every support.

Rural Fire Service, Volunteering

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (6.22 pm): I rise tonight to speak on an issue important not only to my electorate of Burnett but also to the whole of Queensland. I speak of the issue of volunteering in the Queensland Rural Fire Service. The Queensland Rural Fire Service is a fantastic community focused organisation that has been powered over 50 years of service by its hardworking and dedicated volunteers. Rural fire brigades across Queensland service up to 93 per cent of the state and provide services such as fire mitigation, volunteer training and community education to rural and semirural areas across Queensland.

Even outside of rural communities, the Rural Fire Service has made a significant contribution, including during the floods that affected the south-east corner in 2011, with volunteers and appliances assisting in Brisbane. That is an effort worth mentioning and noting here in this House. It is an organisation that should certainly be proud of its positive contribution to Queensland's rural communities.

As the member for Burnett, I am extremely proud of the 80 rural fire brigades and 2,355 volunteers that service the Burnett-Bundaberg region. However, the future of the organisation hinges on the continued strength in the growth of its volunteers. This is why I speak tonight. I wish to use my time today to urge all members of the Burnett community to consider a rewarding volunteering opportunity with their local rural fire brigade. Being a volunteer in the Queensland Rural Fire Service is rewarding not only to the volunteer but also to their rural community and communities like it across Queensland. As a volunteer you learn new and important skills and develop friendships and connections within the

brigade that will last a lifetime. It is the spirit of service that bonds volunteer firemen, and it should be that spirit of service that attracts new volunteers to the service. That is why I fully support the recent initiatives taken by the local brigade to recruit new volunteers and educate the local community on their important role in fire management.

I would urge all Burnett residents to consider a future of volunteering in their local rural fire brigade, as volunteering is a noble cause and is vital to the Bundaberg-Burnett region. With fire season soon approaching, the need for volunteers is crucial. The long-term security of the service hinges on younger residents putting their hands up to volunteer. Younger residents in the Burnett-Bundaberg region are best placed to develop the service well into the future. They have the ability to use social media to attract volunteers and utilise new avenues of recruitment and they can continue to innovate the service in the long term. The opportunities available for younger Burnett residents are opportunities that will assist them for life and will help develop the region for years to come.

In conclusion, I encourage young people in the Bundaberg-Burnett region to log on, call up or do whatever they can to find out more information about becoming a volunteer in the rural fire brigade. The rewards for the volunteers and our community certainly outweigh the effort of signing up. It is a proud tradition to be a rural fire fighter.

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Report, Government Response; Carbon Tax

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (6.25 pm): I commend the Newman government on a very timely and responsible delivery of the government response to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry final report. As all members of the House would know, the 2010-11 floods were a tragic and devastating event for many Queenslanders. I want to assure my constituents that I have not forgotten how the floods impacted our community. I also have not forgotten how so many good people, families and business owners in suburbs like Fairfield, Moorooka, Rocklea, Salisbury, Yeerongpilly and Yeronga suffered during the floods. Many of my constituents are still struggling to rebuild their homes, re-establish their businesses and essentially recover from our state's worst ever natural disaster.

I am sure that the Newman LNP government's clear determination to implement the flood inquiry recommendations will help bring some comfort to the people in my electorate and to all Queenslanders. I want to highlight that these people have endured enough pain, but they are about to cop more—pain of a different kind, thanks to the federal Labor government's carbon tax. People, families and businesses throughout Queensland will soon be forced to weather this disastrous tax at a time when they have very little or no capacity to withstand it.

Just a few weeks ago, the President of the South West Chamber of Commerce, Ms Alice Langford, was quoted in my electorate's local print media as saying—

A third of south side businesses have been forced to close since last year's devastating floods.

Of concern, she also said—

Those who had managed to stay afloat were still struggling and many feared the carbon tax would cripple them further.

The sad truth is that the former state Labor government drove up the cost of living for hardworking people and families and soon their federal counterparts will drive up the cost of doing business. This will inevitably be passed on to hardworking people because business is already struggling. If state Labor genuinely wanted to make a positive contribution to the 54th Parliament it would immediately call on its mates down in Canberra to abort the carbon tax in the interests of people in my electorate, this state and our nation.

Mackay and District Catholic Debutante Ball

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.28 pm): On Friday, 25 May I had the pleasure of attending the 80th Annual Mackay and District Catholic Debutante Ball, held at the North Mackay Bowls Club. The official party included Bishop of Rockhampton, Father Brian Heenan; Catholic clergy from throughout the district; principals of Catholic schools; the Mackay regional mayor, Councillor Deirdre Comerford and her husband, Brett; ball president Russell Gardner; matron of honour Kaylene Gardner; hostess Maxine Allen; as well as the member for Mirani, Ted Malone, and his wife, Mary, and the member for Whitsunday, Jason Costigan; and my wife, Erin.

Twenty-four debutantes were presented to Bishop Brian Heenan by matron of honour Mrs Kaylene Gardner. For the past 21 years Bishop Brian has greeted 808 of the 875 debutantes and their partners. There have only been two occasions when he has not greeted debs. On these occasions they were greeted by former Governor of Queensland Leneen Forde and Father John Grace. This was Father Brian's final debutante ball as he is due to retire at the age of 75. Father Brian's humility and ability to speak to anyone he comes across helps him to relate easily to the younger generation and they to him.

The term 'debutante ball' derives from the French word 'debutante', meaning female beginner. It is believed that the debutante ball originated in Queen Victoria's time. As she ascended the throne when she was 17, it became a tradition to present girls from upper class to the Queen or King around that age. The court dress was traditionally a white short-sleeved evening dress. After the debutantes were presented they would then attend the social season. They would attend events such as Wimbledon and the rowing at Henley-on-Thames, as well as high society social parties. The last debutantes were presented to Queen Elizabeth II in 1958 before Her Majesty abolished this royal ceremony.

In Mackay from the 1890s, all lodges—including the Masonic Lodge, the Oddfellows community and the Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society—held balls where they would present debutantes. These balls were used to raise funds for people who could not afford required health care and funerals, as there were no government-run hospitals. From these beginnings Mackay has continued to have an association with various debutante balls. Today there continues to be many deb balls in the Mackay district, including the Sarina deb ball, hosted by the Sarina Rotary Club; the Pioneer Valley Anglican deb ball; and the Pioneer State High School and the Mackay North State High School deb balls.

In the past 80 years there have been close to 3,000 debutantes and their partners make their debut at the Catholic deb ball. Since 1932, the ball has been held in May every year, except in 1942 when the Battle of the Coral Sea was imminent. The committee is to be commended on the organisation for the ball and the wonderful preparation of the debs and their partners. I wish to specially note the tireless contribution of Berenice Wright, Roberta Overend and Pauline Young who have been involved for about 22 years each. Many of the other committee members have also been involved for 10 years. I again commend the debutantes and their partners as well as the organising committee.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, 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