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THURSDAY, 2 AUGUST 2012

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Contempt of Parliament by a Minister

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.30 am): Madam Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. I draw Madam Speaker's attention to a matter I intend to refer to her because I believe it could constitute a contempt of the parliament. Yesterday I received correspondence from the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, Minister for Health, in relation to a motion he passed in this House on 12 July 2012. It is my belief that the minister's letter is in breach of standing order 266(9) of the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. As such, I refer the matter to you, Madam Speaker, for your consideration. I respectfully request you consider whether this is a matter where Minister Springborg should be referred to the Ethics Committee to consider whether he is in contempt of the parliament. I further advise that I will be writing to you, Madam Speaker, about this matter.

Madam SPEAKER: I will await your letter.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition lodged and e-petition sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

Public Housing

Mrs Miller, a paper and an e-petition, from 2,766 petitioners, requesting the House to guarantee that no tenants will be disadvantaged by the changes to public housing; rent rises will not place further pressure on families and individuals already struggling to pay bills; individuals and families living in the dwellings identified as under-occupied be allocated a suitable roof over their heads in the same community where they choose to live now; and that the changes will not result in the use of private-sector management of public housing [\[649\]](#), [\[650\]](#).

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

Confucius Classrooms

736 petitioners, requesting the House to prevent the establishment of Confucius Classrooms in Queensland schools and ensure the Chinese syllabus for Queensland schools does not support the Chinese Communist Party's 'propaganda by omission' by ignoring topics censored by the CCP or by teaching only the CCP Perspective [\[651\]](#).

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Townsville Community Crime Forum, Petition

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.33 am): Madam Speaker, as you know, my government recently held its first community cabinet in Townsville. During this visit I was provided with a petition from the Townsville Community Crime Forum expressing support for boot camps as a way of dealing with juvenile crime. Unfortunately the petition is a non-conforming petition and does not meet parliamentary guidelines, so it is not able to be formally lodged in that regard. But given that almost 5,400 people have taken the time to sign it, supporting boot camps, I am pleased to table the petition to place the information on the public record.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition supporting boot camps [\[652\]](#).

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.33 am): This Friday Queensland will celebrate the official opening of Brisbane's new home for the Supreme Court and District Court. As all members would be aware, 2012 is the diamond jubilee of our Head of State, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. In recognition of this historic occasion—coinciding with the opening of the new courthouse—the Attorney-General and I thought it most appropriate that this new landmark building be named in Her Majesty's honour.

Queensland was named after Her Majesty's great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria, who was the only other British monarch to have reached a 60-year reign in 1897. Accordingly, the Attorney-General and I have made representations to Her Majesty to request approval that Queensland's new law courts be named in her honour. I am pleased to advise the House today that I have now received a copy of a letter from the Office of the Official Secretary of the Governor-General confirming Her Majesty's approval regarding the naming of the law courts. I am pleased therefore to announce that the new law courts building in Brisbane is to be named the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 July 2012, from Mr Mark Fraser, Acting Official Secretary to the Governor-General, to Air Commodore Mark Gower, Official Secretary, Office of the Governor of Queensland, regarding the approval of the Queen of the name of the new law courts building in Brisbane [653].

I note that the original planning for this was initiated by the Borbidge government back in the nineties, but it was the Beattie government who made the decision to proceed with this \$570 million project, which officially started on 6 October 2008, and its completion has been much anticipated. The Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law represent a significant investment in the future of law and order in our great state. This is one of the largest and most impressive court buildings in Australia.

The Newman government is proud to deliver this final addition to the city's legal precinct, which currently includes the State Law Building, the Brisbane Magistrates Court and the Queensland Police Service headquarters. The Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law will house up to 45 courtrooms—13 more than the former courthouse. It will deliver safer, smarter justice, with increased trial capacity, tighter security and digital technology and enhanced facilities.

The former courthouse has served the state well and housed a number of very significant and large court proceedings, but it passed its use-by date some time ago. Some significant cases include former Labor minister Gordon Nuttall, Dr Jayant Patel and more recently Max Sica.

The LNP has a strong law and order agenda—already we have appointed a new Childrens Court magistrate for Brisbane—

Ms Palaszczuk: Cutting the court reporters; they are all talking about it.

Mr NEWMAN:—we have filled a vacancy at the Queensland Court of Appeal; we will be appointing a new Supreme Court justice and we have increased the minimum sentences for murder, repeat child sex offenders and serious assaults on police—

Ms Palaszczuk: They are all talking to us about it.

Mr NEWMAN:—all initiatives that were either opposed by or received a very lukewarm response from those interjecting opposite right now. It is this sort of decisive action that Queenslanders want when it comes to law and order, and the new courts of law will be pivotal to the administration in justice in Queensland for years to come.

Last year marked the 150th anniversary of the Queensland Supreme Court's establishment in 1861, so this is also a very timely development. Chief Justice Paul de Jersey and the judiciary deserve special mention and thanks for their expert input over the past four years. Madam Speaker, Friday's opening heralds the arrival of a new era for the Queensland justice system.

Abbot Point Coal Terminal

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.37 am): The Newman government made its position very clear before the election that we would grow the Queensland economy. Since the election we have been getting on with the job of building Queensland's economy and getting Queensland back on track. We have been getting on with the job of implementing our four-pillar plan to rebuild the state.

This government is focused on providing the right incentives for business and industry to be able to make the investment decisions that will benefit all Queenslanders in an environment that will always be protected. That is why as Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning I have insisted on a more sensible approach to the proposed Abbot Point coal-loading expansion and the two rail corridors to service the new mines in the Galilee and Bowen basins.

Today I want to inform the House of the latest development in our effort to ensure that the vital coal port of Abbot Point can grow and expand in a sensible and balanced incremental way. In partnership with the North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation, I have appointed a facilitator to test coal companies' appetite to invest in new coal-loading facilities at Abbot Point and to establish the basis on which that investment would be attractive to industry. I have appointed Mr Barry Golding—a man with more than 45 years experience in the mining industry and infrastructure development—to meet with coal companies to discuss their immediate and longer term capacity requirements and find solutions that business will embrace.

In coming weeks, and in conjunction with government officers and the North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation, Mr Golding will meet with coal companies to discuss their upcoming plans and their needs for future port capacity. The focus now will shift to the incremental expansion of port capacity to Abbot Point to meet future demand and to decide how that incremental expansion can be planned and, more importantly, how it can be funded in a sensible, economical way.

The government has a preference for multiuser terminals as a way to meet short- to medium-term development for as many players as possible. Discussions will be held with companies identified with the previous multicargo facility proposal and other interested parties regarding the scale and staging of additional infrastructure development at Abbot Point. Discussions will also be held on preferred development and commercial models to bring that expansion forward and to make the facilities a reality. We want to see port capacity built up incrementally in a scaled way to meet real, actual demand from miners. We believe there are some new opportunities to site stockpiles and other port related infrastructure beside the existing T1 and the planned T0 to T3 terminals, and Mr Golding will be actively discussing these proposals with industry.

The purpose of the Abbot Point State Development Area is to reinforce the future development of regions between Mount Isa, Townsville and Bowen as a triangle of industrial development and mineral processing. The scaled back developments at Abbot Point are consistent with the government's recently announced preferences for Galilee Basin rail infrastructure development, with proponents to now align their rail plans in one or both of two common rail corridors. Finding a workable solution regarding the Abbot Point coal-loading expansion is not only vital for existing coalminers but also for the new Galilee Basin proponents and for the future of Queensland's economy. It is an important part of getting on with the job of getting Queensland back on track.

Commission of Audit

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.41 am): During the last sitting week of this parliament, I outlined the government's interim response to the Commission of Audit report. In the government's response we identified a savings target of \$4 billion to 2014-15. The target is needed to stabilise debt at around \$85 billion, prevent debt from rising to \$100 billion and put Queensland back on a path to regain its AAA credit rating. The decisions we will outline in the budget on 11 September will not be easy, but they will be the result of the debt and deficit legacy left to us by the previous Labor government.

Members will remember that the independent advice contained in the Queensland Treasury incoming government brief that I have mentioned on a number of occasions in this House read—

Ms Palaszczuk: Table it.

Mr Mulherin: Table it.

Mr NICHOLLS: The temptation is so great when they say 'table it'. How about tabling your legal advice in relation to the IBM? How about doing that?

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members! I call the Treasurer.

Mr NICHOLLS: I remind members yet again of what the incoming Treasury brief said in relation to the state of Queensland's finances—Queensland's fiscal position and outlook is unsustainable and must be an urgent priority for government. Supported by the independent Commission of Audit's report, the government is heeding the advice and undertaking the fiscal repair necessary. Given the size of the task, all departments and agencies will participate in it. The government has made a range of savings measures public across various departments to ensure that people can get on with implementing our agenda, and we will ensure that no stone is left unturned.

Now for a little history: in the same week that Gordon Nuttall appeared at the bar to address the previous parliament, the previous Labor government introduced new electoral laws that drastically increased the amount of taxpayer funds going directly to political parties—so-called administration funding. I know this is a matter that the Premier is showing a great deal of interest in. Labor voted yet again to line its own pockets while the cost of living for everyday Queenslanders was rising.

The LNP voted against Labor's changes to the Electoral Act in opposition, and we still oppose them today. The increase in funding was twofold. For the first time, political parties were to receive administration funding and the formula per vote for funding was altered. The Newman government believes that Queenslanders should not pay for political parties' administrative costs at a time when the state is already feeling the burden of Labor's poor and reckless financial mismanagement.

Under the current parliamentary composition, the LNP—this government's party—would receive more than \$2 million in administrative funding per annum. Labor would receive \$581,000 or \$83,000 per MP. Katter's Australian Party would receive \$166,000 and parliaments' two Independents would each receive \$41½ thousand. I can inform the House that in the Newman government's first budget we will remove administration funding for political parties. This will save up to \$17.7 million over the forward estimates. This means a saving of around \$2.9 million in this financial year and, based on the forward estimates, taxpayers will save more than \$4.8 million in 2013-14, around \$4.9 million in 2014-15 and \$5.1 million in 2015-16.

This forms part of a broader ranging reform program, and I can inform the House that the Attorney-General will be preparing a discussion paper on broader electoral funding reform. Consultation will begin in the first half of 2013 on that broader reform process. It is important to note that this change will have the biggest impact on the LNP and this government given the members that were elected to this place in the last election.

Given the size of the savings target of over \$4 billion and the need to ensure that everyone contributes to the fiscal repair task, we cannot just be making tough decisions to let public servants go. We need to also look at our own house, and so we have made the decision—the hard decision—to stop using taxpayer funds to subsidise political parties' administration fees. We remain committed to finding the \$4 billion needed over the next three years to return the budget to a fiscal balance in 2014-15. Today's announcement is a prudent financial step that ensures everyone contributes to the task at hand.

Instrumental Music Programs, Private Funding

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.46 am): When the LNP came to office and opened the books, we saw a financial position that had the potential to become a crisis. We saw an unsustainable addiction to spending beyond our means. Consequently, we have had to make some hard decisions. Such was the extent of the required action we have had to cease funding to some meritorious programs with noble objectives run by outstanding Queenslanders. However, unlike the previous government, despite the difficulty of the situation, we did not just walk away.

When the decision was made to cease funding to the Fanfare music competition, a number of Queenslanders were disappointed. Rather than just fold and roll over, as would have happened in the past under the Labor government, this LNP government with the outstanding support of jazz great James Morrison put a call out to the business community to help us fund the program. I spoke on Tuesday in this place about the Newman government's willingness to explore innovative solutions including partnering with business.

I am pleased to inform the House that AEG Ogden, a company with a proud history of supporting Queensland venues and sporting teams and led by two proud Queenslanders, Harvey Lister—an Ashgrove boy, Mr Premier—and Rod Pilbeam, has put up its hand. AEG Ogden has committed \$150,000 over the next two years to partner with my department to ensure the 2014 Fanfare music competition and the 2013 MOST program for musical outstanding students will go ahead. With the financial and in kind support of AEG Ogden, this program will be bigger and better than ever. This is what happens when we bring together the strengths of government and the private sector in a strong and committed partnership.

We need to move away from the idea that either government pays or it does not happen. Government cannot and should not be the only source of funds for worthwhile programs. This is an example of how this government will work hard to achieve the right outcome, not simply throw money at a bad headline so it will go away. We are committed to building the Queensland economy. The business community, the vast majority of whom are good corporate citizens, recognises this fact. It recognises that both parties have things to offer and we are willing to work together to deliver for Queenslanders.

Olympic Games, Queensland Athletes

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.49 am): With the Olympics well and truly underway in London, Queensland athletes are again doing us proud through their courage and performance and their incredible strong representation in the Australian Olympic team. I can confirm to the House that one-quarter of the national squad is made up of Queenslanders, 106 of the top state athletes competing across 19 sports during these London Olympic Games. Queensland is again punching above its weight when it comes to elite sporting performances. Our high level of Olympic representation once again shows our national force, and I know that all Queenslanders are closely following the results of our athletes across a variety of exciting events at these games.

In the five full days of competition to date, I am pleased to report to the House that Queenslanders have now won seven medals in total, including one gold. Given that Australia's total medal count is currently nine, Queensland continues to shoulder our nation's sporting workload. In an impressive display of our dominance in the pool, 31 of the 47 members of the Olympic swimming squad are Queenslanders, eight of the nine synchronised swimmers are Queenslanders and six members of the women's water polo team are also Queenslanders.

In Australia's finest moment at the London games so far, the 4 x 100-metre women's freestyle relay gold medal winning team was, quite simply, Queensland all the way. Congratulations to Alicia Coutts, Cate Campbell, Melanie Schlanger and Brittany Elmslie on their magnificent golden win. Overnight, in the women's 4 x 200-metre freestyle relay, another all-Queensland team took out silver. Special mention goes to Alicia Coutts, who at this point is carrying not only Queensland but Australia—with one gold, two silver and a bronze medal to her name.

Our state also boasts a number of medal favourites still to compete including: Sally Pearson, athletics; Mitchell Watt, athletics; Mathew Belcher, sailing; Emma Moffatt, triathlon; and Michael Hepburn, cycling. The courage and determination already shown by Queensland athletes to get to this point is nothing short of inspiring. I have no doubt that the exceptional qualities of our athletes displayed over the course of these Olympics will inspire a new generation of Queenslanders to come.

The Newman government will continue to invest in the development of sport throughout Queensland. More than 80 per cent of Queensland athletes on the Olympic team are supported by the Queensland Academy of Sport, one of the best sporting institutes in this country. With more than half of the Queensland athletes making their Olympic debut in London, we can look forward to this tradition of success continuing into the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, the 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympic Games and of course our very own 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. When members of the House go away from the House today, I ask you to start inspiring young people because we need those who are aged 10 and 12 today to compete on the Gold Coast. I look forward to Queensland winning more gold medals in the future.

Queensland Health, Ambulance Ramping

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.52 am): Queensland's proud history of achievement in health has been forgotten after years of Labor mismanagement. In health, the LNP inherited inefficiencies, burdens and outdated, inflexible arrangements. The challenge is to get back to the basics of front-line health care. Ambulance ramping is not the creation of this government but rather its inheritance. Ambulance ramping and the simple resort to bypass in our emergency departments is unacceptable. For this government, upgrading the flow of patients through Queensland hospitals is a top priority and one we will tackle head-on.

Queensland Health is bedevilled with Labor legacies, but it does have quality staff and on this crucial question it has a way forward. Improvements are being made, but more needs to be done. In June 2012 the number of hours that Queensland emergency departments were on bypass was 8.1 per cent lower than in June 2011, but ramping does continue. Today, I announce the steps we will take to address the effect of this issue and the underlying causes of the problem.

Ambulance ramping occurs when beds or treatment areas are not immediately available in the ED to accept patients arriving by ambulance. It leads to bypass, where ambulances are redirected to EDs elsewhere. Addressing these problems requires a whole-of-hospital approach to improving the flow of patients through the entire facility—not just the emergency department. If patients are not treated and discharged from hospital wards in a timely manner, the consequences block access to in-patient beds and even the emergency department itself. To address these problems, I table the Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative report, known as MEDAI, prepared by Dr David Rosengren.

Tabled paper: Report titled 'Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative—a report on Ambulance Ramping in Metropolitan Hospitals', July 2012 [654].

Dr Rosengren is the director of emergency medicine at Greenslopes Private Hospital, chairman of the Emergency Medicine Research Foundation and a senior staff specialist emergency physician at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. He is an executive of the Queensland Faculty of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and has many years experience in clinical emergency medicine. His report sets out 15 recommendations for improvements to the way Queenslanders access hospitals, and it will be implemented in full.

Today I have written to the chairs of hospital and health boards advising them of the government's support for these recommendations and instructing that they be implemented as soon as possible. I have also requested the director-general to establish a group to implement the recommendations. Indeed, I did that in the last couple of weeks when I met with the director-general and Dr Rosengren. They will review best practice procedures, including offsets through saved overtime and other costs. The report recommends an end to the entire practice of hospital bypass from 1 January next year. According to MEDAI, no Queensland hospital should have the authority to divert ambulances

elsewhere. Senior level clinical initiative nurses will be introduced to all major emergency departments to improve the flow through the 'front doors' of our hospitals. The Queensland Ambulance Service was represented on the advisory committee that oversaw the report and the operational working group which engaged the experience of front-line practitioners. I am committed to helping drive these changes to improve access to our emergency departments.

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Housing and Public Works and ask that he keep his speech to two minutes.

Public Housing

 **Hon. BS FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (9.56 am): Members will be aware that I have put in place major public housing changes to try to address the crisis and make public housing sustainable in Queensland. Among those initiatives, I put in place an amnesty for public housing tenants to own up to any extra people who have been living in their subsidised homes rent free. Public housing rents are calculated on a household's income, so with not a single dollar in our budget for new public housing it is important that we identify all possible revenue.

I can advise the House today that more than 2,300 extra household members had been declared by tenants before the amnesty closed on Friday, 27 July. That is right—2,300 people who had been living rent free in public housing under the previous administration came forward. This has been a significant success in moving towards sustainable public housing in this state. The department is progressively processing the undeclared occupant forms so it is too early to calculate the exact amount of unpaid rent that this represents, but it is millions of dollars that should have been going into public housing and from now on will go into public housing. A very conservative estimate is that it is \$5 million—it is likely to be much more—per year each and every year. Some of these households have actually admitted to having up to four extra undeclared people living in their subsidised housing.

I believe the House and the community will join with me in welcoming the uptake of the amnesty by so many public housing tenants, but I regret to say there are thousands still living rent free in Queensland public housing. Part of our reform agenda to make public housing sustainable means that those who did not come forward will now in the future be required to pay back rent. These initiatives are going to help put roofs over the heads of many of the 30,000 or so households on the waiting list for social housing here in Queensland. Around 10,000 of those households are technically homeless. Whilst I have the opportunity, I want to assure public housing tenants that the rumours from ALP members opposite about forced evictions is nothing more than scaremongering and an attempt to exploit a very genuine effort on the part of this government to fix the mess that those opposite left in public housing and to make it sustainable to house desperately needy Queenslanders into the future.

MOTION

Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (9.59 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee inquire and report on the operation and performance of the Queensland Building Services Authority (QBSA) in its regulation of the industry, including the maintenance of proper standards in the industry.

That, in undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider:

- whether the performance of the QBSA achieves a balance between the interests of building contractors and consumers;
- whether the QBSA could make further changes in order to reduce regulations to lower the cost of building a home;
- the effectiveness of the QBSA to provide remedies for defective building work and to provide support, education and advice for both those who undertake building work and consumers;
- the governance arrangements of and between the board and the general manager;
- the effectiveness of the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme and its protections;
- whether the current licensing requirements of the QBSA are adequate and that there is sufficient auditing processes to maintain proper standards;
- the number of trades licensed by the QBSA and whether industry groups could take a greater role within QBSA in terms of licensing standards and procedures for their members; and
- examining opportunities for reform of the Authority with a view to enhanced assistance for both industry and consumers.

Further, that the committee consult with key industry groups including home builders and building contractors, industry participants and relevant experts.

Further, that the Committee report to the Parliament by 30 November, 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Referral to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (10.00 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee undertake a review of the Retirement Villages Act 1999 and in undertaking this review, the committee should consider whether the Act:

- provides adequate fair trading practice protections for residents; including providing appropriate material to enable informed decisions to be made;
- does not include unnecessary restrictions and provisions which increase the affordability of living in a Retirement Village;
- provides adequate certainty, accountability and transparency for residents in relation to their financial obligations, including the interests of residents in the event of a village closing down;
- provides sufficient clarity and certainty in relation to the rights and obligations of residents and scheme operators;
- should make provision for scheme operators to develop and adopt best practice standards in operating villages, or require operators to comply with mandatory standards or accreditation;
- adequately promotes innovation and expansion in the retirement village industry, avoids purely 'red tape' requirements, and facilitates the ongoing viability of villages;
- affords residents all reasonable opportunities to be involved, should they wish to be, in budgetary and other decisions affecting their financial obligations; and
- adequately provides a timely, informal and cost-effective process for resolving disputes between residents and scheme operators.

Further, the committee should take public submissions and consult with key industry groups, including retirement village scheme operators, residents and potential residents, industry participants and relevant experts.

Further, that the Committee report to the Parliament by 30 November 2012

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Reports

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House three reports of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: report No. 6, *Oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman*; report No. 7, *Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner*, and report No. 8, *Subordinate legislation tabled between 17 May 2012 and 19 June 2012*.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 6—Oversight of the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman [655].

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 7—Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner [656].

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 8—Subordinate Legislation tabled between 17 May 2012 and 19 June 2012 [657].

The first two reports relate to the committee's meetings with the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner as part of the committee's oversight functions of these statutory offices. In relation to its review of the Office of the Information Commissioner, the committee recommends an amendment to the Right to Information Act 2009 to allow the publication of the name of a person declared by the Information Commissioner to be a vexatious person. The last report examines subordinate legislation tabled in the House between 17 May 2012 and 19 June 2012 within the committee's areas of responsibility. The committee is satisfied that there are no significant issues arising. I thank everyone involved in the production of these reports. I commend the reports to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Madam SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.03 am.

Caltabiano, Mr M

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.03 am): I refer the Premier to the Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service, which states that chief executives have a responsibility to promote high ethical standards of behaviour. By continuing his directorships with Innovate and LNP donor company Infrastructure Delivery Australia, has director-general Michael Caltabiano breached this code and misled the government about his private business interests?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. It is a very reasonable question and I note the op. ed. piece in the *Courier-Mail* today, which probably attracted her interest in the first place. My position unequivocally is that the director-general has done the right thing. For the benefit of members opposite, who perhaps have not been involved in business before, I will provide a bit of background. It is very easy in this country to actually set up a proprietary limited company. You can go and buy one off the shelf and set it up. As I know myself after going through the process of restructuring my affairs in the fulfilment of my commitment to the people of Queensland, it is really hard to shut them down. It costs a lot of money, it takes a lot of time, you pay a lot of fees to lawyers and accountants—it goes on and on. During the entire period I was the Lord Mayor of Brisbane I was a shareholder and a director of a firm called Ultrex Consulting Services and yet for seven years Ultrex Consulting Services did nothing at all. That is essentially where the director-general is.

In terms of the director-general's activities and actions, when he first started in the job he met with the Integrity Commissioner and he sought that advice. On 22 May 2012, just to further clarify activities, Mr Caltabiano wrote to the director-general of the Premier's department and stated that he had finalised his activities in the companies Infrastructure Delivery Australia and Innovate. I have here a letter he wrote on 22 May 2012 to the director-general, which I table for the information of all members and particularly the Leader of the Opposition.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 May 2012, from Mr Michael Caltabiano, Director General, Department of Transport and Main Roads, to Mr Jon Grayson, Director General, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, regarding the finalisation of his private interests [658].

So where are we at now? The DG ceased all direct involvement and billing activities on 26 March 2012 for both his companies, Infrastructure Delivery Australia Pty Ltd and Innovate Pty Ltd. Since 26 March both companies have ceased operating—Innovate at the end of April and Infrastructure Delivery Australia. Since his appointment, the director-general has not used any departmental resources or work time to bring his company interests to closure. I do point out, as I have before, that prior to his appointment he had prebooked a trip to Germany. He had advised me and the director-general at the very beginning and sought our permission for him to continue that for his personal career development as a professional engineer. I think he has been completely open.

I hope that reassures the Leader of the Opposition. It is a fair question to ask in this place, but those are the key points in this matter. I make one final point: if that were not the case, I can tell honourable members right now that he would not be the director-general of the department anymore.

Caltabiano, Mr M

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister advise whether Mr Caltabiano disclosed his potential conflict of interest and his overseas trip to him or whether it was kept secret?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members on my right!

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn the members on my right. The minister is on his feet to answer the question. I call the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Obviously she was not listening to that very comprehensive answer given by the Premier during which he tabled that letter. Very clearly, when the director-general was appointed he spoke to both the Premier and the DG about his activities, as the opposition would know. In fact, at that time I was not the minister. So, no, at the time of his appointment he did not speak to me. You are obviously losing the time line here. Can I say—

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Stop the clock. Leader of the Opposition, please cease your interjections while a question is being answered. All matters are to be directed through the chair. I call the minister.

Mr EMERSON: As I said, the Premier has given a very clear, very concise, very informative answer to the previous question asked by the Leader of the Opposition—the same question that she has basically asked again. The reality is that the director-general met with the Integrity Commissioner and kept the Premier and the director-general of Premier and Cabinet fully informed of what he was doing. He has been very upfront. I back up what the Premier has just said: if he had done something wrong he would no longer be the director-general. The director-general has done the right thing in terms of informing the Integrity Commissioner, the Premier and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Construction Industry

Mr LATTER: My question without notice is to the Premier. Could the Premier please outline to the House how the government's work is raising confidence in the property sector in Queensland and in my electorate of Waterford? Are there any alternative views?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for the question. This government is determined to provide better planning, less red tape and a better deal for business all around so that we get the state back on track. As we have always said, the construction and property sector is one of the four economic pillars that will be vital to the Queensland economy, as well as to the future of Waterford and all electorates across this state.

As the member would be aware, Kerry Armstrong of LJ Hooker Commercial at Springwood has been serving the needs of the Waterford real estate industry for a number of years and is very well known locally. I understand that Mr Armstrong has had some very positive things to say about the government's new six-month plan and our continued focus on cutting red tape and working to free up activity in development, construction and real estate. He said—

What the industry needs is confidence, and that is what the government is delivering.

He supports us. But the member's local real estate agents are not the only ones pleased about the government's activities in getting this vital sector back on track. A recent Property Council of Australia media release states—

The reinstatement of the Principal Place of Residence transfer duty concession will enable more mobility in the marketplace, freeing up housing that no longer suits the needs of current owners.

What a surprise! With lower taxes and charges and reduced friction in transaction costs in the property sector, people actually will trade property. And that ultimately gets confidence going.

That complements the other initiatives the government has introduced, such as the appointment of the member for Mansfield as the Assistant Minister for Planning Reform, a construction industry go-to person, and the establishment of Infrastructure Queensland and Projects Queensland. The Property Council has urged us to continue the reforms we have started, and continue those reforms we will—unlike our predecessors, who sat there and tied up construction, hampered development and prevented new projects.

The most ironic thing was that at the start of the GFC I remember vividly that Anna Bligh had a 'growth is bad' session over at the State Library. I went over there. While the world was disappearing into the abyss, while the flames in the property industry were burning, as firms were going to the wall, what was then Premier Anna Bligh doing? She was sitting there with a whole lot of latte suckers and swiggers and chardonnay swillers, talking about growth being bad. I remember all of these people talking about how we could not handle the growth pressures as people were losing their jobs—chippies, sparkies, plumbers. People were not actually going to have jobs, and they were talking about how to kill the property sector and to stop growth. They did not get it then; they still do not get it. We, on the other hand, have a plan to get this state back on track.

Queensland Rail

Mr MULHERIN: My question is directed to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister explain whether he directed the new chair of Queensland Rail to appoint the acting chief executive officer to the position permanently without any formal selection process?

Mr EMERSON: I shake my head, but I thank the honourable member for the question. I do not know where they get their information from, but I see it over and over again. The acting CEO of Queensland Rail remains the acting CEO of Queensland Rail. Nothing has changed. But it is great to finally see Labor taking some interest in transport. As we know, previously, when the now Leader of the Opposition was transport minister, they were not interested at all. In her interview with the *Brisbane Times* we heard her confession that she was now working twice as hard as she did when she was transport minister—twice as hard.

A government member: Twice zero is zero.

Mr EMERSON: I take that interjection: double zero is zero. So many members here understand what would have been happening there. What did we get while the Leader of the Opposition was transport minister? We got record low affordability and a three-year low in rail reliability. That was her legacy. Of course, the worst result of all was passengers walking away from public transport. There were four million fewer trips being taken on public transport in the last six months of 2011—

Opposition members interjected.

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

Mr EMERSON: As I said, there were four million fewer trips being taken on public transport in the last six months of 2011 compared to the same period in the previous year. One would be amazed that this could happen under a minister. But when you have a minister who is clearly uninterested in a department, that is what happens. When you have a self-confessed lazy minister uninterested in the department, you get record low affordability, a three-year low in rail reliability and passengers walking away.

Let us look at what we have done in our short period in government, with our initiative to offer free trips after nine journeys. There are 500,000 free trips being taken. I did hear the Leader of the Opposition telling the ABC how she thought commuters would welcome that decision. She was speaking the truth, finally, when she took interest in transport. But then the next Leader of the Opposition, the member for South Brisbane, bagged that. And she bagged it after she had heard the Leader of the Opposition praise it. So the current Leader of the Opposition praises it while a couple of days later the next Leader of the Opposition bags it. There is the member for South Brisbane, right behind the Leader of the Opposition, just waiting—ready to pounce, ready to go. We all know what is coming.

Queensland Economy

Mr KRAUSE: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier outline how the government's six-month plan will continue the work that the government commenced in the first 100 days and continue the job of growing the Queensland economy?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Beaudesert for the question. Like the Minister for Transport, I welcome a question about my portfolio. I welcome a question about state development, growing the economy and planning, because those are the things opposition members never ask us about—those are the things opposition members were never interested in when they were in government—but they are at the very heart of our government's efforts to get Queensland back on track.

We knew before we won the election that we had to have a 100-day plan in place to address the crisis situation that we would inherit. We had that 100-day plan in place, and all of the ministers delivered on their obligations under that 100-day plan. The Premier has reported on that publicly and to this parliament. It was about having a plan for the first 100 days and it was about achieving what was set out in that plan in a methodical, workmanlike way. All of the ministers in the cabinet did that.

Since then we have released a six-month action plan—a plan for the next six months—in the same way, setting out what this government is about, setting out what we aim to achieve, putting out there for everyone to see what our plans are and what we will be measured against. What a contrast that is with the efforts of the previous government, which planned to do nothing and eventually delivered absolutely nothing.

This is a government that is unashamedly focused on growing the Queensland economy—growing the Queensland economy for the benefit of all Queenslanders, growing the Queensland economy in an environment that will always be protected, growing the Queensland economy in a way that will get this state back on track, that will address the horrific financial situation that was the legacy of the previous Labor government. It is noteworthy that in this parliament opposition members never ask us about those things. They never ask us about the economy. They never ask us about the planning that we have put in place to address their dreadful legacy.

Over the next few months, ministers in this government will address the issues that have been laid out in the six-month plan. We will do that in a way that ensures the economy continues to grow. We will do it in a workmanlike, methodical way, addressing those issues one at a time. That will be the real measure of the success of this government—not the peripheral, scandalous nonsense that the opposition tries to pursue and that is too often focused on in the media day after day.

Government is about delivering. Government is about planning. Government is about setting targets and achieving them. Government is about measuring performance. It is about delivering for the people of Queensland, one task at a time—delivering for the people who elected this government.

RoadTek, Jobs

Mr PITT: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Given the important role that RoadTek plays in getting our major highways reopened after floods each wet season, will the minister explain what contingency plans have been put in place to respond to natural disasters now that he has decided to sack 600 RoadTek staff?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for the question because I am very happy to answer it. I know most colleagues here would have listened to the statements I made previously, but maybe just let me inform Labor about what has been happening. We have made a decision that there will be reforms to RoadTek, but let me make it very clear: RoadTek will remain in regional and rural

Queensland. That will be the case. It will continue to have the capacity to deal with natural disasters. That will continue to be the case. However, in the mature contested market of South-East Queensland where we have seen it competing against the private sector, it will no longer be tendering for that work. In those areas where there is not a mature contested market, it will still be there and have that capacity.

I am always very pleased to take a question from the shadow minister for main roads, because he rarely asks me about roads. That might be because of his appalling record and the statements he has made. Let me remind the House what the shadow minister for main roads has said, particularly about the Bruce Highway—something of great interest for so many members here, as it should be in his electorate. What did the LNP announce during the election campaign, and we remain committed to this? An extra \$1 billion over 10 years for the Bruce Highway—an extra \$1 billion. But we have to get more money from the feds to do that. We need more money from the federal government. It was disappointing that there was no additional money in the budget from the federal government. I have spoken to Minister Albanese about this. I have lobbied him to get more money for the Bruce Highway. I suspect his Labor colleagues in Queensland have not. Do members know why I suspect that? Because the shadow minister for main roads made his confession in the *Cairns Post*. What did he say about our promise of an extra \$1 billion to go into the Bruce Highway?

Mr Cripps: What did he say?

Mr EMERSON: He said that that was misspending of money. In fact, what is amazing about this—and, Premier, you would be astonished by this because I know you are committed to the Bruce Highway—is that he said not only was the additional money misspending but any money spent by the state was misspending on the Bruce Highway. He said that any money spent on the Bruce Highway was misspending. That is Labor's commitment to roads—to that 1,700 kilometre lifeline for this state. That is Labor's policy, and remember it in the years ahead that that is Labor's policy on the Bruce Highway—zero dollars for the Bruce Highway from the state. Just remember that that is its policy.

State Finances

Mr MOLHOEK: My question without notice is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer inform the House of the state of Queensland's finances? Are there any alternative views?

Mr NICHOLLS: A resoundingly original question there from the member for Southport, who I know has strong interests in and, like the member for Kallangur yesterday, strong links to the small business community. I can recall visiting the member prior to the last election and talking to a number of small businesses in Southport about the potential for a new government to revitalise Queensland's finances and revitalise the economy. It is important that the new Newman government acts because the Queensland government cannot continue to live beyond its means, as it did when those opposite were in power. Let us look at what might have happened under Labor had those opposite had the support of the people of Queensland—which fortunately they did not; the people of Queensland showed eminent good sense in not giving them that support—to continue down their reckless path. Let us look at what Dr Doug McTaggart said yesterday before he was so shamelessly verbally.

Opposition members: Ha, ha!

Mr NICHOLLS: That is how they dealt with the finances and the taxes paid by the people of Queensland: they simply laughed. They simply laughed. It is far more important than that and it is deserving of far greater consideration than those opposite are prepared to give it. What did Dr McTaggart say? He said—

The ... level of debt is manageable ... only if corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency, otherwise the current trajectory will see debt reach \$100 billion by 2018-19 ...

I note on page 23 of today's *Australian*, just to reinforce it, a report on some financing issues. It states—Moody's analysts have said that Queensland's state budget in September will be a key test for the newly elected government and its ratings outlook.

That is the truth of the situation. It is not the stories that are being peddled by those opposite. That is the situation. That is the market we deal with. That is why we are taking the tough decisions.

This year the state government was going to have an operating deficit after adjustments, taking into account the Commission of Audit recommendations, of originally \$4½ billion. The operating deficit, as I outlined in my response, will now be \$5.1 billion, and that is due to the policy settings of the previous government. Our expenses will exceed our revenue, and those opposite are responsible for it. Debt continues to increase, and I noticed questions yesterday about debt and I refer members opposite to page 7 of the independent Commission of Audit report where they can see what we are saying. I also refer them to the statement which clearly says—

Because the government had already exhausted its fiscal capacity—

(Time expired)

TransLink

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister explain why he chose to sack the TransLink board and convert an independent statutory authority into a unit reporting to Michael Caltabiano rather than allow public transport services to be delivered by one independent organisation free from political influence?

Mr EMERSON: I am feeling the love today. I am feeling the love today!

Ms Trad: You've been so starved in your life!

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I can feel the love in the chamber here today, but I will ask members to cease the interjections. I call the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do appreciate that pledge of undying love from the member for South Brisbane. If only the Leader of the Opposition had that same feeling about her!

Madam SPEAKER: Order! We have had some levity, but I would ask for the minister to answer the question and stay relevant to the question.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I will answer the question of course. As I announced in this chamber a short time ago—and obviously Labor was not listening, again—we have made this decision to ensure that we have a more efficient and effective public transport system. When TransLink was formed in 2008, there were concerns raised. While there was some support for it, there were concerns raised across the LNP as to whether it was being done properly. While there were those who saw some benefits from it, there were underlying concerns raised by members about TransLink and how it was being set up.

The reality is that we are looking to make a more efficient, effective and affordable system—the kinds of things that Labor failed to do year in and year out. I will go through the figures again, because I know the Leader of the Opposition loves to hear those figures being mentioned in terms of her record as transport minister—record low affordability, rail reliability at a three-year low and passengers walking away. We are trying to get people back on to buses, back on to trains and back on to ferries—the exact opposite of what was happening under Labor. Members should not forget what Labor's single policy was on public transport. What was its single policy?

Mr Nicholls: Increase fares!

Mr EMERSON: I take the interjection from the Treasurer, because that was Labor's single policy—15 per cent increases year in and year out. What was the result of that? It drove people away. What is the LNP doing as we look at cost of living? We are halving Labor's planned increases and giving free travel after nine journeys. That is what we are doing. They are the kinds of things that we are doing.

I welcome question after question from Labor, because when I look over there I see the seven members. Do members know who they remind me of? The New South Wales State of Origin team: zero for seven. They are the New South Wales State of Origin team. If they keep asking the questions I will keep coming back to them, because their record on public transport is appalling. That is what it is.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr GULLEY: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer the minister to the ongoing refusal of the Leader of the Opposition to hand over critical legal advice and associated decisions related to the failed Queensland Health payroll system, and I ask: given that the Minister for Health has previously held the position of Leader of the Opposition, can he advise if the Labor government of the day ever requested from him any cabinet documents or cabinet legal advice and what his response was?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Murrumba for his question, because the honourable member no doubt is vitally interested in this issue, as are all members of this House. The honourable member himself only a few weeks ago sat in this place as we passed a motion requesting from the Leader of the Opposition information that will assist the LNP government in Queensland in seeking to take some sort of redress against those people who hopelessly bungled the rollout of the new Health payroll system in the state of Queensland—indeed, a \$6 million contract, which has now grown to a \$1.25 billion monstrosity.

We have heard a lot of excuses from the Leader of the Opposition as she has sought to deny the legitimate requests of this parliament, firstly, saying that the information was freely available, which it was not; then saying that the information was available to the Solicitor-General to be able to advise us on, which it was not; and now saying we can go over there and have a look at it as some sort of perverse Labor peepshow. Then the other day she was on Steve Austin's program saying that by

convention she would not be able to release that particular information and later in the day was able to release information saying that the same cabinet secretary advised the Leader of the Opposition that it was completely within her discretion the information that she felt necessary to release.

So I thought I would go back and have a look at some of the requests made of me when I was Leader of the Opposition—and, indeed, I do not believe this list is exhaustive. On 18 March 2003, I was written to by the cabinet secretary asking to release information with regard to cabinet documents that the Queensland Competition Authority had an interest in. I said that I had no objection to the release of that information. Fast-forward to 26 August 2005 with regard to a matter in the Federal Court and I was asked by the cabinet secretary if I had any objection to the release of that information to assist them with regard to their legal pursuit. I said that, notwithstanding the usual public interest immunities that attach to that, I had no objection to that being used to be able to facilitate the state's interest. Fast-forward again to 13 July 2006, when I was similarly asked by the cabinet secretary to release information through the director-general of the department of health in Queensland to assist the Crime and Misconduct Commission with some of its inquiries. There is no record anywhere where I have objected to that information and, indeed, I released that information to be able to assist that particular organisation with regard to its discoveries and its investigations notwithstanding the public interest immunity.

We see a Leader of the Opposition who is hiding something on this matter. There is a significant public interest issue here and she should follow suit with the precedents that have been set in this place over the years.

(Time expired)

Townsville Ring-Road

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Considering the massive funding cuts facing the Department of Transport and Main Roads, will the minister guarantee the state funds needed to complete the Townsville ring-road?

Mr EMERSON: I do not need the undying love from the member for Rockhampton, I can tell members that. I thank the honourable member for the question. The reality is that we are progressing with all projects at the moment, but let me be very clear in terms of what we are doing and what we are facing because of Labor's mismanagement, bungles and waste. The reality of what we are facing is that we have a projected \$100 billion of debt. We have heard the Treasurer talk about this. This has been fuelled by 14 years of Labor—failures over and over again, waste, mismanagement and bungles. That is the reality that we have inherited and we see it over and over again.

Let me remind the House of the great con by Labor that we saw in the lead-up to the election where it tried to bribe voters to support it—that \$382 million of—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I am sorry to stop you, but there are too many audible conversations in the chamber and there are also interjections from my left and from my right that are not through the chair or relevant to the member with the call. Please show courtesy to the member with the call.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I said, we saw in the lead-up to the election this con by Labor, this hoax on Queenslanders by Labor, a bribe to Queensland voters by Labor. That was its \$382 million of overprogramming in road projects. They went out there across Queensland and promised projects that they knew there was no money for. There was not one dollar to pay for them but still they went out in the lead-up to the election and kept promising project after project after project. That was a \$382 million con on voters and a desperate attempt to bribe voters ahead of the election.

The reality was that Queenslanders saw through that and that is why we saw the result that we did on election day. We saw Queenslanders reject Labor—its failures, its deceit, its deficit. That is what we saw. So we are moving forward. Many of those projects are very worthwhile—very worthwhile—but in the situation that we face we are trying to make as many savings as possible so that we can deliver as many promises as possible. That is unlike Labor, which was happy to go out there and promise \$382 million of projects that it knew the state had not one cent for and could not pay for. But that is what you see from Labor over and over again—not just the debt, not just the deficit but also the deceit. Who was in government and who was in the cabinet at the time those decisions would have been made? The Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the leader of opposition business. Those three were in cabinet while those decisions were being made to con voters, to go out there and claim that they can do projects that they knew they had not one dollar for.

Credit Rating

Mr KING: My question without notice is to the Minister for Local Government. Recently, there have been some who have questioned the relevance to the average person of the Newman government's desire to reclaim the AAA credit rating. Can the minister outline some of the consequences to ratepayers of a credit downgrade?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I thank the member for what is a great question, because indeed there has been some criticism about the determination to restore that AAA credit rating. Both the Premier and the Treasurer have done a fine job in saying what it means to Queenslanders, but can I say that we have to also realise that this impacts local government and, therefore, local ratepayers in a big way.

Local governments, by the end of this financial year, will have a debt of about \$7 billion. That is a real impost on the bottom line for local councils and local ratepayers. Whilst when loans mature is always a moveable feast, if we were to head down the same course that those opposite were plunging us towards—towards a AA credit rating—we would be looking at a figure of somewhere in the order of about \$80 million additional repayments each and every year. That is real money that could be spent on services in communities. That could be used to save money for ratepayers. As I get around the state I will be telling local councils what it means for them. I will be saying to them how much it would put on the bottom line of ratepayers.

It is a tough challenge. Nobody for one moment thinks that it is easy to make cuts to the Public Service. Nobody thinks that it is easy to have to scrap popular programs. But it is necessary. That is what good governments do. I think everyone has accepted that, aside from the member for Mulgrave, who somehow tries to defend the indefensible. There he was on Steve Austin's show on 15 June in a laughable interview. Last week there was a press release, and he still tries. Why do we have this crisis? Why are we faced with this situation? Because of failed planning—because of projects like Traveston Dam and terrible water grids and Health payroll debacles. But my favourite is the PR budget that was bigger than McDonald's. That is what the members opposite presided over. There is a character in each of them. The member for Inala is Ronald McDonald We have the member for Mackay in the middle. We know who he is. He is Grimace. Then on the outside we have the member for Mulgrave, the Hamburglar—the deceitful one. You can picture it, Madame Speaker, can't you? You can picture their little roles.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I would ask for questions to be answered in a way that is relevant and to cease the personal reflections.

Mr CRISAFULLI: That is why we have to make tough decisions. As I go around the state my message to local government is very simple—that is, we do not have bucketloads of money for you, but we will empower you. We will enable you to govern the way you need to. We will restore the AAA credit rating that can again make their finances manageable.

Mrs Miller interjected.

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

Gladstone Hospital

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. The Director of Medical Services at Gladstone Hospital has resigned. To avoid a succession of locums, will the minister ensure that if recruitment has not commenced it will commence now and will the minister also ensure that the Director of Medical Services has the authority to implement change in areas the DMS has responsibility and accountability for rather than the current situation where the DMS has responsibility while authority rests with management in Rockhampton?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I would like to thank the member for Gladstone for her question. The member for Gladstone has a very long and proud history of advocating on behalf of the people of Gladstone, particularly with regard to issues surrounding the Gladstone Hospital, more particularly with regard to issues of staff morale and the continuity of services at that hospital which has been an ongoing problem over a number of years.

I concur with the honourable member for Gladstone that there are some issues at the Gladstone Hospital with regard to morale amongst the staff and also with regard to not only attracting but also keeping staff in the various senior positions within the workforce of that hospital. The hospital itself is very much overreliant on locums. The honourable member and myself agree on that. Even prior to the establishment of the hospital and health service boards in Queensland I instructed my department to look at what I think are quite concerning issues to see if we can do something to address those particular matters to not only give some continuity of services for the people of Gladstone but also make sure that we have continuity with regard to the staffing profile in that hospital.

I have also recently indicated to the chairman of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service Board that this issue with the Gladstone Hospital should be a matter of priority for that board because Gladstone is a growing community that is servicing in many ways a resource industry which is putting more and more pressure on that particular community and its ability to respond in the necessary way. The board chairman has indicated to me that that is a matter which he is very happy to do. I understand that he has also had discussions with the honourable member with regard to that. I want to assure the honourable member that it is a matter which I am concerned about. We do need to get that continuity within the hospital. We need to do all we possibly can to rebuild staff morale. Gladstone will continue to grow into the future and the community has greater expectations than what has been able to be previously delivered. We need to reduce the reliance on locums. Locums increase the amount of cost to Queensland Health and the local district. Indeed, in some cases we can probably get a permanent staff officer for what we would pay for a locum equivalent in a six-month period.

I indicate to the honourable member today that I will be happy to speak with her about those particular matters and also update her on any investigations and discussions that are being held within Queensland Health and also take the matter up with the board.

Legal Aid

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. What action is the Attorney-General taking to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society have access to legal assistance?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Albert for the question and for his strong interest in making sure members of the community have equality in access to justice. I can tell a story in terms of the government's plans and proposals to make sure that people have access to justice. But if we are talking about community safety we can talk about what we have announced in terms of drink-safe precincts around Queensland to make sure that people can go out on a Friday and Saturday night in three places in Queensland and have a good night out that is also a safe night out.

I remind the House that this government has extended the drink-safe precinct trials. Under the former plan they were due to expire in November this year. The government has extended that out until February next year. We have done it for sound reasons. The former government planned the drink-safe precinct trials to finish right before schoolies, right before Christmas and right before the New Year period kicks in. I think that is poor planning. I was proud to be part of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee that looked at drink-safe precincts—in fact, recommended it—with the honourable member for Hinchinbrook and the former member for Beaudesert who occasionally sits up the top there with two pieces of rope hanging down like a puppet-master to the member for Mount Isa asking questions about the M1 and so forth. So we know the former member for Beaudesert is still around.

I say to the member for Brisbane Central, who has a particular interest in drink-safe precincts, that yes, we will continue them until February next year. We will assess it in November. We will work with industry as well. The liquor industry has been overregulated for many years. At our P&C meetings, if a school wants to have a trivia night they have to go through a whole liquor licensing procedure. The Premier has been clear in his direction to me with this liquor review we are undertaking. We want to make sure that we can deregulate the industry in terms of making commonsense approaches to these sorts of things. The member for Brisbane Central, with his particular interest, has invited the Deputy Premier and I to a club in his electorate, The Beat. The Deputy Premier and I are looking forward to going there on a bit of a tour. We will probably try to organise that. I am reliably informed that the Deputy Premier already knows where The Beat is. He is a visitor there.

This government is serious about making sure that we have a viable tourism economy where people can go out and have a good night on the town in safety and comfort. I am working with the honourable police minister to make sure that drink-safe precincts continue in the future to make sure that people have a safe night out.

Hann Highway, Upgrade

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Considering the massive cuts facing the Department of Transport and Main Roads will the minister guarantee that important work on the Hann Highway will continue?

Mr Mulherin: It is very important to a lot of graziers.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let me point out again what I have already said to the Labor Party across the chamber. Let me talk about the decisions we did make early this week. These are not easy decisions in terms of the savings we have to make. It is a very difficult situation. Unfortunately, this is a situation that we have inherited from Labor. This is the cost of

the legacy of Labor that we saw through their years of mismanagement, their financial incompetence, their waste and their blunders—a projected \$100 billion of debt. This is what we have to do. We will be going through this process, but it is not something that I want to do, it is something that we have to do because of Labor's mismanagement. This is a consequence of the cruel hoax that Labor played on Queenslanders; knowing they were employing people who we could not pay. It is great to see Labor finally taking an interest in transport issues. As I have said, before it took no interest at all. Let me remind the House of Labor's record in terms of transport and main roads when the Leader of the Opposition was transport minister.

Ms Palaszczuk: No, talk about the highway.

Mr EMERSON: I know she does not want to hear about this. During her time as transport minister, the transport and main roads department paid out \$76 million for 818 voluntary redundancies, that is, 818 voluntary redundancies that cost the taxpayer \$76 million.

Mr PITT: I rise on a point of order. I wonder if the minister will answer the question under standing order 118(b).

Madam SPEAKER: Take your seat, member. Minister, I ask you to answer the question.

Mr EMERSON: I was just getting to the answer. I wanted to remind the House of the incompetence of Labor, which has left the debt deficit that we have had to deal with. We are looking across projects, including the important roads near Charters Towers. We are doing that. We are looking at those projects. That is the reality, but we face the legacy we inherited from Labor. There were 818 voluntary redundancies that cost \$76 million. What was the end result of paying out \$76 million for 818 voluntary redundancies? The Department of Transport and Main Roads had 100 more people in it than at the start. That is the legacy of Labor and that shows its incompetence at the time the Leader of the Opposition was transport minister. All the Leader of the Opposition does is send out the member for South Brisbane to answer the questions. Why doesn't she go and talk to the media and explain why that happened on her watch?

Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Mr MANDER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Will the minister please update the House on what steps she has taken to get Queensland back on track?

Ms BATES: I thank the member for the question and for the opportunity to update the House on how my department is working to get Queensland back on track. My department is undertaking Queensland's first comprehensive audit of information and communication technologies and this government is not waiting to implement the cost savings that are identified. Already the government has taken a number of decisions to achieve cost savings in ICT, including saving at least \$15 million a year by not paying for phone lines that we are no longer using and saving an expected \$1.8 million just by defaulting printer settings across government to double-sided black and white print.

My department is also finalising a plan to ensure that all Queenslanders can more easily find and access government services through a one-stop shop. In speaking to arts groups across the state, I have discovered that many of our smaller arts organisations have great difficulty with the process of applying for and administering even small arts grants. I have been told that many of the grants are prohibitively expensive and the entire process is governed by red tape.

With this in mind, I have begun working on the establishment of an arts grants advisory board to improve access to arts grants in Queensland. I have also identified an arts grants officer in my department who will assist organisations in Queensland to apply not only for state government grants but also for federal, local and philanthropic grants. In the coming months the government will be opening the first application for the Regional Arts Fund and the Arts Super Star Fund. Those important funds will ensure we have a vibrant arts sector in all corners of Queensland.

In science, this government has put the Chief Scientist properly in charge of science policy. Currently the Chief Scientist is auditing science across government to ensure we are focused on science that adds value to policy decisions and embedding decision rules so that government science and research is better informed and consistent.

In addition to this, I am working on improving the Queensland clinical trials package, including investigating options for reducing cost variability across hospitals, improving the cycle times and creating international partnerships to reduce regulatory differences between other jurisdictions. This work will encourage further investment in Queensland life sciences and follows on from feedback I received from international pharmaceutical companies while leading a delegation to the 2012 BIO International Convention in Boston. Those are just some of the ways that the Newman government is getting on with the job of getting Queensland back on track.

Blackall-Jericho Road, Upgrade

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Feel the love, Scotty! Considering the massive funding cuts facing the Department of Transport and Main Roads, will the minister guarantee the state funds that are needed to continue road sealing between Blackall and Jericho?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that she is a regular visitor to that area. Normally, the member for Bundamba talks to me about park-and-ride facilities in her area and I know she has been talking about that for many years. Unfortunately, she got no satisfaction at all from the now Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister. She advocated over and over again for that project, but what was the result? 'No, no, no!', from the Leader of the Opposition. Therefore, when it comes to the next leadership ballot we know where her vote will go because there was no park-and-ride for Springfield. It was not going to happen and we know that.

Those resealing programs are ongoing programs and we do that. That is the reality. I will explain again the situation our government is facing. We are facing a debt of \$100 billion, which we all know resulted from Labor's waste, mismanagement and failure. The programs are ongoing and we continue to do that work, but we have to try to achieve more within the very difficult financial situation that we have inherited. The reality is that we have seen over programming, as I have already mentioned to the House today. Labor members need to stop listening to the mistruths and the deceit that they put out ahead of the election, listen instead to the reality and start to deal with it. We are trying to work through this. We are going through many projects and looking across them to find savings so that we can continue to deliver worthy projects such as resealing, which does continue on and will continue on. Of course it will continue on and the member for Bundamba would know that that is the reality, even though the Leader of the Opposition kept knocking her back for all the park-and-rides she wanted. She heard the words.

However, what stuns me is that even when they were out there promising \$382 million of over programming works, still the former transport minister would not deliver for the member for Bundamba. Why didn't she want to back the member for Bundamba? Why did she knock her back every time, when she was promising things across the state, even though she did not have the money for them? Still she would not deliver for the member for Bundamba. It must have concerned the member greatly to see the former transport minister, now the Leader of the Opposition, failing to deliver for her electorate. Now the Leader of the Opposition expects the member for Bundamba to sit there quietly and continue to back her, even though when she was transport minister she let her down over and over again.

Energy Plan

Mrs MADDERN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Recently the Premier announced the development of a 30-year energy plan for Queensland. Can the minister please advise how this will help the government to get on with the job of delivering services and lowering the cost of living for Queenslanders?

Mr McARDLE: I thank the member for the question. Can I say what a great thing it is to have the member in this parliament as the member for Maryborough. She is doing great work up there. I contrast her with the past member for Maryborough and what a difference there is indeed—somebody who actually works for the electorate and comes to government trying to get resolutions to her concerns. I congratulate her on her great achievement, because it has not been an easy journey for her but she is doing a great job and well done to her and her team, in particular her husband who has had to put up with her—who has worked with her for many a long year!

When we look back over the past 30 or 40 years of this state and we go back to the seventies and eighties, we see that that period was a boom time for construction across the state—a boom time under a coalition government led by Sir Joh and the ministry at that point in time. The reason that period was so successful was simply this: they had in place a plan to develop the state—the roads, the ports, the mines, the infrastructure right throughout Queensland. Because of that, this state grew and grew as time went by.

Contrast that with what has occurred under the past Labor governments. We have had ports that have been blocked. We have had infrastructure not been built. We have had hospitals not been built and congested. We have had power blackouts. We have had brownouts. We have had price rises. The simple reason is this: they did not plan. They simply did not plan for the future. We only have to look at the wonderful situation with the water grid and the power grid at this point in time—something like \$20 billion in debt! That is planning by Labor, where you put everything on the tick, you push it out to the future, and generations into the future will have to deal with the debt on a day-to-day basis. That is not the Campbell Newman way of doing things. That is not the way the LNP government gets things done in Queensland.

We are here with a 100-day plan, ticked off on all points, with a six-month plan that will be ticked off after six months, because Campbell Newman understands very clearly that with that long-term planning we are going to achieve the outcomes that this state needs. One of those plans in the next six months is a 30-year energy plan for this state. By doing that, we are going to put in place a timetable, a time line, and the signals that business need on a daily basis to understand what they can look forward to from this government in developing their industry base, returning profit to their customers and, more importantly, helping this government to build the very long infrastructure road that we have ahead of us. By doing that we will also take into account all sectors of energy to make certain that we get the best possible outcomes. We have also been meeting with the Chief Scientist recently to get him on board and for us to assist each other in developing that long-term strategy. A 30-year energy plan is the plan for this government to make certain that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past Labor governments.

Weapons Licensing

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. Under the former government, applications for a weapons licence were forced to wait up to 12 months for licence approvals. Can the minister advise what steps are being taken to reduce licence application process times?

Madam SPEAKER: You have one minute, Minister.

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for Dalrymple for a question in relation to firearms. I know that he has a great interest in firearms and bats and a few other issues, but I will not link them together for the member for Dalrymple. This government during the election listened to the people of Queensland in relation to weapons licensing. The matter was also addressed in parliament yesterday in a question in relation to how this government was going to address the weapons licensing act. First of all we will address it by getting tough on those committing illegal offences, bringing in mandatory sentencing in relation to possession or trafficking and supply of dangerous weapons, because that strikes fear into the heart of all of these criminal elements—taking those firearms away from those illegal users and having some of the toughest sentences in Australia. Whilst doing that, we will be ensuring that we make changes to the weapons licensing act in relation to the good, honest shooters that we have throughout Queensland to ensure that they have proper regulation in place.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: Question time has finished.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge schools visiting today. They are Fairview Heights State School from Toowoomba North, Narangba Valley State School from Morayfield and another group from Fairview.

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Madam SPEAKER: There being no members who wish to debate that report, the notice of motion lapses.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND MISCONDUCT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mrs CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (11.04 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 87 of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee tabled on 23 July 2010.

This report was much talked about in the media. I think it is a report that deals with matters of great concern not only to the person who made the disclosures and expressed concerns, Ms Barber, but also I think to almost everybody in Queensland.

There has been some comment in the media in relation to the removal or the redacting of a small number of identifying particulars. I believe the committee acted responsibly. This House must have regard to issues of natural justice. Those issues were at the forefront of the minds of the members of the committee and also issues in relation to matters still being investigated to ensure that nothing that was reported in the public arena in any way undermined or influenced negatively on that investigation.

I would like to thank those involved in the preparation of the report, not only the CMC and Mr Chesterman but the committee secretariat and the committee members. I think it is also important to note that this matter is not finished. The recommendations by Chesterman include—

1. A legal practitioner with extensive experience in criminal law and a reputation for sound judgement be appointed to examine MBQ, QBMBA and AHPRA's files in all cases in which, in the last five years, a disciplinary sanction of some kind has been imposed on a medical practitioner in relation to circumstances in which a patient died or suffered serious bodily harm ...
2. That there be a review of all the cases of misconduct or alleged misconduct by medical practitioners, dealt with by QBMBA or in which AHPRA has recommended disciplinary action against a medical practitioner, including cases in which the Notification Advisory Committee and/or QBMBA rejected a recommendation by AHPRA to take disciplinary action.

And it goes on with some other details. It continues—

The purpose of the review should be to determine whether QBMBA has made timely and appropriate responses to the complaints and recommendations; and whether it is achieving the objectives of the *Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999* ...

Mr Chesterman also recommends—

3. That when appointments are made to QBMBA, the number of medical practitioners on the Board be reduced and that the number of other members be increased. These would include members with similar qualification to the third member of the review panel in recommendation (2); and a legal practitioner with a criminal practice to bring to the Board the experience and knowledge mentioned in recommendation (1).

The fourth recommendation reads—

4. Section 150 of the National law provides for the exchange of information about notifications between (relevantly) QBMBA and HQCC. Each must notify the other of a complaint received if it relates to the authority of the other with respect to the complaint.

It then deals with some further information in relation to that matter.

I believe that those recommendations will be and are being considered by the Minister for Health. He has certainly indicated that in the public arena. What those recommendations mean is that the complaints by Jo Barber are certainly being dealt with and treated very seriously and are the subject of further investigation. I commend this report to the parliament and to the people of Queensland for consideration.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MINES LEGISLATION (STREAMLINING) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (11.08 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Acquisition of Land Act 1967, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Land Act 1994, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, the Land Court Act 2000, the Local Government Act 2009, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Wild Rivers Act 2005. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill, volumes 1 and 2 [659].

Tabled paper: Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [660].

The Newman government will ensure that Queensland's resources and energy sector is a world leader by improving the state's investment attractiveness and making it easier to do business in Queensland.

To support the government's commitment to reforming mining and resource tenure management and to reduce red tape, the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012 contains amendments that will deliver a modern and more efficient regulatory framework. These amendments will:

- modernise the tenure administration system and reduce the time taken for each tenure decision under the Streamlining Approvals Project;
- clarify legislation so that resource activities, such as exploration, and development activities, such as transport and infrastructure development, can co-exist;
- clarify an application of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to hazardous chemicals and major hazard facilities; and
- support the delivery of coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas, or CSG-LNG, projects in Queensland.

Current resource tenure processes are antiquated, inefficient and impose unnecessary administrative and regulatory burdens on industry and on government. This needlessly wastes considerable government and industry time and resources. Implementing initiatives from the Streamlining Approvals Project will modernise the tenure administration system and reduce the time taken for each tenure decision.

This government is committed to cutting red tape and restoring clear, stable regulatory frameworks and investment certainty for the resources sector—a sector that generates significant wealth and economic benefits for Queensland. The amendments in the bill will help transform tenure management from an outdated manual, paper based system to a faster, modern and more transparent online environment through MyMinesOnline. MyMinesOnline is a web based service delivery system which will provide seamless interaction between the relevant department and the resources industry.

The bill will reduce red tape by removing cumbersome, complex and inefficient processes while maintaining the rigorous assessment system that is necessary for sustainable and appropriate resource development. These reforms will enable the department to process more tenure applications, improve the efficiency of administrative processes and ultimately make more timely decisions. Industry will be able to transact business with the department anywhere there is access to the web, further improving the state's investment attractiveness by making it easier to do business in Queensland.

The bill also includes amendments to establish common structure, terminology and assessments for resource activities under Queensland's resources legislation—the Mineral Resources Act 1989, Petroleum Act 1923, Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009 and Geothermal Energy Act 2010. This will result in a more consistent tenure application and assessment model across all resource types.

Additionally, the bill includes amendments to Queensland's Acquisition of Land Act and other acts to ensure they accurately reflect government policy and practice for the compulsory acquisition of land. The amendments will ensure constructing authorities have the flexibility in relation to the compulsory acquisition of resource interests, bringing Queensland's legislation into line with the other resource jurisdictions in Australia.

The amendments will clarify that the compulsory acquisition of land by a constructing authority will not extinguish resource interests, with the exception of instances where a potential or real conflict exists. The amendments introduce a discretionary power for constructing authorities to acquire resource interests where there is a conflict with the purpose of the proposed take—for example, a rail corridor that needs to be acquired that would impact on a proposal for an open-cut coal mine.

Transitional provisions have been included to ensure that, for past compulsory acquisitions of land, resource interests were not extinguished unless actions were specifically taken to do so. These amendments will ensure the majority of resource related activities, such as exploration and CSG production, and development activities, such as the building of road and rail infrastructure, can continue to co-exist.

The bill proposes amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, which was passed in May 2011 as part of the state's commitment to the Council of Australian Governments' national harmonisation of general work safety laws. This act contained provisions for the transfer of the regulation of hazardous chemicals and major hazard facilities from Queensland's specialised mining legislation. National harmonisation did not intend such a transfer of authority and therefore amendments contained in the bill make it clear that the regulation of hazardous chemicals and major hazard facilities on mine sites is required by the Mining and Quarrying Safety and Health Act 1999, the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999 and associated subordinate legislation.

Finally, the bill contains amendments to the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 that are vital for the sustainable development of CSG-LNG projects in Queensland. These amendments will support improved environmental outcomes and increase regulatory certainty for the state's emerging CSG-LNG industry by:

- delivering a more efficient framework for the safe storage, transportation and treatment of CSG water and brine from and on individual petroleum leases and between lease areas;
- allowing pipelines to be constructed to transport CSG water and brine under a pipeline licence;
- supporting the development of centralised water treatment and brine processing facilities; and
- enhancing the possibilities for beneficial use of treated CSG water and encouraging the commercial disposal of salt recovered from brine.

The amendments also provide for:

- the registration of pipeline easements negotiated between CSG-LNG proponents and landholders, bringing security for pipeline infrastructure investments made by proponents and for landholders;

- incidental activities such as the building of roads and construction of power lines to occur across adjacent petroleum tenures areas; and
- petroleum leaseholders to seek ministerial consent to change a delayed production commencement date.

The Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012 will reduce red tape for investors and at the same time increase security for landholders and industry. This legislation will contribute to the growth of the mining industry, one of the four pillars identified by this government to drive economic growth, job creation and prosperity in Queensland. It will also ensure the state's resources sector has a strong future, with a stable, clear and efficient legislative framework for the industry. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (11.18 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

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

CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 1 August (see p. 1410), on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr CHOAT (Ipswich West—LNP) (11.19 am): I rise to speak to the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I am pleased to speak in support of this very important bill. I feel there is no need to be verbose or complex in speaking on this occasion as the issue is well understood and this bill long anticipated. Put simply, this bill represents the reinstatement to this House of one of the most basic principles of our society and, I hasten to add, the expectations of the community with regard to the conduct of people in positions of authority including state members of parliament.

The people of Queensland may have forgotten where all of this started. I have had so many discussions with people in the street about the slide of the standards of conduct of politicians in this country. There is a worrying trend of debasement of the standing of members of parliament in the community—something that must be addressed with urgency. It was a spectacular demonstration of failure and a breathtaking move against honesty and integrity by the former state Labor government when they effectively dispensed with integrity to legislate for lying in parliament—which is essentially what we are talking about today.

Indeed, four members now present on the opposition benches voted in 2006 to make lying a part of the fabric of this place, and for what? To save face and the hide of one wretched soul now detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. I wonder how those members feel as we speak on this bill today and as we begin the task of wiping clean the dishonour created by the former government. At least in one sense, the people of Queensland played their part by wiping the government benches clear of Labor's lies and broken promises at the March 2012 election. In fact I believe dishonesty has been the biggest contributor to the record low levels of support Labor attracts across the nation. 'There will be no carbon tax,' 'We will keep the fuel subsidy,' 'QR is not for sale'—all of these statements were made by Labor figures so at ease with misleading people that the words rolled comfortably off their tongues in apparent solemn pledges of determination.

Worse still was the scant regard for the truth demonstrated during the March state election campaign, and I do hope the resulting rejection by the electorate will serve as a lesson to be honest. I was taught as a child, and indeed I have taught my children, to tell the truth. At primary school I recall being taught the Ten Commandments—No. 9, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' I remember being in year 2 and asking Sister Patricia what it meant, and she told me it was one of the most important commandments—to tell the truth and not tell lies.

As the 54th Parliament, we will introduce and debate some very important legislation in this House, but there will be few bills that will have the potential to impact on the integrity and ethics of this place like the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. As I indicated earlier, there is no need for great explanation as to what the implementation of this bill will achieve. It clearly represents a longstanding commitment of the LNP to restore the relevant standards of conduct that existed in this place from 1899 until 2006, when as I mentioned earlier it was dispatched for mere political convenience by the previous Labor government. I am confident that the implementation of this bill will go some way to restoring the public's confidence in the Queensland parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.22 am): I rise today to speak on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. The aim of this bill is to amend the Criminal Code to reintroduce the repealed section 57, 'False evidence before parliament', with amendment, to make it an offence to knowingly give false evidence to the parliament or its committees. The reputation of parliament and its MPs has suffered over the last 20 years. Politicians, unfortunately, are now seen like car salesmen, and I must apologise to car salesmen for the comparison. We are also compared to snake oil salesmen, and we all remember those people from years ago. Unfortunately, we are perceived as being dishonest and that is something we are seeing regularly come through in the newspapers and the SMS sections of our papers. There is a perception that politicians are overpaid, underworked and, in some fashion, dishonest. That is a real shame for our schoolchildren who come through parliament because they look down on us in here and they go away wondering whether we are telling the truth and think that maybe we are not. That is something we really have to tackle, and I think this bill puts us back where we should be. Bills like the one that were introduced by the Labor Party in 2006 have added to that perception.

The public expects more from its members and its representatives as far as accountability goes. The Queensland community expects its parliamentarians to act responsibly and with the highest integrity. It is a special privilege to be a member of parliament and that comes with responsibilities, including honesty, integrity and hard work. As I said before, in politics I think perception is everything and politicians are perceived at the moment as being dishonest. For over a century, Queensland was the only state in Australia that had a safeguard, small as it was, against members in parliament telling lies. It was little known and little used, but it was section 57 of the Criminal Code. As I said, it was little known and little used but it was there as a much needed deterrent. Section 57 provided for a possible seven years in jail for any member of parliament or indeed any person who told lies before a committee or the parliament.

In 2006 the Labor government were thrown into panic—absolute panic—by the possibility of one of their own members ending up behind bars, and we all know where that particular member ended up. So what did they do? Did they let due process take place? No, they did not. They recalled parliament, as we have heard other members tell us during this debate, and they firstly judged the minister themselves before introducing legislation into this place that made it okay for members of parliament to lie. As we have heard from the speeches by members now, the Labor government at the time hid this legislation—that is, the abolishment of section 57 of the Criminal Code—behind the fantastic news and the media frenzy surrounding the eventual release of the Beaconsfield miners. By doing this, the Labor government legalised lying to parliament and once again reinforced that very important public perception of politicians being dishonest.

Is this how the MPs in this place want to be perceived? I know that is not the way I want to be perceived, and it is not the way I want the children who live and go to schools in my electorate to perceive me as their member. I doubt whether any member in this place would like to be perceived that way. I congratulate the Attorney-General on bringing this before parliament as quickly as he has in response to our election promise to do exactly that. I congratulate the previous leaders of the opposition who tried with their private members' bills to have this section reinstated.

I looked through *Hansard* to put together my speech for today to see exactly what happened in 2006 with regard to the bill and the voting sequence on it. I do not think anybody here would be surprised to know that, of the five members of the then Labor government who spoke in support of this bill, four of them retired and one lost his seat at the last election. The member for Kurwongbah, who was the minister for justice and Attorney-General at the time, moved this piece of legislation, and she has now retired. The Hon. Rob Swarten, the member for Rockhampton, retired. Dean Wells, the member for Murrumba, lost his seat and we now have a wonderful new member for Murrumba. The Hon. Peter Beattie, the former Premier of the state, retired. And Terri O'Sullivan, the member for Stafford, retired, surprisingly enough. All of these members obviously did not plan to stay in parliament very long so they did not mind getting up and speaking about this particular piece of legislation because they knew it was a piece of rubbish.

On the other side of the chamber, honourable members of the opposition stood up and spoke against this piece of rubbish legislation. We had the honourable member for Southern Downs, the honourable member for Currumbin, the honourable member for Gladstone, the honourable member for Warrego, the honourable member for Moggill, the honourable member for Callide, the honourable

member for Burdekin, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, the honourable member for Nicklin, the honourable member for Gregory, the honourable member for Gaven, the honourable member for Mirani and the honourable member for Darling Downs. If you add those people up, you realise that a few more members spoke against it than in favour of it. We also heard the member for Currumbin speak very passionately on this issue yesterday.

On 24 March the people of Queensland had the opportunity to look at our members and see which way they voted on particular pieces of legislation and then judge accordingly. If we look at who in the 51st Parliament actually voted in favour of this piece of legislation we see that on Friday, 26 May the former member for Mount Ommaney spoke in favour of it. Where is she now? She lost her seat. The people of Queensland voted against her. The former member for Capalaba voted in favour of this particular piece of legislation. He lost his seat and we now have a wonderful new member for Capalaba. The former member for Broadwater voted in favour of this particular piece of legislation and we have a new member for Broadwater. Can honourable members see where I am going with this?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. We are discussing the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill. The member just said that the former member for Mount Ommaney lost her seat. The former member for Mount Ommaney did not run at the last election. He may want to correct the record.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! I am listening—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members will cease interjecting. I am listening to the member and I would ask that the member focus his comments on the bill.

Mr HART: Certainly, and I would like to correct the record in that fashion if I could. Let us focus on the members who are sitting opposite now. We see five members over there who voted in favour of this piece of legislation: the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Manager of Opposition Business, the member for Woodridge and the member for Bundamba. I say shame on them for voting in favour of that particular piece of legislation.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting. The member has the call.

Mr HART: I say shame on them for voting in favour of that particular piece of trashy legislation that allowed members of parliament to dishonestly represent themselves in this place. This bill implements the Liberal National Party's pre-election commitment to introduce amendments to make it illegal to lie to the parliament. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (11.32 am): I commend the Attorney-General for bringing the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill to the House. As has been mentioned by the previous speaker, the member for Burleigh, we are bringing in legislation that we said we would—something that we tried to do two or three times previously. The Minister for Health, the then Leader of the Opposition, tried to overturn this unctuous legislation that was brought in by the Labor government and when I was Leader of the Opposition we tried again to overturn this disgraceful legislation.

The handling of the Gordon Nuttall resignation in December 2005 and the political tactics that led to the repeal of sections 56, 57 and 58 of the Criminal Code in May 2006 crystallised all of the bad habits and dark arts of the Beattie Labor government. To protect themselves, the Labor Party felt it was necessary to protect a disgraced minister. To justify the protection of that disgraced minister, they altered the Criminal Code. Yet I and other members sat in this place with Attorneys-General Welford, Lavarch, Shine, Dick and Lucas who would often preach at us in opposition about how sacrosanct the Criminal Code is and was. Every time we came in here on a Wednesday night to debate opposition business, they would tell us that we could not change the Criminal Code that Sir Samuel Griffith had written. Yet in one fell swoop they removed three sections. We are here today to right that wrong and put those sections back into the Criminal Code. As usual, when legislation is amended like that, it leads to unintended consequences, the worst of which was the public behaviour we saw during the debate of the civil unions legislation that we amended only a couple of sittings ago.

During the debate on the Criminal Code Amendment Bill in 2006 the Premier of the day, Peter Beattie, injected himself into the debate and in one line summed up what the Labor Party had become. He said, 'The rabble opposite seek to destroy the institution of parliament.' His argument, therefore, was that he was seeking to protect the institution of parliament by allowing members to deliberately mislead the parliament without fear of the consequences. So let us make this clear: the Labor Party's view of parliament, directly from the mouth of their hero Premier, was that the institution of parliament was best protected by allowing members to deliberately mislead. It was a culture that was evidenced time and time again as the party declined in a constant cycle of incompetence or deceit, spin and cover-up.

Mr Johnson: Looking after his factional mate!

Mr LANGBROEK: As the honourable member for Gregory says, it was all to cover up for a mate.

Mr Johnson: Factional mate!

Mr LANGBROEK: A factional mate. As we heard, they stood up here in that December 2005 sitting and they all said, 'He's a good man. He's an honest man,' and how wrong they were proven to be. The consequences of their actions subsequently led to the amendment of the Criminal Code in 2006 and they stand condemned by their actions.

At the time, the gloss that was put on the argument—the spin as it was known—was that the removal of these provisions was necessary because their continued existence struck at the heart of parliamentary privilege. Rereading the *Hansard* of the debate, we see Labor member after Labor member referenced the Bill of Rights, written in 1688, as well as the Commonwealth and Queensland constitutions and played amateur lawyer by discussing the intent of Sir Samuel Griffith in drafting the relevant sections. It is accurate that early legislation was heavily influenced by British instruments like the Bill of Rights. That does not on its own mean that our legislation was written in the same context, should be conferred the same interpretation or apply in the same way as the instruments that influenced it. It is merely instructive.

Premier Beattie was particularly crafty in his approach to ridding himself of a political problem by allowing members to deliberately mislead the parliament. He did not make the decision on sections 56 through 58 when the Criminal Code Amendment Bill was introduced in 2006; he made it when parliament was resumed for Gordon Nuttall's partial mea culpa in December 2005. At that sitting Mr Beattie said—

The choice today is simple. You vote for a principle tried and tested over 300 years which is set in stone in the Parliament of Queensland Act to protect free speech and you vote for a punishment set by precedent, or you vote for hypocrisy and a quick headline.

In politics this is called framing and the former Premier was a master at it. It was a typical tool of the previous government: simplify an argument with half-truths and then throw mud at your opponents. Labor would allege anything in government and just keep doing it. They would do it here every day during question time and throughout the day. They did it throughout the election campaign and now, of course, they are doing it in opposition.

Parliamentary privilege is not unrestricted free speech, as the then Premier went on to say in his address that day, nor has that been the understanding of parliamentary privilege for some time. Indeed, in her second reading speech to the bill amending the Criminal Code to remove these sections, then Attorney-General, the Hon. Linda Lavarch, said that the genesis of the sections was likely a response to several Privy Council decisions in the 19th century that said that the powers of the Legislative Assembly were only such as are necessary to the existence of the Legislative Assembly and its proper functions. The Senate privileges committee endorsed a similar view in 1996 when they discussed the subject. Their report stated—

The privileges of Parliament are immunities conferred in order to ensure that the duties of members as representatives of their constituents may be carried out without fear of intimidation or punishment, and without improper impediment ... a privilege of Parliament is more properly called an immunity from the operation of certain laws, which are otherwise unduly restrictive on the proper performance of the duties of Parliament.

Note that the word 'proper' is used throughout. Parliamentary privilege extends to allow parliament to undertake its proper functions and not to restrict the proper performance of the duties of the parliament. I challenge any member of the opposition to explain to the House how deliberately misleading the parliament is part of the proper functions of a member in this place. According to then Premier Beattie's argument, the Labor Party believes it is proper to deliberately mislead the House. According to then Premier Beattie's argument, the Labor Party believes it is proper to deliberately mislead a committee. According to then Premier Beattie's argument, the Labor Party believes it is proper that public servants and other witnesses called by the parliament should be able to get out of service and, if they do turn up, to give false or misleading evidence. According to then Premier Beattie's argument, the Labor Party believes it is appropriate for members of the public to disrupt the parliament from the public gallery, as they did recently during debate of the civil unions amendment bill.

We should not be surprised. Deception, which at its worst manifests as deliberately misleading the parliament, was an art form during the time of the previous government. It was not just the Nuttall affair; it was their modus operandi across every aspect of their administration. Just look at their record. They said before the 2009 election that they would not sell assets. They sold assets. They said that they would not impose a fuel tax on Queenslanders while they were struggling. They imposed a fuel tax. They said that electricity prices would not rise as a result of deregulation. Prices rose. They said that they would keep Queensland's AAA credit rating. Labor lost the AAA credit rating.

Labor thought they could say anything and do anything and that they would not—could not—lose power. And in a final insult, Anna Bligh said that if she lost she would not be going anywhere. She lost, and a day later she resigned. How wrong they were. Out of all that hubris, arrogance and hatred, it all

came crashing down on them on 24 March. But can I say the LNP was elected not just because of our policies; we were elected as emphatically as we were because the people of Queensland rejected the negative, gutter politics of the Labor Party—negative, gutter politics that they had to resort to, that they still resort to, because they had nothing else to offer and because they had lost the trust of the electorate.

We are here today to fulfil an election commitment. We are here today to place another brick in the wall as we attempt to rebuild respect and faith in the institution of parliament and the profession of politics. It is a shame that we have to drag the Labor Party kicking and screaming to do the same thing.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.42 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. It is regretful that we are here debating this bill, not because we should not reintroduce the section but because it should not have been deleted.

I remember the debate held back in December 2008. I think all of us who were recalled remember it very vividly. I was disappointed and regretful for a number of reasons. One of the things I said at the time was that I believed—and I still believe—that the then Premier, having recalled parliament to delete parts of the Criminal Code, had done the member for Sandgate 'no favours by moving to restrict the investigation of the allegations against the member to a very exclusive committee of the parliament deliberating on members and one which is dominated four to three by government members'. I said—

It is acknowledged that this committee has deliberated on a broad range of references and has, on a great number of occasions, reported unanimously. That is not what the community sees in this instance.

It sees a Premier in denial of the severity of the CMC findings, attempting to shield a member of his government from proper judicial scrutiny by using his numbers in this chamber. The proof of the Premier's and the member for Sandgate's denial of the seriousness of this matter is in their public statements.

We did see a handful of ALP members rise in this chamber and defend the then member for Sandgate. In the main, I think they lived to regret that. In time it was proved that their statements of the member for Sandgate's character were on shaky ground. We have seen a great deal of difference now in the experience of Gordon Nuttall. I said at the time that I had had some dealings with Gordon Nuttall when he was health minister and that the dealings were very positive and very helpful. That whole day, the period of time when parliament was recalled, I think reflected very poorly on this parliament and on us as members.

Indeed, I have heard comments by Labor Party members past—I will not include members present because I am not recalling everybody individually—and I think it would be fair to say that they have very strong feelings about the former member for Sandgate. Indeed, the schism that has developed between him and his ALP former family is irreparable at this point in time.

Some people here know my grand-daughter Belle. She was here last night and she brought with her her sister, Giaan, her mummy and daddy and her other nan. We said goodnight and she asked me, 'Where are you going Grammie?' I said, 'I have to go back to work.' She asked, 'What are you doing, Grammie?' I said, 'We are talking about telling the truth. It's important to tell the truth, isn't it?' She replied, 'Yes, Grammie.' She didn't hesitate. She didn't think about it. She is three. The member for Mount Ommaney relayed an exchange between her mother and her as a child: 'Have you eaten your fruit?' 'Yes.' 'What did you eat?' 'A banana.' 'Well I gave you an apple.' I am not saying that everything kids say is 100 per cent accurate, and I am certainly not advocating that everything that is said in this chamber is 100 per cent accurate. All of us at some time or another will get into a situation where we have to correct the record. We have made or will make comments in this chamber in good faith that will be proven to be either wrong or inaccurate. But that is an error made inadvertently.

Already in debate on this matter I have heard members of the Labor Party refer to the Fitzgerald inquiry. It is a bit nauseating, because it was so long ago. I think we need, without reservation, to learn lessons from Fitzgerald—to recall and remember how easy it is to move away, by small amounts, from solid ground of truth and integrity. But it must be remembered that there are ALP members who have left this place because of electoral rorting or, in the case of the former member for Sandgate, criminal convictions. In my time in parliament at least one other member of the ALP has served time in prison.

It is absolutely reasonable for our constituents to expect us to be honest in our dealings. Will we make mistakes? Yes. We will make errors because we have misunderstood or we have misinterpreted information. But I would like to believe that overwhelmingly—or all the time—those errors are made by mistake; they are made in good faith. When we stand in this place and correct ourselves, our electorate will accept that because we are, as they say, only human. What they will not accept is wilful and intentional deceit, and we as members of parliament, who expect to be treated with respect, should have no part in it.

I support without hesitation the reintroduction of section 57 into the Criminal Code. I believe that it is repairing damage that was done in 2008 and 2009 to this chamber—to the integrity of this place and to the accountability of us as members of parliament. I certainly hope that none of us here has to face the contents of the Criminal Code that we are reinserting, but as a gesture and action of good faith to our community it needs to be there and we need to be accountable. I support the bill.

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (11.49 am): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate before the House. I start by congratulating the Attorney-General on bringing this bill to the House today and also congratulate him on finally putting to rest a situation that had developed since July 2005 that is now to be rectified by this parliament. I also congratulate the member for Surfers Paradise for his contribution to the debate today. I thought it was an exceptional contribution and touched upon many issues that went to the very heart of the debate that occurred in December 2005 led by Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh. The genesis of the debate actually goes back to 8 July 2005 when then minister for health Gordon Nuttall appeared before the estimates committee and was questioned by Stuart Copeland, the then shadow minister for health. Mr Copeland referred, if I recall correctly, the minister to an article by Hedley Thomas with regard to overseas trained doctors and the concerns that had arisen due to the Lennox report as to the qualifications of those doctors to practise here in Queensland.

At the estimates committee—again, on looking at the transcript and recalling from memory—the health minister indicated that he had not been briefed initially with regard to the complaints or the content of the Lennox report and the implications that that report had on the qualifications of overseas trained doctors. Mr Copeland then asked whether he could request Dr Buckland and Dr Scott, who were senior advisers to the minister, to answer a question on whether or not they had in fact briefed the health minister. Dr Scott in fact answered that he had been briefed. Up until that particular point in time, Mr Nuttall had not acknowledged that he had been briefed and after Dr Scott's comments he then retracted his comments in some manner to try to limit the question to the Dr Patel issue and the Bundaberg Base Hospital.

What then ensued was a complaint lodged by the then Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, with the state police for a potential breach of section 57 of the Criminal Code. That matter was then referred to the CMC, which undertook a thorough assessment and interviewed a number of people, including Hedley Thomas and also Mr Nuttall. It provided a report in December of 2005 and that report was tabled by then Attorney-General Linda Lavarch on 7 December 2005. It is worthwhile just looking at the report prepared by the CMC. On page 44 as part of the recommendations and findings, the report made this comment with regard to its investigation—

There is an abundance of evidence (referred to above) that the minister, prior to the Dr Patel scandal becoming public on 22 March 2005, knew of such concerns from a number of sources, including departmental briefings. However, the minister told Mr Thomas on 27 April that he had never been briefed by his departmental officers about concerns relating to overseas-trained doctors, including concerns about their competency. He did not attempt to correct this statement after the publication of the Thomas article on 30 April, though aware of concerns among departmental officers that what it reported him as saying was not correct. The minister repeated his claim that he had not been briefed about those matters in his initial evidence to the Estimates Committee. He only changed his position and acknowledged he had been briefed after being contradicted publicly by Dr Scott.

The commission then made this comment—

At no time has the minister claimed he forgot that he had been briefed about concerns relating to overseas-trained doctors. In his comments to Mr Milliner after being told of departmental concerns about the statement attributed to him in the Thomas article of 30 April, he indicated that Thomas had reported him in a broader manner than he had intended. His statements made after being contradicted by Dr Scott at the Estimates Committee hearing appear to be an elaboration of what he had earlier told Milliner, insofar as he thereafter acknowledged he had been briefed but thought he was being asked in the Estimates Committee about narrower issues ...

Finally, it makes this comment—

In light of the above evidence, the Commission has decided that prosecution proceedings within the meaning of section 49(1) of the *Crime and Misconduct Act 2001* should be considered. For that purpose it has resolved to deliver this report to the Attorney-General so that the Attorney can take it to parliament to obtain direction as to the course parliament wishes to follow—i.e. whether proceedings should be instituted against the minister and, if so, whether they should be by way of prosecution under section 57 of the Criminal Code or by proceedings in parliament for a contempt of parliament.

We then come to the situation of 9 December 2005, and this was the opportunity for this parliament to pass judgement under the advice given by the CMC as to what it should do. This would have been the opportunity in my opinion for Premier Beattie to take the high moral ground and indicate that he would not allow one of his ministers to mislead or deliberately mislead a committee and then try and exonerate them by taking the steps that he did. I think one of the most cruelest comments in relation to what had occurred up until that point and what occurred subsequent to that point can be levelled clearly at the feet of Anna Bligh, who was the Deputy Premier at the time. In referring to Nuttall on 9 December 2005 she made this comment about him—

For those of us who are colleagues of the member for Sandgate, for those of us who have worked with him, for those of us who have sat with him around a cabinet table and know him to be a decent man—a man of integrity—this will not be easy.

The CMC recommended that there were two courses of action available and it left it to this parliament to determine what was the course of action that should have been taken—that is, it should have been taken to court for breach of section 57 or exonerated by the Labor parliament under the terms of privilege. The Labor government chose the easy option—the easy option to use its numbers simply to push through a situation of its own contrivance, push through a situation that it concocted post the delivery of the CMC report to further its own agenda, that is, to protect one of its own. If this matter had gone to trial for a breach of section 57, I can guarantee members now what has occurred in subsequent years would have flowed much quicker, much sooner and been a much better result for this state. Indeed, what has taken place is that, because the government at that point in time adopted a process to allow this man to walk, every member of parliament in this state was tainted as a consequence of the actions by the Beattie-Bligh scenario on 9 December 2005. It has taken almost seven years to rectify and remove that stain. It has taken almost seven years for this parliament to come back and again assess what should have occurred on that date and retrospectively put in place the section of the act that the former Beattie government refused to acknowledge would have given a proper and just outcome to the people of Queensland.

This government on this side of the House—the LNP government—is committed to ensuring that the highest standards are achieved by all parliamentarians, whether it be by the government, opposition or crossbenches. That is the role of the parliament. The role of the parliament is to ensure not only the best debate and the best outcomes but also that the honesty and integrity of all parliamentarians is foremost in their minds when they stand on their feet in this House or for a committee of the parliament to answer questions or give evidence. The role of this House is to ensure that that is achieved at all times. If anybody breaches that role or breaches that integrity level, they then should suffer the consequences of doing so. That is the situation that this government has implemented. That is the situation that this parliament will face on a daily basis. Back in 2005 the Labor government could not grasp the simple fact of what it was doing was blatantly wrong.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.58 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. I draw Mr Deputy Speaker's attention to the speech made by the member for Burleigh earlier during debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. The member stated that I was a member of the parliament when the vote was taken on the bill that removed section 57 of the Criminal Code. The debate occurred on 25 and 26 May 2006. I was elected to this House on 9 September 2006. I will be writing to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, about this matter asking for it to be referred to the Ethics Committee.

CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed.

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (11.58 am): I thank the government for allowing me the opportunity to jump the queue to speak on this bill because I have to get to an Ethics Committee meeting. I have listened to many of the speeches on this bill and the contribution made by the member for Gaven was one that I thought would be appropriate for me to follow. I do not intend to comment on comments made by politicians when Mr Nuttall was a member of parliament and the matters that led to the change in the law. Suffice it to say I think it unfortunate that we now have to introduce this amendment to make it an offence for a politician to lie. Hopefully, it will be a warning for everyone of the importance of telling the truth at all times and that if you make a mistake you apologise as soon as you can.

Before I resume my seat, I also put on the record that my position is consistent. I can certainly recall when parliament was recalled. We had to rush back for that special sitting of parliament that other members have already spoken about. I hope that the intent of this amendment will flow through to political candidates in elections. It just amazes me that sometimes we can be so righteous in the way we require everyone to perform in parliament, yet in the lead-up to an election campaign—the one we have just been involved in—some quite outrageous, appalling allegations and comments were made that clearly should not be allowed. I raised one matter with the Electoral Commission that clearly was not true and was clearly defamatory. It was clearly false and it was clearly a lie. When I raised that matter with the Electoral Commission it effectively said, 'Here's a High Court decision. You can't do anything for these technical reasons.'

Many members have spoken about lifting standards. I put on the record that, if the government and other members of parliament really want to lift the standards, we should all jolly well make sure that the candidates—be they candidates for the Liberal National Party, the candidates for the Labor Party, the candidates for Bob Katter's Australian Party, or Independents; anyone—step up to those standards, be truthful, be honest. I resume my seat and look forward to the bill proceeding to the final vote.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.01 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. The reason we are here today is a fellow by the name of Gordon Nuttall, who wandered these halls for some years, a fellow by the name of Peter Beattie, who wandered these halls for some years, a lady by the name of Anna Bligh, who also walked these halls for some years and all of the Labor members of parliament who on a day in 2005 decided that it was going to be okay to tell lies to parliament and voted to protect a man who was later found to be full of graft and corruption. At that point there was no knowledge whatsoever that this man was indeed a corrupt individual. They protected him for one reason. They wanted to get him out of jail on something for which he could easily have received a fairly serious slap on the wrist, I am sure, but it would have been no more than a slap on the wrist.

Since 9 December 2005 this place has devoted so much attention to Gordon Nuttall and the amendment that is in this bill today. That in itself was a theft on the people of Queensland. All of the talk, all of the effort, all of the proof that has been dug up and has taken away from the people of Queensland the time that could have been better spent developing good-quality legislation to assist the people of Queensland during a time in 2008 when we saw the marketplace turn down, people doing it tough, people losing their jobs in the building industry and what have you. During that time—I did not come into this place until 2009—this place was spending time and effort on this despicable act.

As I mentioned, there was unknown graft and corruption way back then. It had been going on for quite some time. I have taken the time to download a speech that Gordon Nuttall made at the bar in quite dramatic circumstances. He attended the bar with police and Corrective Services people behind him. I will read from the first couple of pages of the proceedings. Mr Speaker said—

Honourable members, in accordance with the resolution agreed to by the parliament on 7 April 2011, I will shortly call Mr Gordon Nuttall to appear in person at the bar of the House to address the House in relation to the specific charges of contempt set out in the order dated 7 April 2011. The Sergeant-at-Arms, bearing the mace, will escort Mr Nuttall to the bar of the House.

As I said, in very dramatic circumstances Mr Gordon Richard Nuttall was announced at the bar of the House by the Sergeant-at-Arms bearing the mace. So there we had him standing, and I have to say that he was still in denial. He started his speech with this—

Mr Speaker, honourable members and the people of Queensland: I have considered long and hard how today's events may unfold. And, as a former student of ancient history, I am reminded that back in about 500 BC in the Babylonian Empire there was a king by the name of Darius and Darius had a governor by the name of Daniel, and for a range of reasons Daniel was thrown into a den full of lions.

How dramatic! He stated further—

As most of you would know, the following day the king went down and there was Daniel unharmed and untouched.

Did this man seriously see himself as a Daniel on that day in this place? He stated further—

While I hope that that may be my outcome today, I am a little bit more fearful. I feel as though perhaps I may have the same result as the Christians in the days of the Roman Empire when they were fed to the lions in the Colosseum. I hope that is not the case today.

How dramatic a man do we have here? This fellow told lies to this place, told lies to an estimates committee and continued to tell lies to an estimates committee to the extent that ultimately the then Premier of this state recalled parliament. At what cost? It was another theft on Queenslanders. At what cost to Queenslanders was it to call back all members of parliament from right around the state, or wherever they may have been at that time of year, on 9 December 2005? The then government recalled the parliament at significant cost to protect its mate. There are people in the Labor Party who today still hold their heads up high and say, 'We did the right thing.'

For as long as I have been in the House—since 2009—this side of the House has been very clear on its intent once it gained government. There were no ifs, buts or maybes. There was no worrying about, 'Hang on a second, what if we get in and maybe'—none of that. We said, 'This is going to be a priority. We are going to get this settled once and for all if you blatantly tell lies to parliament, if you blatantly tell lies to estimates committees.' I am not talking about accidental oversights. If a member accidentally says something that they later find to be incorrect then they can come back to the parliament and say, 'I was in error.' But to tell lies on purpose in this place and to cover up those lies is abhorrent. We are going to correct that situation here today.

Nuttall was here for 45 minutes that day telling us his story. He called on our Christian ethics, he called on our feelings of fatherhood and motherhood. He called on all sorts of things to protect himself. The reality is this: at the time that he came to this place and lied to the estimates committee he did so knowingly. Unknown to the parliament at the time though, he was lying in another way. He had been

receiving graft and corruption from a number of individuals—two that were proven. I have been reading with interest how Mr Nuttall says it came about. He and Mr Talbot were sitting around as friends having a beer. They had a bit of a chat about a few things and it got around to family and so forth. It was decided that Mr Nuttall's solicitor was going to ring Mr Talbot's office. There was an exchange of letters for a loan. The man is in denial. He was a blatant liar back then. Members opposite got up and said how honourable he was, how much they appreciated him as a colleague, the quality of the man and so forth and so on. It was a different story in the three years that I was in this parliament when he was found guilty of this graft and corruption. They changed their tune then. They made it very clear that they were very unhappy about Mr Gordon Nuttall and what he had done to this place.

But did they bother to correct the record and change the laws back to where they should have been? No, they completely ignored it, turned a blind eye to it and simply went on and on. I commend the Attorney-General for bringing this bill to the House as quickly as he has. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.11 pm): The Labor Party understands the intention of this bill. We understand this is primarily a symbolic gesture of goodwill and accountability from the Liberal National Party. However, we in the Labor Party also know that accountability is more than gestures, more than words, more than legislation. Accountability is first and foremost an attitude that must be internalised within individual politicians. It must also be a clear expectation from the Premier because organisational ethics are set from the top. Legislation, regulations and an impartial watchdog like the CMC are necessary but not sufficient conditions for accountability. They can investigate, uncover and prosecute breaches after the fact and they have an important deterrent effect, but they do not in and of themselves ensure accountability.

Accountability is a proper public expectation but also an individual choice. Individual politicians can even approach the Integrity Commissioner to get advice on issues of integrity and accountability. It does not just mean the bare minimum that politicians are truthful in parliament; it means that they are truthful outside of parliament. It means they do not try to hide problematic information. It means that they do not dodge questions. I worry, notwithstanding this legislation, that this new government is not living up to community expectations when it comes to accountability.

The Premier came to power presenting himself as a builder, a can-do man, and so far he has been a total failure. He and his ministers have stripped funding from incredibly important community programs like Family Planning Queensland, Sisters Inside and social housing tenancy advocacy groups. The Premier and his ministers have appointed LNP cronies to important high-paying public positions, often without due process being followed. The LNP government has sidelined the parliamentary committee process to fast-track bills through parliament. The Premier and his ministers have purposely misrepresented the Queensland economy and the government's finances for political purposes. And the LNP have sacked thousands of hardworking public sector workers with little warning.

I think it is worthwhile to dwell on the government's savage job cuts a little bit longer because they betray both a disturbingly cavalier attitude to people's lives and a breathtaking breach of faith. Prior to the election, when he wanted public servants to vote for him, the Premier was emphatic when he said, 'The Public Service has nothing to fear from me.' After the election, of course, it was a different story. The government has already sacked thousands of employees and there will be thousands more sackings to come. Losing your job, losing your income, losing your livelihood is, of course, something to rightfully fear. If the Premier had made his intentions clear before the election instead of purposely misrepresenting them, many people would have thought twice before voting for him. When it comes to public servants the Premier campaigned as Roald Dahl's big friendly giant, promising sweet dreams and continued employment. But he has governed as Freddy Krueger, delivering nightmares for Queensland's dedicated public servants. The Premier has slashed, cut and burned. It is not enough that the government has fired employees left, right and centre; they have belittled and disparaged them as well. In this chamber the Treasurer said 'that a real job is in the private sector'. In the space of just nine words the Treasurer managed to disparage every single one of Queensland's more than 200,000 public servants. He told every single teacher, every single nurse and every single firefighter that their work does not matter. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Labor understands the important job these people do even if the Treasurer and the government do not.

None of these failures to live up to public expectations of accountability will be stopped or discouraged by this legislation under consideration. Section 57 of the Criminal Code will not stop the LNP saying one thing and doing another. Accountability is about more than gestures; it is about legislation. So far this government has shown no commitment to accountability in its day-to-day actions and this legislation will not change that.

I think it is worthwhile to take a look at the history of section 57 of the Criminal Code in a bit more detail and how it interacts with the primacy of parliament. The primacy of parliament was hard won and the mere fact it has existed for centuries should not make us guard it with any less zeal. When the

House of Westminster passed the Bill of Rights in 1688 it included under Article 9 the provision that the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. The provision does not mean that parliamentarians are unanswerable; it means that they must answer to parliament.

The government would have us believe that misleading parliament currently has no sanction, that people who do so get off scot-free. That is quite simply not the case. Currently giving false evidence to the parliament is dealt with through parliamentary mechanisms as a contempt of parliament. The government points to Gordon Nuttall, but the reality is Gordon Nuttall is proof that the system works. If it did not he would not be in prison. He has been behind bars for three years. He will not be eligible for parole for another three years. Who referred Gordon Nuttall to the CMC? It was the then Premier Peter Beattie. The previous Labor government was the most open and accountable government in Australian and Queensland history. He has also been dealt with appropriately through the provisions allowing parliament to pass judgement for contempt of its proceedings. That is why the reintroduction of section 57 of the Criminal Code is not something to be treated lightly. It is not self-evident that the existing systems are inadequate.

Section 57 of the Criminal Code is not a common provision in other comparable jurisdictions. Lying to parliament is not treated as an offence to be dealt with through the courts in the Commonwealth parliament, the New Zealand parliament or in the House of Westminster. I believe the only other jurisdiction with a corresponding provision is Western Australia. All other similar legislatures reserve the right to deal with parliamentary proceedings themselves.

We understand the motivation of this bill and we believe it is at heart a good motivation. However, we still harbour concerns that it may have unforeseen consequences, particularly given the brief period it was before the committee. Several of the submissions received complained about the short time available to them to scrutinise the bill and offer feedback. The committee also recommended that a number of other changes to the Criminal Code should be considered. I note that these have not been addressed by the government. We think that a bill which potentially significantly affects the primacy of parliament is worthy of greater consideration. I do not oppose this bill as I believe that it is ultimately well intended. I do, however, have reservations that need to be addressed by the Attorney-General. Well intentioned actions can have unintended consequences, as the government may find to its own detriment further down the track.

Accountability is fundamental to good government, and to the extent that the bill offers greater accountability I welcome it. However, in the short time this government has been in office, it has not shown a commitment to accountability befitting modern Queensland. The bill will not change the fact that thousands of Queenslanders are out of work because of this government. It will not change the fact that soon there will be many more Public Service redundancies. It will not change the fact that the Premier massively misled Queenslanders during the election campaign. Queenslanders deserve and rightfully expect accountability from their government. So far this government has shown a serious contempt for accountability. Unfortunately, despite its best intentions, this bill will not change the character of this government.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise to support the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. I would like to thank the Attorney-General and conservative members for their speeches on this bill, for their insights and for their vigour. I also give special thanks to the conservative members who were here in 2005 and 2006 for carrying the load and carrying the light. In this Olympic week, I am reminded of the Olympic torch and how it carries light. I would like to thank the members from 2005 and 2006 for carrying the democratic light through those dark days.

Why are we here? We are here because of the actions of Gordon Nuttall. Let us talk about Gordon Nuttall and his character, which was so warmly spoken about by ALP members in 2006. In Brisbane circles it is well known that Gordon Nuttall was fired not once but twice by Westpac. What did Westpac fire him for? For lack of integrity. His actions failed Westpac's code of ethics. The ALP knew it had a grub. The ALP knew that it had a man who had failed the ethics test. The *Courier-Mail* knew that the ALP had a man who had failed the integrity test. What did the ALP do? It invited him in and gave him a reward. His reward was a safe Labor seat, the seat of Sandgate, to which he had no connection. Let us talk about the ALP members who spoke on behalf of Gordon Nuttall during the 2006 debate to delete section 57 from the Criminal Code. I imagine that each of those members knew in their own hearts that they were talking about somebody who had failed the ethics test, yet one after the other they stood up and spoke warmly of his character. They were speaking about a man who had failed the character test in a prior career. I thank the conservative members of 2005 and 2006 for working and speaking against the deletion of section 57 from the Criminal Code.

During my maiden speech I spoke about how, from outside of politics, I had observed not only Gordon Nuttall but also the ALP. I saw their ethics. Drawing on my training in accounting and from my observations of the ALP, I knew that it was an organisation devoid of ethics and I became angry. I dare say I stand here today because I became angry at the ALP and decided to join the fight on the side of

light rather than darkness. In 2006 I had the privilege of representing the Liberal Party as a candidate. While campaigning, arguably my most memorable conversation was at Peter Morris Park at Rothwell. A constituent came to me and very earnestly said, 'Will you reinstate section 57?' Therefore, today I am very proud to stand here and be part of the process to reinstate section 57 on behalf of the LNP government. Why do we need sections 53, 56 and, importantly, 57 to be a part of the Criminal Code? We need to reinstate this vital missing link in what is an otherwise comprehensive piece of legislation. I am proud to be a member of this government, I am proud to be here today restoring accountability and I am proud of the pledge that I gave during the 2012 election. I believe that governments and members should all be held accountable. I congratulate the Attorney-General for his good work and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (12.25 pm): Today I rise to speak on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. I thank most sincerely the Attorney-General for introducing this bill. I say to the Attorney-General, 'Well done!' It is tragic that we even have a piece of legislation called 'false evidence'. It is embarrassing to say the least. During the last half an hour or 15 minutes that I have been sitting here, I noticed one of the many school groups that come through this place. I thought about our students, our leaders of tomorrow, the kids who are learning about life and getting an education. They must have been wondering, 'Are they seriously debating whether or not you can mislead parliament, whether or not they should be completely honest in this place and be upright and forthright in their answers and in their interrogation of legislation?' That is what they heard. All morning they have heard how we should not be telling fibs in this place and how we have to legislate to make that so. However, even worse was that they heard that the legislation was in place but it was taken away to protect mates.

Mr Ruthenberg: After a long time.

Mr DOWLING: After an incredible amount of time. For a long time we had legislation that protected the integrity of the processes of this place and we had systems in place, yet someone came in here and introduced an amendment that took away that provision. Not only did they legislate to take away those provisions, but they actually recalled parliament to do so. They brought in all the members from the length and breadth of this state. They dragged them back to this House in order to make falsehood acceptable. That is what they did.

Mr Mander: It was a waste.

Mr DOWLING: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Everton: it was a complete waste. It was a complete scandal. Much has been made of Gordon Nuttall and his role and actions in all of this. I take a slightly different view. I think the seat of blame lies with Labor. It is Labor I hold in contempt. It brought in the provisions. It is the one who built this wall around one of its members and I presume it was aware there were issues surrounding that member. Labor built this fortress around one of its own to protect itself, instead of allowing the due process to run its course. It did that through the removal of section 57. I take on board a comment made by the member for Mackay, who said that the system works otherwise Nuttall would not be in jail today. He is absolutely right. Justice would have been delivered ultimately, but it would have been delivered in a much more timely manner. It would have been delivered without all the barricades that the Labor government could possibly place in the way of justice. Lady Justice is blindfolded and she holds scales, but Labor also handcuffed her and chained her to removable objects. If you think justice is not swift, certainly it was not in this case.

I just hope that the students who were here today—we all did the school tour when we were little; and any one of them could end up in this place—remember that they were here the day when a great injustice was righted, that an appalling black day in this Legislative Assembly was righted the day they visited this House. I sincerely hope that they remember that. I hope that the media actually makes significant mention of this because it is a very significant day. Instead of getting caught up in the trivialities, this is where it all happens. This is the room where the rubber hits the road. This is where we have to be open and honest and accountable with setting the legislative frameworks.

We cannot afford to protect mates. We can support friends who make mistakes—absolutely—but we cannot protect them to the detriment of the integrity of this state. That is what happened way back when Beattie recalled parliament to remove section 57, and I am pleased to report that one Jarrod Bleijie, the honourable member for Kawana, will go down in the history books as the one who brought it back. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (12.30 pm): It is with much pleasure that I speak today to the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. This piece of legislation has probably been brought about by the former member for Cunningham, Stuart Copeland, when he asked that leading question at the budget estimates hearings in 2005 and the then minister trapped himself by giving false information at the budget estimates hearings.

We have heard the name Gordon Nuttall mentioned here. We have not heard the name Keith Wright. We have not heard the name Bill D'Arcy. The list goes on and on. We hear about former members of the Bjelke-Petersen and Ahern governments, but that was not about deceit. The situation

here is that these people are criminals and criminals of the highest order. I heard the member for Nicklin here today touch on the issue of candidates in elections. I know the scrutiny that the LNP members and candidates were subject to before the election in relation to their entitlement to stand for election to this great parliament.

I have to say that there were people who were rubbed out. There were people who were asked a question, but was that applicable on the Labor side? No, it was not because they do not conform with that type of scrutiny. That is what this legislation is all about. As a child we are taught to tell the truth, to be honest and to do the right thing. As I said to the member for Gladstone earlier today, as a kid I think my mother made me bite into more cakes of soap than any other kid, and at the end of the day probably the Labor Party—

Mr McArdle: It didn't work.

Mr JOHNSON: It did work because I do tell the truth. I used to have to bite the soap and scrub my mouth out for swearing but I do not even swear anymore, although those on that side have driven me to it sometimes.

We heard the Deputy Leader of the Opposition make reference here today about what our intent is. It would have been good if the former Labor government had had the honesty and integrity and decency not to bring the parliament back here on 9 December 2005 but to let justice take its course. In terms of the then Premier protecting somebody who has done the wrong thing, as the Minister for Education, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, John-Paul Langbroek, said in the House today, they were factional mates. They were mates in the same faction of the Labor Party, and that is why the Labor Party works the way it does. It puts members in here through factional deals. On our side of the House we are put in here because we have the credentials to uphold what the people of our electorates that we represent want, and that is honesty, decency and fair representation.

Never in the history of this parliament or in the history of any parliament—and today the member for Surfers Paradise, the Minister for Education, mentioned the British system going back to the 19th century. If members of this Labor Party had been around in the 19th century, they would have had their heads lopped off. We would have had nobody on that side today through that—

Ms Palaszczuk: What?

Mr JOHNSON: That is what would have happened to you. They would have executed the lot of you because none of you conform with the truth.

Mrs Scott: Come on. That's disgraceful.

Mr JOHNSON: You might not like what I am saying, but the truth does hurt. The fact of the matter is that deceit and dishonesty are what has led the Labor Party in this state to the deplorable situation it is in today. There are some very good people in the Labor Party. I know that myself. There are good people in every party. But the point I make is that it is about time we saw decency stand up and take account of itself, and that is exactly what the Attorney-General has done in introducing the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill.

This bill is giving back to the people of Queensland what they want: they want honesty from their politicians, they want honesty in their parliament, they want honesty in everything we do. We are in the spotlight all the time. No, we do not have an upper house in this parliament but we have the media, and I hope the media might accurately report on and make some accurate assessments about what this government is about. What we are about is bringing transparency back to the people of Queensland through an honest system, and that is what the people of Queensland want. On 24 March the people of Queensland voted for this piece of legislation. This was one of the policies that we took to the 24 March election—to restore honesty and decency and integrity to this parliament, and that is precisely what we are doing today.

I just hope that the opposition members will support this piece of legislation and show that they are fair dinkum about having honesty and transparency in the delivery of government. Not only is this about the delivery of government; but it is about the estimates committee system; it is about restoring section 57, which was removed by the Labor Party; and it is also about showing the people of Queensland that we are genuine and that we are going to be honest and open.

A lot of the problems that we hear from the Labor opposition at the moment are to do with people having been paid off in jobs, redundancies and all of these sorts of things. But I do say here today that one of the real fallouts from the former Labor administration is deceit. When we talk about deceit, in the budget estimates committee system that we have had over the last 20 years we never, ever seem to get the right answers. We get fabricated 'facts'. With a lot of those fabricated 'facts', we are now finding out that we were right all along. The real truth never came out. The Treasurer has now found out that we have an horrific debt in this state of some \$65 billion and it will grow further out of control if we do not manage it. That is why we have to manage it. We are not managing it for us; we are managing it for the children of today, for the kids of tomorrow and for the future generations of Queenslanders.

We want to restore this state to an honest, open level of government, to a level of government where people can be proud of their politicians. I am proud to represent the people of Gregory. I have done that over a long period of time by being honest with them. If I know the answer, I tell them. If I do not know the answer, I tell them I do not know it. I do not fabricate 'facts' for the sake of an answer. If you do something, you do it. If you do not do something, you tell the people you represent. That is what it is all about. If you cannot find out the answer, you tell them you cannot find out. You do not hide it. You do not operate behind deceit. You do not do it in a way that you think makes you look good, because at the end of the day you get found out. What happened after 24 March this year? The people of Queensland found out exactly how they have been deceived and cheated and defrauded by the Labor administration over nearly 20 years in this state, and enough is enough.

That is why today when Campbell Newman came to power with his LNP government on 24 March 2012 the people of Queensland said, 'We've had enough. We want open and accountable government. We want transparency in government. We want honesty from our ministers, from our assistant ministers and from all members of parliament,' and the committee system is no exception. I hope the rest of Queensland hear that this government is on track to deliver honesty, integrity and decency and to eliminate the deceit and the fraud that we have witnessed over nearly 20 years of Labor.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.39 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012. In particular, I thank my colleagues on this side of the House. Before I turn to general statements about the bill and before I refer to some members' statements made during this debate, I want to lay it out honestly and deliberately what we are on about.

Mr Ruthenberg: Please do, Minister.

Mr BLEIJIE: The few Labor Party members who have spoken in this debate have said, 'We support it with reservation because of the privileges of the parliament. We would not want parliamentarians to get caught up in what they say.' Make no mistake: this is being changed because the Labor Party recalled parliament to protect one of its own. That is what we are talking about here. Labor can disguise it under the false pretence of being worried about the privileges of parliament, but this law has been in the Criminal Code for many, many years. As far as I know, one issue where it has potentially arisen was with Gordon Nuttall—a Labor Party former minister.

Make no mistake: this is not about questioning the privileges of this parliament and what members may or may not say. This legislation is fixing a piece of law that was removed to protect one of their own—Gordon Nuttall, a former minister. Reintroducing section 57 of the Criminal Code is an illustration of the government's commitment to restoring accountability in government and meeting the expectations of Queenslanders that parliamentarians act honestly, responsibly and with the highest of integrity.

The bill reintroduces the criminal charge offence of giving false evidence to parliament or its committees. The bill re-enacts repealed section 57 of the Criminal Code with amendment. Repealed section 57 contained the offence of false evidence before the parliament, with a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment applying. A key difference between the repealed section 57 and the new section 57 is that the new section 57 makes it clear that parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech is abrogated to the extent necessary to prosecute the person for the offence.

The bill also reintroduces, with amendments that I will be moving later, repealed sections 56 and 58 of the Criminal Code. The bill also amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to ensure that answers given before the Legislative Assembly are dealt with in the same way as answers given before a committee in terms of their admissibility in certain criminal proceedings or a proceeding before the Assembly or its committee. The Legislative Assembly will retain the right to decide whether particular conduct should be dealt with as a contempt of parliament or whether it should be prosecuted under the new offence. When it comes to integrity, the former Beattie-Bligh governments—

Mr Stevens: Couldn't spell it.

Mr BLEIJIE: They couldn't spell it, they don't understand it and they were certainly tainted by the Gordon Nuttall brush and the events of 2005, following which they removed section 57 of the Criminal Code to essentially legalise lying in this great place. They repealed section 57 after former health minister Gordon Nuttall deliberately misled parliamentary Estimates Committee D on 8 July 2005. I know that members have referred to the estimates committee process where this all took place, but I would like to read the transcript because I think it shows just what went wrong and the train crash that ultimately occurred. On 8 July 2005 in the estimates we had the following—

Mr COPELAND: Minister, I refer to your statement about the process of recruiting overseas trained doctors. It was reported in the *Courier-Mail* on 30 April this year that—

Nuttall's position is that he did not know about the widely held concerns over the proficiency of overseas trained doctors streaming into Queensland, nor did he know, he says, about the worries over the lack of screening of their qualifications because he said nobody, not his Director-General, Dr Steve Buckland, his Head of Health Services, Dr John Scott, nor any of their underlings had told him. 'In all the briefings given to me when I became minister, all the briefs were by way of senior management coming in and talking to me about their issues. This issue of overseas trained doctors was never raised—never ever raised.'

Minister, do you stand by that statement that you were never ever advised by your department of the issues relating to overseas trained doctors?

Mr NUTTALL: What issues are you referring to?

Mr COPELAND: About the training, the concerns over proficiencies, the registration of those doctors coming into Queensland or any of those issues regarding OTDs as you were quoted as saying?

Mr NUTTALL: I stand by the statement I made.

Mr COPELAND: You were never ever briefed?

Mr NUTTALL: I stand by the statement I made.

Mr COPELAND: Minister, could I ask Dr Buckland and Dr Scott whether they agree that you were never ever briefed on the issues of OTDs?

Mr NUTTALL: I am happy for them to answer that, but let us get it very clear when we talk about the issues of overseas trained doctors. The question is around the competency of overseas trained doctors. Is that what you are getting at?

Mr COPELAND: Widely held concerns about the proficiencies of overseas trained doctors, which is what you said. There has been a whole range of issues that have been raised over the proficiencies of overseas trained doctors for 18 months, and you said that you were never ever briefed about any of those widely held concerns.

Mr NUTTALL: I will let Dr Buckland answer and Dr Scott can answer.

Dr Scott: Certainly, my understanding is that in discussions that I had had with the minister's office and with the minister in the past, either on the basis of one to one or in concert with other officers of Queensland Health, the issues had been raised. But I think also that there have been other meetings in the past with outside agencies like the AMA or the Rural Doctors where I understood that those issues had been raised as well.

The circus continues a little further and then Mr Nuttall says—

The issue around the competencies of overseas trained doctors was never brought to my attention. It was never brought to my attention that there were problems around the competencies of overseas trained doctors by anyone, and, as I said to you, I stand by that statement.

Mr COPELAND: Thank you, Minister. Dr Scott has just said that his belief was that they indeed were raised with you.

Mr NUTTALL: And I am telling you they were not.

Mr COPELAND: Could we perhaps get Dr Buckland to clarify the position? Yes or no, Minister? That is all we need.

Mr NUTTALL: I do not quite understand what you are trying to get at here.

Mr COPELAND: I think it is a very important issue—that you have publicly criticised—

Mr NUTTALL: And where is this in the estimates? I have tried to clarify it with you, but I am trying to come to grips with where this is in terms of the estimates that we are trying to address, or are you trying to run a parallel inquiry to Commissioner Morris?

It then got a bit hot and contested. I think they had to take a morning-tea break. After morning tea the show continued. There was then another page of statements and then Mr Nuttall says—

I am glad we have clarified that. Because what you have got there and what you have said there is this: the article referred to by you this morning appeared in the *Courier-Mail* earlier this year following issues in Bundaberg being raised publicly. That is where it initially came from. My comments in that article related to the situation at the Bundaberg Base Hospital, although they were reported in a broader fashion ... I want to make it very clear—very clear—at no stage was I briefed about the competency of any overseas trained doctor at the Bundaberg Base Hospital and, as I outlined today, I stand by these comments. If you look at that article it says 'when I first became minister'. If you ever reach the dizzy heights of being a minister, what will happen to you is that your new department will brief you—give you briefings on all areas of your department.

...

Mr COPELAND: Well—

Mr NUTTALL: That is right, that is what it says.

Mr COPELAND: Minister, you have just said two different things.

Mr NUTTALL: No, I did not.

Mr COPELAND: You did. In the context of that quotation—which was reported more broadly than you actually said—you said that you were not briefed about overseas trained doctors at Bundaberg Base Hospital and that that is what the quotation pertains to. You have now just said again, reiterating what you said earlier, that the issue of OTDs was never raised with you.

Mr NUTTALL: Listen to what I said.

Mr COPELAND: I am trying my best, Minister. It would be very easy to clarify it if you would allow Dr Buckland to answer.

Mr NUTTALL: If you are prepared to listen you will understand. What I said in that article, and you quoted it, is that when I became the minister—is that what it says?

It is quite confusing, isn't it? I do not know where Mr Nuttall was going with all of this. They then continued—

Mr COPELAND: It says that when you became the minister, in all the briefings given to you—

Mr NUTTALL: That is right.

Mr COPELAND: In all the briefings—

Mr NUTTALL: That is right. So when you become the minister—

Mr COPELAND: So when did the briefings stop after you became minister?

This is where this circus came from. What happened then is of course that complaints were made. The CMC investigated the allegations of misrepresentation and of knowingly misleading the committee, and the CMC recommended through the prosecutors to the Attorney-General at the time that a prosecution should take place.

So as the Attorney was sitting in her office looking at this brief and wondering what was going to happen to Mr Nuttall, the Premier at the time recalled parliament. The Labor Party was thinking, 'Let us not be judged. Let our ministers not be judged by what they say or if they potentially mislead parliament. Let us just change the Criminal Code so he gets off.' There was a real chance that Mr Nuttall would have been prosecuted under section 57 of the Criminal Code, but do you know what happened, honourable members? When the prosecution either looked at it or decided to prosecute, they had nothing to prosecute Mr Nuttall under because the Labor Party had repealed section 57. Although the evidence was there and the prosecutors were ready, they could not prosecute Mr Nuttall because the Labor Party took elements of the prosecution out of the Criminal Code so therefore he could not be prosecuted. If you applied it to any provision in the Criminal Code—like stalking, harassment or any of those provisions—it is exactly the same. If a Labor Party member was up on that sort of charge, the Labor Party would come in here and take it out of the Criminal Code to let one of their own off. That is not how you treat the Criminal Code in Queensland. That is not how you treat the people of Queensland. You cannot stand up and say that your government is all about integrity and accountability when you proceed down that path.

I have outlined essentially the history of what the CMC said in their report concerning Mr Nuttall being referred to parliament. It was clear that Labor demonstrated by their actions a complete and absolute contempt for this parliament by recalling the parliament on that fateful day and rushing through the repeal of section 57 on the night that the Beaconsfield miners were rescued. When the Criminal Code Amendment Bill was introduced by the former Labor Attorney-General, Linda Lavarch, and was passed on 26 May 2006, some sat in this place and did not speak against it but voted for it. Some who sat in this place then are still in this place today serving in the opposition but they did not speak against this, which shows a complete contempt.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will take the interjection from the honourable Manager of Government Business. I can recall debates we had trying to get this through when we were in opposition, and I can recall the statements made by the former premiers Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh and the glowing character references they gave to Mr Nuttall when they recalled parliament. If the new members do not know, parliament was not due to sit but they created a special session of parliament to get Gordon Nuttall off potential charges and prosecution under former section 57 of the Criminal Code. That is not what we are elected to do. That is not what legislators are elected to do—to make laws to suit our friends or to make sure that our friends cannot be prosecuted.

The LNP are well on the way to restoring accountability and integrity into Queensland politics. We cannot restore accountability and integrity with a little green paper or a little white paper, like Anna Bligh tried to do; we need to show actions. You cannot just expect the Queensland voters to think you believe in integrity and accountability; you have to show it by your actions. The Labor Party certainly had many actions but they were not the actions of integrity, accountability, openness and transparency. I am glad the LNP government is on the way to showing a new level of accountability and integrity in Queensland with the reintroduction of section 57 of the Criminal Code.

As I outlined in my second reading speech, I intend to move a number of amendments to the bill to implement recommendations 1, 3 and 4 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. Amendments will be made to reinsert into the Criminal Code contemporary versions of repealed sections 56 and 58. Repealed section 56 prohibited persons from disturbing the legislature. Repealed section 58 applied to witnesses refusing to attend or give evidence before the parliament or a parliamentary committee. New section 56, 'Disturbing the legislature', will in effect reinsert the repealed section but with minor drafting changes to the language of the original section to reflect modern drafting practices. When we talk about section 56, we are talking about people who attend when parliament is sitting. We note the gallery is empty but it has been full on occasions recently.

Ms Palaszczuk: No-one here to listen to you? What a disappointment.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. The public may not be up in the gallery listening to me but they are certainly online in their workplaces watching the parliamentary proceedings. I tell the shadow Attorney one thing: we do not stack the public gallery, we do not incite the public gallery for fear or favour and we do not crank them up. We do not sit up in the public gallery inciting the hatred that is shown to politicians. We respect the public's right to be able to sit in that gallery and remain silent as debate occurs on the floor of this chamber. I cannot remember a time in history when any Liberal National Party member sat in that gallery and incited the hatred that we saw a few weeks ago—because we respect the right for the public to protest but not in this place.

When the Clerk of the Parliament put in a very, very well written submission to the committee, I looked at it and I made the call that we should reintroduce section 56. The behaviour we saw in the parliament a few weeks ago drew criticism from this side of the place but a happy face from one person opposite, the member for South Brisbane. As people were being ejected from this chamber, all the member for South Brisbane could do was smile and laugh because what she had set out to achieve had happened—the people got thrown out. The member for South Brisbane has talked about Fitzgerald and Joh Bjelke-Petersen—

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. He is making accusations—

Mr BLEIJIE: Oh, you should know all about that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Attorney-General, I will hear the point of order.

Ms TRAD: I find the statements the Attorney-General made offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney, you have been asked to withdraw those statements. It would help the House if they could be withdrawn.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the comments. One of the funniest things I have heard in this place is the member for South Brisbane saying that she is offended by comments, because as we saw today she can dish it out but she cannot cop it. The member for South Brisbane is like a chess board over there—she is like the knight behind waiting to take out the pawn in front to move forward.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, could you adjourn the debate?

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I was on fire!

Debate, on motion of Mr Bleijie, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

North Stradbroke Island

Dr ROBINSON (Cleveland—LNP) (2.30 pm): The future of North Stradbroke Island is as bright as the sun that warms its sandy beaches and walking trails all year round. The residents of Straddie are, in general, cheerful and positive about their future now that the failed Bligh government has been removed. The risk to their future has been removed and now the task of rebuilding confidence and getting Straddie back on track has started.

The residents of Straddie gave the Newman government a very large mandate to change directions on Straddie with regard to cost-of-living issues and reinstating previously understood and agreed upon time lines for sandmining, among other issues. The Newman government's intervention on this matter will prevent the economic crash that the former government's policies would have brought on. A local recession has now been averted and local residents, workers and businesses are grateful.

Getting tourism back on track by working closely with the local tourism and hospitality sector and with local businesses has become important. I thank the tourism minister for a recent visit to Cleveland to discuss tourism on North Stradbroke Island and in other parts of the Redlands. Tourism suffered under the former government. Tourism is one of the pillars of the Straddie economy that must be nurtured and a practical approach adopted. Ecotourism is a part of that approach, but the former government's plans were overreliant on tourism, with the former Premier thinking that 400 jobs could somehow be created out of thin air. That is the equivalent of five Tangalooma resorts, which nobody thought was possible. The September school holidays are an important time for tourism and small businesses on the island and for jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector. The school holidays are fast approaching. I encourage people to visit North Stradbroke Island this holiday period.

Another Labor legacy is a problem with squatters in the bush. I raised this issue with the previous government on a number of occasions from a safety and disaster management perspective but without any interest or action to deal with the problem. As a result, the problem has compounded and, again, time and resources are being used to try to address the legacy of the previous government.

The Newman government is also working hard to address some recent incidents of bad behaviour of a few individuals, events that have caused angst and concern in the community. I want to acknowledge Brian and Hetty Conlon, who experienced a violent break-in recently. They are respected members of the community. There will be a fundraising event for them on 11 August 2012 from 11 am at the Dunwich Sharks Football Club. I want to assure the people of North Stradbroke Island and mainland Redlands that violence will not be tolerated and that we are working hard to make sure that Straddie remains the safe place that it has always been. I want to thank the police minister for arranging meetings and also the QPS personnel for their involvement.

The legacy of the previous government in terms of education is also a failed one. The former government left behind a junior high school program that is dysfunctional. I want to thank the education minister, his staff and the departmental personnel for their help in getting education back on track on North Stradbroke Island.

Jambia, Ms S

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.33 pm): I am pleased to rise to pay homage to a truly remarkable young woman with an inspirational story who is residing in the Chatsworth electorate. She is someone from whom all Australians can learn. I recently had the privilege of meeting Sarah Jambia, a resident of Carina and a refugee from the West African nation of Sierra Leone. Sarah, her mother and three siblings arrived in Australia in August 2009, leaving behind the turmoil and war of the nation's capital, Freetown, one of the most violent cities on the planet. They left behind a life of fear, witnessing social atrocities like assault, rape and the hacking off of hands and feet. Tragically, Sarah also saw her father shot right in front of her eyes. I really cannot imagine what life must have been like for Sarah and her family living in this state of civil unrest and for the millions of Sierra Leoneans still there today.

It was at this point that Sarah and her family knew they needed to get out. After months of living in a camp in neighbouring Guinea, they made the decision to find a safer life here in Australia. Witnessing first-hand the perils of slow economic growth and a failed political system, Sarah's thirst for politics is the reason I came to meet this extraordinary young woman. Sarah is the YMCA youth parliament representative for Chatsworth, and I would like to congratulate her for stepping into this role. Sarah and I share the same concern for good governance and participative democracy in Australia.

Hearing Sarah's story was a sobering reminder that many Australians take democracy for granted. The right to vote and to freely speak our mind are things Australians in 2012 have never really had to fight for, or die for. As Sarah has eloquently observed, 'It is a great pity'. This august House and institution is greater than any individual member or party. We need to be able to place our trust and faith in our elected representatives to foster and deliver good governance. I urge this House to be reminded that for those of us privileged to have been given our community's trust on 24 March 2012, our responsibility is great. Sarah told me that in Sierra Leone 'leaders are masters, rather than servants' for the people. It is our duty, as elected representatives in a participative democracy to be servants for all people, diverse of cultures, values and opinions.

Today in the House I would like to take this opportunity to again congratulate Sarah on her election to the YMCA youth parliament as the representative for Chatsworth and to thank her for allowing me to share her story. Sarah has indeed a bright future in politics and I hope, as does Sarah, that she may one day return to Sierra Leone and serve her people as a democratically elected servant of the people.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (2.36 pm): On Tuesday, 31 July 2012 this parliament debated a motion that in its final amended form read—

That this House:

- supports the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme; and
- calls on the Federal Government to fully fund the scheme in line with the recommendations of the Productivity Commission report.

I was shocked to stand in this place and see the seven Labor members and one Independent on the other side of the chamber voting against this motion and, subsequently, not supporting this critical national disability reform. I fully support this national reform and was proud to stand on this side of the chamber voting in favour of the motion to have this scheme fully funded as per those recommendations of the Productivity Commission.

I personally have been a big supporter of the NDIS. I participated in the Count Me In Qld! NDIS public information forum last year throughout my campaign. That was held in Morayfield of course. Contrary to what the story in the media might have been lately or what they are trying to tell us, the Newman government has always been very clear that we want the NDIS here in Queensland. In fact, Premier Newman delivered a speech here in this chamber on Tuesday night in which he stated—

I recognise that reforming disability services means reforming the lives and support of our nation's most vulnerable people. That is why my government is and has always been a strong supporter of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We want to be part of this very important national reform ...

Queensland already spends \$930 million on disability services and we have pledged to increase funding when the massive deficit left by Labor has been overcome. That is why it is important for this government to make tough decisions now to get Queensland's finances back on track. In contrast, the federal Labor government only contributes around \$300 million to disability services. I find it hard to swallow that Julia Gillard and her Labor colleagues, including those in this parliament, want to play political football with the lives of those with disabilities. To me that is downright disgusting. It seems to me that they will preference spending \$50 billion on a national high-speed internet broadband scheme in which most will be unable to afford to participate; however, they are not prepared to spend \$8 billion to support those with disabilities in our community.

Labor members in this place were quite happy to support Labor's federal carbon tax to gain support from the Greens and to look after their own political careers, but they do not have the guts to stand up and support those with disabilities. I call on all those Labor members in this House to pick up the phone to Julia Gillard and their fellow Labor colleagues in Canberra and tell them to stop playing politics with the lives of families with disabilities and to fund this scheme in full as per the recommendations in the Productivity Commission's report. I say to those people with a disability, their families and their carers that, as your local member, I am committed, as is this Newman government, to working on behalf of people with disabilities to improve the support and opportunities they shall receive.

Supreme and District Courts Complex

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise to commend the opening of the new Supreme and District courts complex in Brisbane. This \$600 million project, fully funded by the former Labor government, will help transform our legal district. I congratulate all involved in its inception, design and construction.

While I am sure those opposite will be lining up to take credit for this magnificent new development once it is opened tomorrow, it is worth noting that it took a Labor government to get it off the ground and see it through to completion. This is an investment in architecture and public infrastructure that Brisbane and Queensland can be proud of. It is a fitting tribute to the former government's commitment to a fair Queensland delivering a modern and inclusive justice system for all Queenslanders. The state-of-the-art design doubles the floor space of the former complex and allows 45 courts to operate when at full capacity. That is 13 more than were available in the old District and Supreme courts complex across the road, and that is a true reflection of a continually growing Queensland. It means that more trials will be able to be staged each year, cutting down on backlogs and offering a more efficient system of justice to all Queenslanders.

The new courts complex also stands as a testament to our investment in public infrastructure, even in times of difficulties. Indeed, you might say that the courts stand as a reminder of the importance of public investment, especially in times of economic challenges. Investment in the complex created approximately 5,000 jobs over the period of its construction—a time that included the global financial crisis and the worst natural disasters in Queensland's recorded history. The project utilised the skills of thousands of carpenters, electricians, plumbers, tilers and painters, amongst others.

The building also represents the respect that the courts and the administration of justice should be accorded. Amongst the legal community, in the broader society and in this parliament, the role of the judiciary should be respected and the separation of powers should be honoured. Unfortunately, on the eve of the opening of this magnificent new complex we are seeing that not even our judicial system is safe from this slash-and-burn government. Make no mistake: the judiciary is concerned about what is to come from this government. I have been approached by senior members of the judiciary who have voiced their strong concern about and opposition to the plans this government has to scrap the important State Reporting Bureau, which is responsible for transcribing the events within our courtrooms. They also question the motivation behind the planned closure of several courthouses throughout the south-east corner. So let us make sure that, just as the buildings stand to represent the strength of our legal system, we give respect to the practitioners and the judges that keep our system alive and thriving. I want to give my best wishes to the judges, lawyers, court staff and administration and support staff who will enjoy the new facilities as they carry out their very important roles in the administration of our legal system here in Queensland.

Mount Ommaney, Events

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.42 pm): The other day my colleague from Sandgate mentioned that it is festival season. I would like to tell the House about the great festival atmosphere in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. If it is a festival you are looking for, Mount Ommaney is the place to be.

Last weekend I attended over two days the ninth Centenary Rocks Festival that was a celebration of families, community and businesses in the Centenary suburbs. Centenary Community Connections, headed by Belinda Karnaghan, created a truly wonderful weekend of family fun and interactive community club and business networking. The fabulous food and all-day stage entertainment from local artists saw thousands of people spread out a blanket on the lawn and relax in the beautiful Centenary suburbs and enjoy the great Brisbane weather. Just as dusk was settling, the most fabulous fireworks display ended a truly great day. The next morning we started off with a combined church service in the park attended by hundreds of people. It was a great way to start off a Sunday morning. Next year will be bigger and better in the Mount Ommaney electorate with the 10th anniversary of the Centenary Rocks Festival.

This weekend the Middle Park State School will host its school fete. This promises to be the biggest and best yet, as this great school is also celebrating its 25th anniversary. With food stalls, rides, competitions and entertainment, this will be a day not to be missed. I acknowledge the P&C for the hard work they do to organise this event and make it such a great and special day. They do a fantastic job. They will be looking to raise some funds for the school. I invite members to come and experience the community spirit in Mount Ommaney and support the Middle Park State School fete.

It is festival season. It is the time to be out and about at the school fetes and other marvellous events in each electorate. Again, I encourage members to come to Mount Ommaney to celebrate 25 years of the Middle Park State School. It will be a great family day showcasing our community spirit.

Townsville, Crime

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (2.44 pm): I rise to speak about something near and dear to my heart: law and order. I will keep banging on about this matter, as I know will the members for Townsville and Thuringowa. We have seen over recent years what happens when government is on autopilot: nothing gets done.

The other day I posted a survey to some of my constituents and I want to report to the House the results of that survey. Eighty-two per cent of people who responded to that survey listed crime as one of the top 3 issues that affect them. More than 50 per cent of those listed it as No. 1. Today in the House we saw the Premier table a petition containing over 5,000 signatures from people who want boot camp action. North Queenslanders have had enough. They want to see tougher sentences for repeat offenders, they want to see accountability and they want to see boot camp trials.

I will outline a few things that have happened in recent times in our great part of the state. We have had three serious armed robberies with knives, a bashing and a stabbing—all in the past five days alone. Last weekend in Townsville saw the carjacking of a 65-year-old woman while her husband parked their car and went into a corner store. I can only imagine how harrowing that was for her. The carjackers then drove to Willows Mini Mart and conducted an armed robbery. That minimart is owned by a great personal friend of mine, Mr Anthony Pedrini. I can only imagine what a terrible ordeal that was for his young staff members. Also in my electorate, at the Riverside Foodworks there was an armed robbery of two women in their 20s. There were also incidents at the chemist at Annandale and at the Palmerston Street servo.

The north will not just sit back and take this. I am not suggesting vigilante action but the sort of northern enterprise that was shown when Helen Parkinson posted on Facebook on 11 June that her car had been stolen. Tens of thousands of people knew about that. I would like to acknowledge the great work of the local newspaper, the *Townsville Bulletin*, in making that cause known.

This government recognises the community's anger and intends to protect them with tougher sentencing and other measures, such as charging guilty offenders some of the administration costs of their court appearance. That is why I rose in the House earlier this week to support the Penalties and Sentences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, and it is why I will speak in support of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill in due course. We are serious about protecting our communities, remembering that it is our job to safeguard the victim. Let the criminals know that the Newman government has them in its sights. We will again let decent, law-abiding citizens know that the streets belong to them, not thugs.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mr MALONE (Mirani—LNP) (2.47 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak again about the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which one of my colleagues has already spoken about this afternoon. Before coming to government I spent some time as the shadow minister in the area of disabilities. In that time I gained a great insight into those very vulnerable people and the challenges they face almost on an hourly basis. I also take my hat off to the carers and the parents of people with disabilities.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is planned to be introduced in 2018. The Gillard government has proposed four trial sites across Australia. This means that a number of states and territories will miss out on a trial site. Obviously Queensland is not in a situation to fund one of those trial sites, and nor should it. It is a federal scheme and it should be funded federally.

I am not sure that people have actually thought through the issues involved with this scheme. I hear that there will be a trial site in central New South Wales. What about the people with disabilities in the rest of New South Wales as they watch on and see what is happening in an area that is being funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme? How will they feel for the next two, three or four years while this trial goes on?

There has been a lot of waste by the federal government over a long period of time with the fluffy stuff in the ceilings and the BER scheme which tore up basketball courts and tennis courts to build halls in schools that already had access to a community hall. Huge amounts of money have been spent on the illegal arrival of people from overseas. Then of course, without going into any great depth, there were the \$1,000 cheques that arrived in everybody's letterbox under Kevin 07 and more recently the compensation that some received for the carbon tax—a tax that we did not really want. Had the federal government taken a few billion dollars off the national broadband scheme, the national disability scheme could be easily funded. I would suggest to the members in the House today that we do need to look after people with disabilities. We are now spending \$900 million a year to do that, and we will spend more. Unfortunately, the state of the economy in Queensland precludes us from throwing the required money in to make this happen. I commend the House to support the NDIS and extra funding for it.

Minister for Housing and Public Works

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (2.50 pm): This afternoon I rise to bring to the attention of the House the actions of the worst landlord in the country—'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg. On 13 June 2012—50 days ago—the minister announced a bold new plan to reform public housing in Queensland to free up rooms in houses by 'adopting a compassionate view', as outlined in his letter, and I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Pro forma letter, undated, from the Hon. Dr Flegg, Minister for Housing and Public Works, addressed 'Dear tenant' [661].

How does sending a letter to a 76-year-old invalid grandmother in Inala stating that a department initiative transfer would occur amount to compassion? How does axing Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service programs, like in Ipswich, which support thousands of individuals through local community based advocacy support services at a time when people are faced with massive upheaval in their lives amount to compassion? How does placing current long-term residents like Constance Dailey of Inala on a three-year lease, providing her with less stability and causing her to live her life in fear knowing that she can be moved on at any time, amount to compassion? How does sending a letter to residents at the Monte Carlo Caravan Park at Cannon Hill, the Woombye Gardens Caravan Park at Woombye and the Lazy Acres Caravan Park at Torquay, displacing hundreds and hundreds of residents on to the streets without a place to go, amount to compassion? I table a copy of the letter sent to the people at the caravan park by the cruel, cold and callous 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 27 July 2012, from Ms Natalie McDonald, Director-General, Department of Housing and Public Works, addressed 'Dear resident' [662].

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: I visited Monte Carlo Caravan Park residents yesterday, who were clearly devastated and in shock at the letter they had received.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! I call the member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. One elderly resident collapsed due to the minister's actions and was taken away by ambulance. Many of these people have spent hundreds and thousands of dollars modernising their properties and making them their castle. Those opposite have been in government for over 100 days and they have already lost touch with the Queensland community. As 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg buys a \$1.2 million investment unit, thousands of Queenslanders live in fear of where they are going to live, and I table the *Sunday Mail* article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Sunday Mail*, dated 22 July 2012, titled 'He'll take Manhattan ... as his department prepares to punt Miriam from home of 39 years' [663].

Coupled with this was the minister's statement on Seven News last night in relation to selling off government owned caravan parks, stating, 'They aren't really an asset. They are a liability.' The minister does not think that people's homes in a caravan park, such as Esther Mellows who has lived in the caravan park for 36 years, are assets but merely liabilities. People are never liabilities—only to the cruel, callous and cold LNP government. But the Premier—

(Time expired)

Challenge Games

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (2.53 pm): As we follow the travails of our Aussie athletes at the London Olympics, it is appropriate that I rise today to highlight the success of some of our younger athletes at the North Queensland Challenge Games who themselves face relatively greater and lifelong challenges. Last week I was fortunate, along with the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, to attend these games in Townsville.

The purpose of the Challenge Games is to provide two days of fun, friendship and participation in a range of athletic and sporting activities for students who have a disability. Students, according to their own level of interest and ability, participate in as many or as few events as they wish. Whilst the focus of the games is fun and participation, they also allow for the identification of students from all schools—state or private—who may be interested in competing at further school, regional or state level in formal track and field events. Additionally this year, for those who wished, the games enabled official classification for future events.

The 800-plus participants travelled from all over Queensland—from as far north as Weipa, west to Mount Isa and south to Mackay. The games also gave the kids the opportunity to meet some of their heroes such as Richard Coleman, Australian Paralympian; Natalie Hodges, Australian under-25 World Cup wheelchair basketballer and a former Challenge Games participant; and Darren McKenan, wheelchair basketballer and state and Oceania record holder in athletics.

The Challenge Games have won numerous awards, including the 2009 Townsville City Council's Inclusive Communities Award and more recently Education Queensland's Northern Region's Showcase Award for Excellence in Inclusive Education. These awards are a great acknowledgement for hardworking committee members like Lynne Derry of Hermit Park State School, Robyn Hosking of Heatley State School and many others from both Queensland Education, the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, and parents and carers who, for the last seven years, have worked tirelessly to make the games a must-attend event for these kids and their carers from North Queensland.

It was simply fantastic to see the grins, the smiles and often the determination on the kids' faces as they came hurtling down the track. But the mark of success of the Challenge Games was the observation of a carer parent about the games who said—

I was there in the capacity of a teachers aide for one school, and all 3 students I was looking after loved their time there, but also at another school was my son. I got to see him compete in one or two events, one of them being the rely. To see him at school carnivals come last, it was absolutely wonderful and he was trying his little heart out. Both days he had a chestful of ribbons and I may struggle tomorrow to get him to not wear them to school. Thank you, for making my son's year.

National Tree Day

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.56 pm): I rise to speak about some of the fantastic work done by environmental protection groups that operate in the electorate of Everton. Like many members of the House, last Sunday I spent time planting trees for National Tree Day. National Tree Day provides all Australians with an opportunity to do something positive for the environment and to reconnect with nature. In 2011 thousands of Australians planted over one million native trees, shrubs and grasses at more than 2,900 Tree Day events, and a host of other Tree Day activities were held. National Tree Day aims to inspire, educate and recruit Australians to actively care for our unique land and create future generations of committed environmental custodians.

Last weekend I joined 60 to 70 volunteers on the banks of the South Pine River to help plant hundreds of trees. There was great teamwork displayed as some of us dug holes while others planted the saplings. The South Pine River is one of the longest untamed coastal waterways in South-East Queensland and runs through the electorate in Eatons Hill and Albany Creek. This was an initiative of the Pine Rivers Catchment Association, a community based environment group formed to promote action within the community and through interested sectors to achieve sustainable, responsible and productive management of the Pine Rivers catchment, both now and into the future. The powerhouse behind this association is Jann McArthur, who has been a volunteer for 11 years. Well done, Jann, for your tireless work and for doing something positive for the environment.

The saplings used for planting along the South Pine River came from the Pine Rivers Community Nursery which is part of the Kumbartcho Sanctuary, an environment centre just down the road from the planting site. The Pine Rivers Community Nursery was a joint venture between the Bunya community

association and the Pine Rivers Shire Council. The nursery was established in 1997 and is run mostly by community volunteers. I had the good fortune to have morning tea with these dedicated workers last week. They proudly boast that there are 69 of them, and they all make a fantastic contribution.

Kumbartcho stands in the old Bunya Park wildlife reserve. This reserve was a childhood favourite of mine. It had all the wonderful flora and fauna that is native to Australia in a beautiful bush setting, which was a delight to behold. It ceased operations in 1994, but a few years later part of Bunya Park was subdivided for residential development. After a concerted campaign from local residents, headed by their champion, Kim Pantano, the most environmentally sensitive land was acquired by the council for its wildlife habitat and corridor values.

Kumbartcho is a local Aboriginal word for hoop pine—a tree that is the focus of Pine Rivers. I congratulate the Pine Rivers Catchment Association and the Kumbartcho Centre for their contribution to the wellbeing of the environment.

Scenic Rim, Mining Exploration

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (2.59 pm): I rise to voice the concerns of the Beaudesert electorate regarding coal seam gas and other forms of mining. Shamefully, the previous Labor government—in particular the former member for Stretton, Stephen Robertson, when he was the minister overseeing the resources industry—sold CSG exploration permits over much of the Beaudesert electorate, the Scenic Rim. An area that is renowned for its exceptional agricultural land, rural residential living, including for commuters, and pristine national parks, an area that has no history of mining other than quarries for local roads and infrastructure, was at the stroke of a pen by the Labor Party subjected to exploration by CSG companies. Make no mistake, a returned Labor government in 2012 would have almost certainly seen the commencement of CSG production in the Scenic Rim, in a community that did not ask for it, does not want it and, as the Premier made clear in the 2012 campaign, should not have CSG. Then there is the proposed open-cut coalmine at Croftby, south of Boonah. Residents are concerned about what this might mean for their homes, their roads and the impact on the natural environment at the foot of Mount Barney National Park.

This government is working to fix the problems created by Labor. I say to those in my electorate who have concerns about CSG and mining that the Premier, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Mines and their departments are working together with me to implement our commitments for the Scenic Rim. We are doing this in two ways. Firstly, the Minister for Mines approves mines and CSG production. As part of the LNP team, this minister knows our commitments to the Scenic Rim. To my knowledge, no mines or CSG production have been approved since the election and nor are there any applications on the table at this time. Secondly, the government plans amendments to the SEQ Regional Plan to set out for the long term planning measures that fix land use conflicts in accordance with our commitments to the Scenic Rim.

I refer to the alarmist claims made by some which could certainly, if inadvertently, serve to whip up fear in the community that there are no legislative impediments to tenure holders commencing mining or CSG production. That is simply not the case. There is a rigorous application process that must be completed before any production commences and, in any case, the Minister for Mines retains the right to not approve resource tenements.

In the short term, the best protection our community has to ensure that they are listened to is the fact that we have an LNP government and an LNP local member who is listening to the community and is working with the government. I stand with and I am working for those who consider our community to be entirely the wrong place for these industries to take root. I ask members of the community to be patient. As part of the SEQ regional planning area, the Scenic Rim's planning forms part of a much larger project. The government needs to get all of this right to ensure that our community's vision for its future is accurately planned. As the saying goes, if you fail to plan, you should plan to fail and in this case never a truer word has been said.

Napranum

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (3.02 pm): I would like to inform the House that the Napranum Aboriginal community is today engaged in a whole-of-community change program that will bring significant and lasting changes in terms of its community growth and economic development. Minister Elmes and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs are supporting this community owned and driven initiative.

Napranum sits just 15 kilometres from the mining town of Weipa, yet it is rated as one of the most underprivileged communities in Queensland. Today, 30 young adults of Napranum are undertaking a program that matches their life skills and values to vocations and employment opportunities and it is a first for Indigenous communities. The program commences with a values based assessment of each individual. I would like to share some of the responses: 'I am overwhelmed by self-doubt,' 'I am afraid of failure,' 'I just can't find the right job so I give up,' 'I'm scared I won't succeed.' After just one hour of one-

on-one coaching, we are hearing positive feedback from these young people such as, 'Every step I take is a step of faith for generations to come,' and 'My choice, my values, my beliefs are all God's gifts from above,' and 'I am a strong Indigenous woman.'

The assessment and coaching reveals that the young adults of Napranum aspire to be teachers, accountants, nurses, lawyers, engineers, fitness instructors and office workers. The usual range of jobs available to these people are labourers, clerical workers, yardsmen, gardeners, rangers and so on, yet these did not rate a mention in this process. These young people all have aspirations, as do young people everywhere.

This program is all about choice. If the communities of Cape York are given a choice, then it is obvious they will elect a better way to go forward. However, it has to be their choice and not what we think is best for them. Napranum is taking the lead in community based change and does not rely upon expensive top-down intervention or government control. The people of Napranum simply need support to bring about lasting change. It is time we took the training wheels off the bicycle and let these communities ride along. They may fall off a few times, but ultimately they will succeed.

This program has all the hallmarks of success and will be an example to all communities of a new way forward. I would like to share the feedback from one leader involved in the first stage of the program which commenced in December last year. She said, 'Three months ago we embarked on a journey that has played a big role'—

(Time expired)

Fire and Rescue Service

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.05 pm): Last Saturday I was fortunate to be given the opportunity to spend a shift with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in Rockhampton. For me it was a fabulous learning opportunity and one that I would highly recommend to the other members of this House. I must acknowledge the role of the minister in facilitating the opportunity and I appreciate it. Too often politicians can be distracted by the ebb and flow of pure politics, the events of this chamber and/or the insatiable media cycle. The truth is that our focus should always be on the quality of the services that the government is expected to deliver to Queenslanders and these sorts of opportunities certainly help ground politicians such as me.

I was hosted by two absolutely fabulous blokes, station officers Noel King and Bruce Ogle, and they provided me with a very comprehensive orientation of all facets of the station's operations and responsibilities. These men and their crew were completely open and transparent and answered all questions in a very professional and practical manner. This is what the community would expect from such a dedicated, tight-knit and, frankly, determined bunch of people. As members would probably have picked up, I could not have been more impressed by the people who I met. They really reminded me of some of the better military units that I have served with—a great work ethic, strong but measured leadership, complemented by great wit and humour. These qualities all reflect most favourably on the culture and capacity within the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.

Some particular highlights included participating in a minor traffic accident call-out. I was very disappointed to be in a single-storey fire station with no pole, but maybe next time. I also attended a toxic spill out in the middle of the highway, which again was pretty interesting inasmuch as no-one knew exactly what it was. I observed competency training for junior officers preparing for the next level of certification. I observed and participated in the training for recovery of road accident victims where they had been trapped within the vehicle. This was, I hate to say it, a lot of fun. Should anyone want the roof taken off their car while they are in it and not be injured, I reckon I could have a go at that. Finally, by pure accident, I watched the crew intervene in what I would only describe as a spontaneous road rage event well before the Queensland Police Service or other services arrived.

Frankly, I want to say that this was a great thing for me. I encourage all other members to avail themselves of similar opportunities. I want to thank the minister, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and particularly the crew who put up with me for a full shift.

Karawatha Forest

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak about the wonderful Karawatha Forest that makes up a third of the Stretton electorate and is located in the southern outskirts of Brisbane City bordering Logan City. It is of extreme ecological importance to the 160 or so species of wildlife that one sees when walking on the circuits that meander through 900 hectares of bushland, including wallabies, koalas, gliders and rare frog species. After walking, there are two picnic areas with recreational facilities available to have a rest and reflect on the Karawatha Forest experience. The creek and lagoon are picture-postcard to say the least, the kind of serene beauty that makes one want to pick up a paintbrush and have a go at capturing its beauty. Over 320 plant species have been identified in Karawatha Forest. The forest contains some of the last remaining wet heathland and melaleuca swamps in Brisbane.

In 2005 a road widening project was undertaken by the Brisbane City Council, increasing the width of Compton Road to four lanes. Compton Road is, unfortunately, a well-known spot for fauna kills, especially wallabies and kangaroos as they cross from Karawatha into Kuraby bushland. A land bridge was built across the road to safely guide wildlife over the busy roadway. The project has generated worldwide attention and is the only one of its kind in Australia incorporating so many fauna-friendly features in one stretch of road. I spoke to a wildlife ranger and he said that the crossway is so user-friendly that wildlife have actually made their homes and nests on the overpass directly above the traffic.

I am very excited to say that the Karawatha Forest Protection Society are holding a bushwalk and barbecue picnic day on 9 September from 10 am until 2 pm. The wonderful Lions Club of Macgregor are running the barbecue as a fundraiser. I thank Councillor Kim Marx and the Brisbane City Council for their support of this event. The electorate of Stretton invites you to come and join us for what will be a truly enjoyable day out.

Coopers Gap Wind Farm

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (3.11 pm): I would like to talk about the proposed Coopers Gap Wind Farm at Cooranga North. AGL paid Investec, a bank in Melbourne, \$14 million for this project. I was there the night that the bank first put up the proposal. They hired the hall at Cooranga North and put up photos of wind turbines on top of the hill. They then sold the project and made a lot of money. I do not see that the people of this district are opposed to this wind farm; the fact is they want it done properly. That is the feeling I am getting from those who I have met. We need to take a serious look at what is about to happen.

In other states there is a two-kilometre policy in place. We need the Minister for Health and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection to have a look at this. Both ministers have people in their department who are very well learned on this proposal I am talking about. AGL has other wind farms. These wind farms have been built and problems have occurred. There is a farmer who lives 1.6 kilometres from a smaller turbine farm and the result is that the turbines have had to be shut down because they are above the noise compliance in that state. This is something we really have to look at. This has to be done right. Oaklands Hill has had nine turbines shut down every night due to noise. I would hate to see this project go ahead and then be shut down. We need to get this right. That is the picture I am trying to paint here today. We need to seriously look at a two-kilometre policy being put in place. It would line up with Victoria. Victoria has a two-kilometre policy. New South Wales has a draft two-kilometre policy. The Liberal Party in South Australia will put that policy in place if they win government. We need to have a very serious look at this project.

I know a fair bit about this area. My children were the fourth generation to go to the Cooranga North school. I lived in that district all my life. There were times when I had to put pump jacks on my windmills for a period of three or four weeks because there was simply no wind. We have to have a serious look at this project. The people of that community are not against the project; they just want it done well. We as a government have to make sure that it works. Thank you.

Storm Safe Program

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (3.14 pm): Last Thursday, 26 July, I had the privilege of launching the Storm Safe Program, which is sponsored by the Mount Gravatt Community Centre. This is a great centre for our local community. It was established in 1991. It has premises at Logan Road, Mount Gravatt. I had the privilege of taking both Lisa Newman and Campbell Newman on separate occasions to tour the centre prior to the last election. They were both very pleasantly surprised by the wonderful activities that take place there.

There are many programs at that centre, from ones as diverse as the Uplift Health Program, the Paints and Palettes Program and basic PC lessons for those who need those skills to be developed, to extensive programs providing emergency relief, in-home support and the Home Assist Secure program as well as many others. This particular launch, the Storm Safe launch, is a new program that the centre is sponsoring. I and the local councillor, Councillor Krista Adams, went to the Sunnybank Community and Sports Club where the program was launched. It was accompanied by some great presentations by the Bureau of Meteorology, Energex and the SES all dealing with the issues surrounding storms. It is a unique program that is being provided. It was put together after the centre surveyed what the needs of our community were. There are many isolated people in our community who feel unsafe and not secure during storm events.

This program provides not a one-size-fits-all but a personalised home service for those people in that situation. It assesses their preparedness on three fronts. Firstly, it looks at their home and the surrounding environment and practical things are dealt with, such as clearing gutters of leaves, lopping trees, cleaning up yards and putting non-slip surfaces on exposed steps and so on so that people are safe if they need to move quickly during a storm. It assesses the personal situation of the individual involved: their support mechanisms and whether there is a neighbour close by or a family member who

can help them. It looks at their emergency management support arrangements and, most importantly, it provides a tangible kit to help them through storms with torch, phone pendant, first aid kits, batteries, radio and REDiPlans, water containers and so on. It is backed up by an interactive database online and it really provides great support for our exposed, lonely and insecure people in these very regular storm events. Thank you to chair Ian Lang, CEO Lyn Rose and to project officer Ken Wiltshire for providing this wonderful support to our local community. I urge our businesses in Mansfield to get behind it.

Greenbank RSL Men's Shed; Logan West Meals on Wheels

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeria—LNP) (3.17 pm): I want to talk about a number of organisations that do such great work in the Algester electorate. I was very privileged to present new Queensland flags to the Greenbank RSL sub-branch at their office at the Greenbank RSL. While I was there I had the opportunity to tour the Men's Shed set up by the members. We all know what a great initiative Men's Sheds are and this one is no different. The sub-branch Men's Shed is literally that: a shed—very similar to the one you would find in the back yard. Every inch of space was utilised either by machinery, wood storage or finished product. And what great product it is. The blokes come together to manufacture wooden toy trains, both engines and carriages, kids' table and chair sets and when I was there the fellows were finishing off the last of four storage cabinets for the sub-branch office. The products are sturdy and can take the rough and tumble that they are sure to be put through—a lot like the good-hearted blokes of the sub-branch who make them.

I would like to thank Howard Buckley, the secretary of the sub-branch, Brian Lewis, George Morris and Ron Lord for their hospitality and taking the time to show me around. But, more importantly, I would like to thank them for the many hours they put in at the sub-branch helping their fellow veterans young and old. They gave service to our country and they continue to serve but in a different way.

The other organisation that I had the opportunity to visit was the Logan West Meals on Wheels working out of the community centre at Wineglass Drive, Hillcrest. I was met at the door by the president Bob Woodburgess. Bob gave me a rundown on the facilities and introduced me to the volunteers who prepare the meals daily for 300-odd residents across not just my electorate but also the electorate of the honourable member for Logan.

On that particular day, the meal was corned beef with vegetables, chicken soup and either a sweet or a piece of fruit. I can tell the House that I am a bit of an expert on corned beef, as my mum makes a great one, and the corned beef that was being delivered to residents certainly did rival hers. I was encouraged when shown the delivery roster of volunteers, which was full. I also noted that a number of local schools provided students on a regular basis to participate in the delivery process. I think this is a great initiative and the schools and Meals on Wheels should be congratulated. It provides the students with experience in volunteering and also gives back to the community. It gives the students an understanding of what people in the lower-socioeconomic bracket go through in society.

Kokoda Challenge

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.20 pm): Today I rise to speak about students of several schools in my electorate of Greenslopes who took part in the Kokoda Challenge on the Gold Coast in July this year. The Kokoda Challenge is regarded as one of the toughest endurance events in Australia. The Kokoda Challenge website states—

Participants trek a 96km course that leads along fire trails, crosses 12 creeks and summits 5,000m of vertical elevation.

The goal is to finish as a complete team of four in honour of the spirit forged on the Kokoda Track in 1942: Mateship, endurance, courage and sacrifice.

Regardless of fitness level, age or background, people from all walks of life find participating in the Kokoda Challenge not only a great personal achievement, but a way to honour the Kokoda legacy and support local teenagers to gain a brighter future for themselves and their families through The Kokoda Challenge Youth Program.

There is also a 48-kilometre version for those not able to complete the full 96 kilometres.

Students from three schools in the Greenslopes electorate took part: Cavendish Road State High School, Mount Gravatt State High School and Holland Park State High School. It is not just a case of turning up to complete the challenge. A great deal of preparation and training is done, requiring ongoing commitment from students.

In the 96-kilometre course, Cavendish Road State High School had five teams consisting of four students and a teacher. They came second and third in the Stan Bissett Cup. In the 48-kilometre course, 13 teams competed for the Jim Stillman Cup. Every year Cavendish Road State High School takes part in the Kokoda Challenge and usually has over 100 participants. The challenge plays an important role in the culture of the school and teaches students about mateship, endurance, spirit and courage.

From Mount Gravatt State High School, my old school, four senior students and one teacher took part in the challenge. Of 84 teams, Mount Gravatt State High School was one of only 17 to complete the 96-kilometre challenge with all team members intact—that is, no retirements from injury, fatigue and so on. The benefits Mount Gravatt State High School derived from the challenge were the promotion of working as a team, highlighting the importance of sticking at something and the promotion of mateship. Already a number of students have expressed an interest in competing in next year's competition. The school raised over \$2,200 for charity.

The Kokoda Challenge has fostered a sense of helping others, goal-orientation and the need to help the community. Holland Park State High School had a number of students participate, and I suspect that this number will grow as word spreads of their experience. Leading up to this year's challenge there had been a considerable amount of rain, which only added to the similarities to the actual Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea. Over the duration of the entire course, participants in this challenge receive four 20-minute breaks.

In this speech I would like to be able to name all of the students and teachers who took part, but unfortunately time will not permit that. However, I acknowledge the efforts of those students and teachers and say how impressed I am with their achievements. The lessons and memories that they take away from this event will be lifelong. I encourage all schools to take part in this event, not only for the valuable lessons learnt and sense of achievement but also as a way of raising valuable money for charity.

Public Service, Jobs

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.23 pm): Recently, we saw the marching on Parliament House of thousands of disgruntled public servants who are very concerned about this government's slashing of government jobs and services. Coinciding rallies were held in regional centres, including Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton. I was outside my office building in Mackay where a few hundred government workers had marched, demanding information from this government about which of them would lose their jobs. I vowed to take the issue up with the government, as local representatives, the member for Whitsunday and the member for Mirani, did not front or meet with the protesters.

The rally was an ideal opportunity for the Premier and local LNP members to be upfront with their own employees and their families about how many of their jobs will be slashed. With all government departments and agencies now involved in the prebudget process through CBRC, the Premier has no excuse for not revealing the number of government jobs set to be axed. We know that the CBRC has already considered slashing 2,200 from Queensland Rail, 140 jobs from Skilling Queenslanders for Work, 550 from the agriculture department, one-third of Tourism Queensland and 1,000 from QBuild. It is time that the Premier revealed the total number of people and families he will be sending to the jobless queue. This government knows the number; it is just not being upfront enough to communicate to its own workers about how many will go and from where.

The disrespect the LNP is showing to its own workers is in stark contrast to comments made in this very House when it was in opposition. During debate on the Public Service Bill 2008, the now Minister for Health and member for Southern Downs stated—

The Public Service Bill should be a declaration by the government that it values the Public Service workforce and is prepared to provide the best possible conditions for its employees.

The member for Gregory claimed—

If we are going to produce high-performing government agencies, we have to look after every aspect of employees' needs ...

He also said—

People should not be gouged out of a department because they do not support a particular side of politics.

The now Minister for Energy and Water Supply and member for Caloundra said—

... I want to put on record at the outset my admiration and respect for the Queensland Public Service and the thousands of employees who contribute to Queensland on a daily basis. Having spent 10 years working for the Queensland Public Service a number of years ago, I understand the contribution they make not just to the state of Queensland but also indirectly to the economy throughout this great state of ours.

The comments of the member for Caloundra are a far cry from recent comments of the Premier and Treasurer that the only real jobs are in the private sector. The Premier needs to stop hiding, be upfront and show public servants the respect they deserve.

Regional Queensland

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.26 pm): I want to tell the parliament a good news story. Last Friday in Emerald the Deputy Premier, Jeff Seeney, and my colleagues the member for Rockhampton, Madam Deputy Speaker and honourable member for Gladstone, the member for Keppel and the member for Mirani visited Emerald to launch, in conjunction with the local regional authorities, the

Central Queensland strategy for future planning. This is one of the great news stories that we have heard in recent times. This strategy will set the template to put Central Queensland back on a path to victory for profitability and fruitful outcomes.

My colleague the Minister for Local Government has just completed a tour of Western Queensland. He talked to local governments about the re-empowering of local government by giving back the direction and initiative they require to take their areas forward. They know how to do that best at a local level. It should not be done by a centralised government in Brisbane. We hear members on the other side whingeing about how bad things are. They are bad because of poor, ill-conceived Labor policies that have driven this state into oblivion. Those policies created the \$65 billion debt. The Deputy Premier's visit to Emerald last Friday let the people of Central Queensland know that this government is far dinkum and it is going to take this state forward.

After visiting Emerald, the Deputy Premier visited Blackwater where he talked to me about the deplorable state of town planning. He was absolutely gobsmacked at what he saw. The chair of the Blackwater Community Progress Group, who is now a councillor on the Central Highlands Regional Council, Kev Cracknell, has been pushing that issue for a long time. The new Central Highlands Regional Council has the agenda to do something about that, in conjunction with the plan that the Newman government has put in place to revitalise Central Queensland and the initiatives that have been put in place by Minister Crisafulli to re-empower and re-engage local governments so that they can drive the agendas for communities throughout regional Queensland, which is where productivity comes from. Local people know the local issues and local people can address those local issues. It is a bit like the hospital boards that have been put in place by the health minister: it is about local people taking control of the agenda and driving it towards the common goal of positive outcomes for local communities.

Cox, Mr D

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.29 pm): I am very proud to tell the House about the success of Burdekin sugarcane grower David Cox, who has been named the 2012 Precision Farmer of the Year in the United States. This is a magnificent achievement because it is the first time this award has ever gone to a farmer outside the United States. It was presented by the US based PrecisionAG Institute to David Cox in recognition of his use of technology to boost efficiency and reduce farm impacts.

Mr Cox has been at the forefront of precision agricultural practices for more than three decades. He is held in high regard in the Burdekin, regarded as an innovative contributor to the sugarcane industry. He first became involved in laser landforming in 1979. He developed many technological initiatives during the intervening years before finally developing optimum surface GPS landforming in 2007. Most of David's applications were firsts in sugarcane production, allowing him to minimise chemical use, save on fuel, reduce fuel cultivation and minimise erosion and water use. By the mid-2000s, Mr Cox was fully employing technologies that were barely on many growers' radars—he was forging ahead of the field.

Davco Farming, which is David's operation, includes 2,450 hectares of fully irrigated furrowed cane which produces 250,000 tonnes of sugar cane, with 15 per cent sugar content. Determination is a word synonymous with the whole Cox family name in the Burdekin, and this certainly rings true with David Cox, who has made it his mission to seek out emerging technologies since entering the industry in 1987.

Sugarcane producers travel from all over the world to witness David's farming practices firsthand—a true indication of his influence and the respect that he has gained through his pioneering insights. Most of his technologies have come from the United States, but a key one was the two-centimetre tractor guidance, which was developed in Australia by the Mailler family, which became known as Beeline Technology. Beeline Technology is recognised as the first company in the world to develop hands-free steering GPS based technologies for the agricultural industry.

The Burdekin is the largest sugarcane region in Australia, and David Cox has contributed to the success of this industry. David recognised that GPS machine control overcame the limitations associated with laser levelling and so embarked on his mission to develop a system which would take full advantage of this new technology. His latest innovation—optimum surface GPS landforming—is reportedly the next generation in landforming beyond laser grading. Together with his brother Geoff, David Cox is also behind the major development of the Burdekin's first ethanol plant, Austcane Energy Ltd. Taking a good thing and making it better is what David Cox does best.

(Time expired)

Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (3.32 pm): This week marks a series of significant events in Queensland's legal calendar. Tomorrow I will have the great pleasure in joining Queensland's Governor Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC and the honourable Premier Newman to officially present the key to the new Supreme and District Court building to Chief Justice Paul de Jersey.

I am delighted that the Queen has consented to the courts being named in her honour in this diamond jubilee year. As was announced this morning by the Premier, the new District and Supreme Court complex in Brisbane will be named the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law.

The significance of the judicial system in our system of government means that the historic importance of tomorrow's event should not be underestimated. The importance certainly has not been lost on members of the judicial community both home and abroad, with many travelling to attend this very special ceremony tomorrow.

A number of judicial events have been scheduled to coincide with the opening tomorrow. The 39th Council of Chief Justices of Australia and New Zealand is today holding its biennial meeting in the new Supreme and District courthouse. The date of the meeting was specially selected to precede the day of the opening which will be attended by the Chief Justices and their international visitors who include the Master of the Rolls, Lord Neuberger; Lady Justice Hallett of the Court of Appeal of England and Wales; and the Chief Justice of Hong Kong, Mr Justice Ma.

The council discusses a diversity of issues common to their jurisdictions around the nation. The Chief Justice's office has informed me today that members of the council have expressed their admiration for the new courthouse in setting a benchmark for courthouse design in the national context. Last night I was honoured to join the Governor and the Chief Justices at a reception at Government House to mark this week's special event and again today at lunchtime with the Chief Justices in the new Supreme and District Court complex.

Brisbane is also currently playing host to the 2012 Queensland Magistrates conference. It will be held at both the Brisbane Magistrates Court and Law Society House and provides an opportunity for magistrates, particularly those who work in the more distant parts of the state, to exchange information and ideas and discuss legislative impacts on the courts.

Speakers such as the Hon. Paul de Jersey AC, Chief Justice; Justice John Dowsett, Federal Court of Australia; and Mr Barry Thomas, President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, are addressing the conference. It will promote discussion on topics such as the implementation of the new Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012, sentencing issues and technology and the law. The attendees can also take the opportunity to visit the new Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law. We are very proud to be the government tomorrow that will open this most magnificent court complex, named the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law.

Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.35 pm): Yesterday I was stood down during the debate on the Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill as I questioned the accountability and truth in election promises by this government. I bring to the attention of the House the fact that during the election campaign in the electorate of Dalrymple, particularly in the township of Charters Towers, my home town, the LNP absolutely pounded the streets. There were visits from the president, the vice-president, Senator Joyce, Senator Macdonald, the member for Aspley, the member for Burdekin at least five times, the member for Hinchinbrook at least five times, the member for Maroochydore, the member for Glass House, the member for Gympie and the Premier. As they pounded the streets, they knocked on the doors of businesses. There were billboards and mail-outs. We had never seen anything like it. Their promises were that they would care, that they would be accountable, that they would be Public Service friendly, that they would grow the four pillars of the economy, that the party would be a party of honesty and integrity—'Stick with us and you'll never go hungry again.' These were the promises made to the people of Dalrymple and Charters Towers.

Look at this headline: 'Program cut: Health funds slashed'. Two former shadow ministers visited that neighbourhood centre, had their pictures taken in the paper and bragged about what a wonderful service it was. They said, 'We'll look after the neighbourhood centre.' And what did they do? They have cut three major programs after they promised that they would look after them. The article states—

An award-winning neighbourhood centre program has been axed as part of the State budget cutbacks, which could have a ripple effect on the organisation and the greater community.

Two former shadow ministers stood outside this centre and bragged about how they were going to look after that neighbourhood centre. The other thing is that they received the letter one day and the next day they were gone. Here is another example—

A nationally recognised indigenous health program will be shut down as part of the fallout from the State Government budget cuts.

Then they promised that they would get rid of the bats. Here is one headline: 'Campbell's promise: bats will go'. The article quotes Campbell Newman as saying—

"One way or the other, the bats will be gone,"

Government members interjected.

Mr KNUTH: Another headline reads 'Bat fight'. In another article the member for Glass House is quoted as saying—

"It will depend on each community, but the LNP has given a commitment to give councils all possible approaches to get rid of the bats,"

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr KNUTH: The bats are still there. The ALP blamed the council; you are blaming the council. Go there and get rid of the bats at all costs.

Tabled paper: Various articles from the Northern Miner regarding various issues [\[664\]](#).

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! I would ask the speaker be heard in silence.

Milton Post Office

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.38 pm): I rise to acknowledge the families and business owners in my electorate of Mount Coot-tha who were severely impacted by the 2011 flood. It has been 18 months since our streets, our homes and businesses were submerged in water. Within my community, the impact of the flood is still being felt and unfortunately, following the disaster, some businesses and services found it exceptionally difficult to continue trading.

One important service that did not recover from the flood was the Milton Post Office. The post office at Milton was an institution and an important community service. The closure by Australia Post compounded the impact on businesses and individual needs. Milton is a unique micro-economy within my electorate. It is where you will find fantastic restaurants, cafes and pubs, friendly bank managers and an array of specialist small businesses, as well as major corporate head offices, all within a small inner-city pocket.

For many communities, a post office does not act just as a mail service but often as an information booth or an activity hub. In some of Queensland's smallest towns where there is only a main street, the post office acts as a landmark. Therefore, it became an important community goal to bring back the post office—a landmark and an important asset.

After many months of lobbying from businesses and with the help of the Brisbane Inner West Chamber of Commerce, the federal member for Brisbane, the honourable Teresa Gambaro, and local councillor Peter Matic, it was with great excitement that Mary Ryan's bookstore on Park Road announced it would become the new home of the Milton Post Office in June this year. Mr Bill Concannon, the Chief Executive Officer of Mary Ryan's, recognised the importance and need for this facility within our community. I commend him on his hard work in returning this service.

The new post office will certainly provide many benefits to local businesses as it makes doing business easier and faster. After the flood, businesses and residents were forced to collect their mail from one of the Kelvin Grove, Red Hill or Toowong post offices. The impact of this inconvenience was a significant cost to business which cannot be overstated. I recently attended the official opening of the Mary Ryan's Milton Post Office with the Lord Mayor and many other local residents and businesses to congratulate the Mary Ryan's team on this achievement. The reinstatement of the post office is certainly monumental and it signifies the steps our businesses and residents continue to take to rebuild. It also signifies the power of people to fight for what is important. On behalf of the community which I represent, again I congratulate and acknowledge Mary Ryan's bookstore and wish them the best of luck with their new post office endeavour.

Catholic Education Week

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (3.41 pm): Catholic Education Week 2012 was launched at St Therese—the Little Flower Church, Kedron—in the electorate of Stafford on 25 July. The staff and students of Franciscans on the Hill, Padua College, Mount Alvernia College, St Anthony's Primary School and the Kedron Catholic Parish helped make the day a truly wonderful event. Among the

dignitaries who joined families, students and school staff were Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, Catholic Education Week ambassador, General Peter Cosgrove AC, MC, the Queensland Governor, her Excellency Penelope Wensley AC, and Queensland education minister, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek MP.

The launch was a great tribute to and celebration of the wonderful work done by the Catholic school community. The theme of Catholic Education Week 2012 was 'Celebrating community: Family—Parish—School'. Queensland Catholic Education Commission executive director Mike Byrne spoke of how community is at the heart of the Catholic tradition and how for 2,000 years people have come together in community to share the story of Jesus, to nurture and strengthen each other, and to commit themselves to continuing his mission through good works and acts of kindness.

A highlight of the launch was the presentation by the Governor of the 2012 Spirit of Catholic Education Awards to seven outstanding contributors to Catholic education including one to Missionary Franciscan Sister Pauline Robinson of Mount Alvernia College, Kedron. Minister Langbroek spoke of how for almost 170 years the Catholic school community has strived to provide a high-quality education and encourage a lifelong love of learning. He confirmed the Newman government's commitment to providing a high-quality educational experience to all Queensland children and the important part Catholic education plays in seeing that goal realised. His Grace Archbishop Coleridge spoke of how the breadth of a Catholic education taught the art of living and so contributes to the great social capital of our state and country. I was very pleased and proud to be part of Catholic Education Week and look forward to ongoing support of their vital work and, indeed, all the great educational endeavours in the Stafford electorate.

Beef Industry

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (3.44 pm): I recently received a briefing from the management of JBS Swift, meat processors in Rockhampton. It was an insight into the industry. The red meat processing sector is a significant contributor to the Queensland and Australian economies as well as making a substantial contribution to the nation's export markets. Australia and Brazil are the largest beef exporters. Australia has three per cent of the world cattle inventory and produces four per cent of the world's beef supply and is the second largest exporter in the world. This growth has meant a need for the Australian and Queensland beef-processing industry to maintain but also diversify away from its historical key markets of Japan, the US, Korea and Australian domestic. This has brought opportunity and with it commercial risks. The expansion of market opportunities and the ability of the federal government to maintain access to markets are the greatest challenges facing the Queensland beef industry.

It is estimated that the beef-processing sector contributes \$4.8 billion in gross state product, \$2.1 billion in household income and more than 46,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Queensland. This represents approximately two per cent of the gross state product. The industry sectors benefiting most from the flow-on effects in terms of employment are agriculture, transport, storage and warehousing, and retail trade. When flow-on effects are included, the beef-processing sector in the Fitzroy statistical division underpins approximately 5.7 per cent of the region's full-time equivalent employment, 4.1 per cent of household income and 4.2 per cent of gross regional product. It is therefore a significant component of the regional economy.

Based on the seasons, Queensland beef numbers will continue to increase. Queensland has a majority of the beef herd with larger corporate family farming operations. Central Queensland is the powerhouse of Australia's beef industry and supports a significant number of jobs on farm along with blue-collar jobs at the two meat-processing facilities in Rockhampton owned by JBS and Teys Brothers. Queensland accounts for over 40 per cent of beef processing in Australia. JBS and Teys Brothers operate a total of seven processing facilities across the state and their national headquarters are also in Queensland. Combined they process around 50 per cent of Australia's beef numbers annually. JBS Swift Australia has invested over \$500 million in their business since 2007. It is important to understand that beef processing is Queensland's largest manufacturing industry and the Queensland beef industry is the state's—

(Time expired)

Moreton Bay Hinterland, Tourism

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (3.47 pm): On Tuesday, 26 June I hosted a public forum in the township of Dayboro to discuss the tourism potential of our Moreton Bay hinterland region. With support from the members for Kallangur, Ferny Grove and Glass House, I held this forum to kick-start discussions around the strengths of our beautiful region, the opportunities for growth in tourism in our region as well as the challenges and problems we need to overcome if we are to bring more tourism jobs and more tourism dollars into our region.

The forum was attended by a good number of local business owners, experienced local tourism operators, representatives of recreation organisations and many others with an interest in local tourism. The forum was held on the same date as the Newman government's highly successful DestinationQ forum in Cairns, and I would like to acknowledge the support that the Minister for Tourism and her office provided to our forum. With so many resources already committed to DestinationQ, I thank the minister for sending one of her staff to our forum. I think this support underlines the commitment of the Newman government to developing our tourism industry throughout Queensland's regions.

The forum was the first step in a process that I hope will lead to increased tourism activity in our region. Since the forum I have collated the ideas that were raised both at the forum and by others who could not attend on the night and I have released a draft action plan that lists around 60 actions. There are ideas and suggestions that talk about road infrastructure, marketing opportunities, government red tape, horse-riding and walking trails and much more. I readily acknowledge that not all ideas on the list will be achievable, but each and every idea will be investigated and action taken to progress as many of them as possible. This report is now available to be viewed and can be downloaded from my website.

I am currently calling for expressions of interest for a local working group that is being established to review each item on the action plan. I am pleased to say that I have already received expressions of interest from a number of key local tourism operators and business leaders, and I am confident that we will end up with a strong working group which will be able to take this action plan and identify the opportunities that will benefit the Moreton Bay hinterland region.

In the longer term, I hope that we can put together a strategic plan for tourism in our region so that we can turn our region into one of South-East Queensland's must-visit destinations. But for now my focus is unashamedly on immediate action. We need to get some runs on the board, we need to build momentum and we need to stimulate growth in our region. I made a strong commitment prior to this year's election that I will do everything I can to bring more jobs into Pine Rivers, and I am committed to delivering on this commitment to my electorate. The tourism forum and subsequent action plan are part of that commitment, and I look forward to working with local business owners and community leaders to see our tourism industry strengthened in the coming months and years.

Abbey Museum Medieval Festival; Farm Fantastic



Mrs FRANCE (Pumicestone—LNP) (3.50 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Abbey Museum in Caboolture, home of the famous Abbey Museum Medieval Festival which was held recently. The Abbey Museum is in need of a stable and consistent source of funding in order to ensure that it is able to continue its great work educating and entertaining our local community. Having grown up in the area, I have attended the festival in previous years and have been so impressed by the scale of the tournament and the entertainment it provides.

This year I was thrilled to be invited to officially open the Medieval Festival, and my family and I had a wonderful day enjoying the century old traditions of medieval Europe and dressing up like lords and ladies with our little monsters as well. It is no wonder visitors come from interstate and internationally and the local community comes back year after year to participate in the largest medieval festival in Australia held right in my backyard. This year's festival was the Abbey's 23rd and followed a huge year in 2011 when over 27,500 people attended the week-long event. The festival, including the vastly popular tournament weekend, keeps going from strength to strength, and this year's event was one of the most successful yet, attracting 37,000 medieval enthusiasts.

The annual festival is a huge boost to the local tourism economy, and it is the primary source of revenue for the Abbey Museum. The museum is a destination for many school groups and historical societies, all of whom have experienced the wonder of ancient medieval life. The Abbey Museum is sustained by earnings from visitor admissions, the festival, school programs, archaeological digs and its retail outlet. As it is such an important part of Caboolture and Queensland's history and as it generates revenue in the local community as a tourist destination, the Abbey Museum and festival must be preserved. As its collection is not focused on Queensland's cultural heritage and due to the specific nature of its charter, the museum finds it difficult to access grant funding and it cannot borrow money.

The Abbey Museum has received support from the state government in the form of one-off funding under various incentive programs but it has been unsuccessful in securing long-term funding. There are also funding avenues available through the Australian government, and I am pleased to say that representatives from the festival recently met with the federal member for Longman, Wyatt Roy, and our mayor, Allan Sutherland, to seek the assistance of all levels of government to secure the future of the Abbey's funding. Edith Cuffe, Michael Strong and Trevor Robertson have all worked tirelessly to ensure the Abbey Museum remains at Caboolture and continues to educate visitors for years to come.

I would also like to acknowledge the fantastic event which was held last weekend, Farm Fantastic, and the wonderful work done by the Blatchfords and their organisation group. It was absolutely terrific. If you love tractors, Caboolture is the place to go.

Gladstone Electorate, Firefighters

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.53 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the need for additional firefighting crews for the Gladstone region. I wish to thank the minister because we have had some conversations in relation to staffing in the electorate, particularly in light of the increase in the population. For many years now, firefighters have been the first responders at accidents. Sadly, in the last few months we have had more than our share of fatal and serious accidents, and firefighters are well and truly at the front in responding to those incidents, as well as to the incidents they cover in relation to firefighting.

I am going to refer mainly to the Gladstone station, but we do have wonderful firefighters including auxiliaries at Calliope, Boyne Tannum and Benaraby and we also have rural fire services that do such an amazing job on a volunteer basis. We desperately need a special crew to be funded for the Gladstone station. It has always been a little bit intriguing that in my electorate the big industries have been put outside the line on the map to pay fire levies. However, if there is a major incident that their internal firefighting brigades cannot respond to, the QFRS firefighters are required to respond—and respond they do. But, again, in light of the growth and the risk profile in the Gladstone region, we desperately need more firefighters.

One solution would be the creation and recruitment of a special crew for the Gladstone station. There are only a handful of stations in Queensland that are stand-alone. Gladstone is one, as are Gympie and Bundaberg. The minister is very much acquainted with the challenges of a stand-alone station. If another full-time firefighting crew is needed to respond, it would come from Rockhampton, otherwise we rely on auxiliaries, and it is incredibly important for our station to be properly manned. A lot of ghost crewing occurs. We have nine fire trucks but crewing for less than half of that, and the rest are ghost crewed. It flies in the face of not only logic but safety.

I know the new minister has been looking at these issues throughout the state. I specifically ask him to look at the situation in Gladstone. I extend an invitation to him to come and visit the stations in Gladstone and the other stations in the electorate to talk to the firefighters and the firefighting union. They are all very reasonable people who want to see a high level of safety for themselves as well as for the public that they so ably serve.

Dementia

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (3.56 pm): Honourable members, here in Queensland we are not immune to the future problems of ageing. There are a growing number of people living with dementia in Queensland, and the alarming projected estimates for the next 40 years will dramatically change everything in our lives, their lives and our economic fortunes. In particular, I am shocked that by 2050 in my electorate of Gaven we will experience a 520 per cent increase in the number of sufferers. This is the largest increase in the Gold Coast, although surprisingly this is not the largest in the state, as that actually will occur in the inner suburbs of Brisbane. If the population movements and demographics continue, it could even be more sanguine for other areas which are regionally displaced.

Almost 50,000 people are currently living with dementia in Queensland, with the electorate of Surfers Paradise having the most sufferers in the state. By 2050 it is estimated that 215,000 people in the state will have dementia—an increase of 342 per cent. The ageing baby boomer generation, who are now retiring, will accelerate the growth. According to a recent report, dementia is on the cusp of working its way through those age brackets and those people are at a greater risk of dementia. Therefore, four per cent of the population will have dementia within the next four to five years.

According to the report titled *Projections of dementia prevalence and incidence in Queensland 2011-2050*, which came across my desk during the week, dementia is of utmost concern for health and aged-care service provision. The report was commissioned by Alzheimer's Australia Queensland to provide the latest projections for dementia sufferers. It says that there will be a shortage in the supply of care for people with dementia. For each decade between 2011 and 2050, the prevalence of dementia is expected to increase at a faster rate than the state's population growth. The most rapid growth in dementia prevalence is expected during the current decade, at 58 per cent, and the following decade, at 56 per cent.

As a GP, I know too well that our sedentary lifestyle and our love for fast food have contributed to this. For example, type 2 diabetes increases the risk of Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Obesity is a risk factor, as is physical inactivity. Dementia prevalence rates are relatively low until the age of 70 years and then they rise rapidly. For example, in 2011 in Queensland, prevalence rates of males and females aged 70 to 74 years are around 3.6 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively. This then increases to 21.6 per cent and 24.8 per cent for those aged 85 to 89—in fact, that is the average age that people are living to.

I agree with Alzheimer's Australia Queensland CEO, Victoria Beedle, that dementia is not a normal part of ageing. She wants to raise awareness of dementia on the Gold Coast at an inaugural fundraising dinner on Friday, 3 August, and this will also raise funds for support services. This is vital because it is estimated that the incidence of dementia will increase by 498 per cent by 2050. This is an alarming figure and statistic.

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): I call the member for Burnett, and you have one minute.

Murphy, Dr B

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.58 pm): I rise to share with the House the work of Associate Professor Dr Brad Murphy. Dr Murphy is a proud Indigenous man in our electorate. He is one of the stolen generation and we are very proud to have him. Dr Murphy stands as a testament to the success of a medical school focused on producing general practitioners with an interest in rural and remote and Indigenous interests. He spent much of his training in his postgraduate years in rural and remote placings in Theodore and Eidsvold and we are happy to now announce that he is the chair and the trustee of the Jimmy Little Foundation.

Dr Murphy ascribes his success and influence to many mentors. In fact, it is his connection with mentoring that sees him in the process of establishing a new general practice development in the Bundaberg area called Ashfield Country Practice. It will be the first privately owned and operated Aboriginal GP surgery in the world. Situated on an acre of land nine kilometres from the heart of Bundaberg, it plans to be the mainstream general practice for Indigenous and diabetes health in the Bundaberg region.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (4.00 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That, under the provisions of standing order 136(1), the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill by 16 August 2012; and
- (2) That standing order 136(5) be suspended, to allow the second reading debate on the bill to commence from 21 August 2012.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL LAW (FALSE EVIDENCE BEFORE PARLIAMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1452, on motion of Mr Bleijie—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.01 pm), continuing in reply: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Johnson: Do you remember where you were up to?

Mr BLEIJIE: Who said that? I thank the member for Gregory for asking, by way of interjection, if I remember where I was up to. I recall—

Mr Johnson: I'll remind you.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will seek a bit of reminding because I recall I was in full flight about the member for South Brisbane. I think that is always a good place to start when one is on their feet in this place. Perhaps we could start where we left off a couple of hours ago. I was talking about the member for South Brisbane, particularly in relation to the reintroduction of section 56 of the Criminal Code to which I will be moving amendments. Section 56 deals with disobedience in the public gallery when parliament is in session. The reinstatement of this section will allow it to again be a criminal offence under the Criminal Code. I was using the example that we saw a few weeks ago in this chamber during debate on the amendments to the civil partnerships legislation with respect to the behaviour of people in the gallery. Most of us, apart from one in the chamber, thought it was absurd behaviour.

Mr Hart: Is there a penalty for inciting it?

Mr BLEIJIE: There is no penalty for inciting it, but there certainly—

Ms Trad: Who incited it?

Mr BLEIJIE: I will tell the member for South Brisbane who incited it. The member for South Brisbane incited the behaviour in the gallery a few weeks ago.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks offensive and untrue and I ask they be withdrawn without qualification.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Would the Attorney-General please withdraw without qualification for the benefit of the House?

Mr BLEIJIE: For the benefit of the House I withdraw. With respect to section 57, I would point out that, in her contribution to the debate, the opposition leader and honourable shadow Attorney-General said that ministers will use this new law as an excuse not to answer questions. I think that is what she said. The examination under section 57 is not meant to capture everyday workings of the parliament. However, if the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that it should, then the member for South Brisbane would be found to be breaching that provision every time she pledged allegiance to the Leader of the Opposition. From time to time members do pledge allegiance to their leaders. The 78 of us on this side pledge allegiance to the Hon. Campbell Newman. If the shadow Attorney-General is suggesting that I ought to change it so as not to bring into line general debate in the House, then every time the member for South Brisbane stands on her feet or says in the party room on level 9 that she supports the member for Inala in her quest to be Premier of the state she would be in breach and it would number many, many times. I am reminded from whence we came at lunchtime—in fact, this is where I did leave off. I was talking about the game of chess with the seven on the board opposite and the member for South Brisbane sitting in the back there like one of the knights or one of the other—

Mr Johnson: Do you know what she said? Checkmate!

Mr BLEIJIE: The knight stands at the back there and says, 'Checkmate'. Who does she have in line? Not the king or the queen, but the little pawn in the front, the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Inala, who we know is on a very short leash. We know that Anthony Chisholm and the Labor Party put the member for South Brisbane in there for one purpose only—and she claps with laughter. I think she is clapping in agreement because the member for South Brisbane cannot come into this place and try to hide her ambitions with laughter and joy. We know what is going on here.

For the benefit of the shadow Attorney-General, who has just joined us, I was responding to her questioning about section 57. The opposition leader should be listening to this because I am responding directly to her question that she asked me. If she wants it to capture everyday discussion in the parliament, as I said, the member for South Brisbane would at times breach that trust and allegiance that she swears to the Leader of the Opposition. That is in direct response to the Leader of the Opposition.

I do not want to know what people think about me; I want to know what the real opposition leader—the one sitting behind her in the white jacket—thinks about her. The member for South Brisbane can stand with the jug of water and fight all she wants, but the reality is that she is here for one purpose only and that is to take over the position of the Leader of the Opposition in this parliament. We saw it yesterday when we found out that the *Courier-Mail* had approached the 'star attraction' for a profile piece. One would think it would be the Leader of the Opposition but, no, it is the insignificant member for South Brisbane. She gets a full-page spread in the *Courier-Mail* because we know her ambitions and so does the *Courier-Mail*. A little birdie told me that not only did the *Courier-Mail* want to do a profile piece on the member for South Brisbane, but has anybody noticed that *Party Games* on the ABC on a Friday has gone? It has gone because they had so many complaints about the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Inala. Not only did the public complain about the member for Inala and her performance on *Party Games*, but they also wanted a replacement—none other than the member for South Brisbane. The ABC wanted *Party Games* between the government and the insignificant member for South Brisbane, not the Leader of the Opposition.

What we have is a whole campaign, like the Labor Party Peel Street campaign that we see time and time again led by Chisholm and Trad opposite, all for the benefit of that seat in front of her, just as the knight comes forward and checkmates the little pawn in the front row. That is what is happening here. The member for South Brisbane—

Mr Byrne: Return to the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am talking about the bill. I am talking about integrity, ethics, accountability, openness and transparency. I am being as open, honest and transparent as I can with respect to the seven opposite. The member for Rockhampton—I see him laughing now—knows that one day he is going to have to support the member for South Brisbane in her—

Mr Springborg: Deputy leader.

Mr BLEIJIE: He might be the deputy leader. I take the interjection because it certainly will not be the member for Woodridge, it certainly will not be the member for Mulgrave and it certainly will not be the member for Bundamba based on her performances in parliament during the last week. Certainly the member for Rockhampton may just have to do the deal with the member for South Brisbane.

I thank the committee chair, the member for Condamine, Mr Ray Hopper, for his diligence in carrying out his duties with respect to this committee report. I think this bill represents a good opportunity for Queensland.

Mr Johnson: For honest Queenslanders.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. Honest Queenslanders would not stand for what the Labor Party did. The member for South Brisbane was not a member of this place, but I suspect that she was in a high-profile spot in the Labor Party in Peel Street, and I suspect that she knew exactly what happened when the parliament was recalled to get rid of section 57 so that Gordon Nuttall could not be prosecuted. What was her role in that?

Ms Trad: Where was I?

Mr BLEIJIE: I am asking you where you were. I am asking what role you played in the Labor Party. Did you play a role in the Labor Party in getting rid of section 57 of the Criminal Code? Was it a policy of the Labor Party?

Ms Trad: Where was I?

Mr BLEIJIE: I do not know where you were. I am asking you. I am making an assumption about where you were. Correct me if I am wrong. Where was the member for South Brisbane when this was being debated in parliament? I say to honest Queenslanders: members of the Labor Party cannot come in here and hide behind this veneer that the issue they have with respect to this bill is some parliamentary privilege that goes back in time. I will tell members what goes back in time: section 57 of the Criminal Code. That is what we are reintroducing. It is shameful that it was taken out of the Criminal Code in the first place. It has taken a Liberal National Party government, through openness, transparency and accountability, to bring it back.

I am surprised that those opposite are supporting it. They know that they can do nothing but support it because they know that the position they took at the time was wrong. They know that the position they took at the time was wrong and they have no choice but to support these amendments reintroducing section 57 into the Criminal Code. They know that it was wrong at the time. It is one of the most shameful acts in Queensland's political history. Members opposite can go back in time and mention Fitzgerald as much as they want, but all we have to mention is all of the jailed former ministers. How many former ministers are serving time in jail or have just been released from jail? The Labor Party has more jailed former ministers than the Liberal National Party ever had, and those opposite should be ashamed of themselves for supporting such legislation in the first place.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr BLEIJIE (4.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 2

Page 4, after line 8—

insert—

'2A Insertion of new s 53

'Chapter 8, before section 54—

insert—

'53 Evidence of proceedings in the Assembly allowed for prosecution

'(1) Despite the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 8, evidence of anything said or done during proceedings in the Assembly may be given in a proceeding against a person for an offence under this chapter to the extent necessary to prosecute the person for the offence.

'(2) Subsection (1) does not limit the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 36.

'(3) In this section—

proceedings in the Assembly see the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 9 and schedule.'

'2B Insertion of new s 56

'After section 55—

insert—

'56 Disturbing the Legislature

'(1) A person who, while the Legislative Assembly is in session, intentionally—

(a) disturbs the Assembly; or

(b) commits any disorderly conduct in the immediate view and presence of the Assembly, tending to interrupt its proceedings or to impair the respect due to its authority;

commits a misdemeanour.

Maximum penalty—3 years imprisonment.

'(2) A person may be arrested without warrant.'

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (False Evidence Before Parliament) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes to the Hon. Jarrod Bleijie's amendments [665].

Amendment No. 1 inserts new clauses into the bill, clauses 2A and 2B. Clause 2A inserts new section 53 into chapter 8 of the Criminal Code which expressly provides that, despite the operation of section 8 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, evidence of anything said or done during proceedings in the Assembly may be given in a proceeding against a person for an offence under chapter 8 of the Criminal Code to the extent necessary to prosecute the person for the offence. The approach is consistent with clause 3 of the bill, new subsection 57(3). As a consequence of the insertion of sections 56 and 58 into the Criminal Code, new subsection 57(3), clause 3, has been omitted and is now consolidated within clause 2A.

Subsection (2) provides that subsection (1) does not limit the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 36, 'Inadmissibility of particular events before the Assembly or a committee'. Subsection (3) contains the definition of 'proceedings in the Assembly' relevant to new section 53. The term is as per the definition in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

Clause 2B inserts new section 56, 'Disturbing the Legislature', into the Criminal Code which makes it an offence to disturb the Legislative Assembly while the Legislative Assembly is in session. New section 56 in effect reinserts former section 56, which was repealed in 2006 by the Criminal Code Amendment Act 2006, but with minor changes to the language of the original section to reflect modern drafting practices. The offence applies where a person, while the Legislative Assembly is in session, intentionally disturbs the Assembly or intentionally commits any disorderly conduct in the immediate view and presence of the Assembly, tending to interrupt its proceedings or to impair the respect due to its authority.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3—



Mr BLEIJIE (4.15 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 57)

Page 4, line 9, 's 57'—

omit, insert—

'**ss 57 and 58**'.

3 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 57)

Page 4, lines 19 to 23 and page 5, lines 1 and 2—

omit, insert—

'(3) To remove any doubt, it is declared that a member of the Legislative Assembly does not give an answer during an examination before the Legislative Assembly only because the member answers a question during Question Time, a debate or the conduct of other daily business of the Legislative Assembly.'

4 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 57)

Page 5, line 3, '(5)'—

omit, insert—

'(4)'.

5 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 57)

Page 5, line 5, '(6)'—

omit, insert—

'(5)'.

6 Clause 3 (Insertion of new s 57)

Page 5, line 10—

omit, insert—

'*Queensland Act 2001*, section 9 and schedule.

'58 Witness refusing to attend, answer question or produce a thing before Legislative Assembly or authorised committee

'(1) A person who—

- (a) fails to attend before the Legislative Assembly as required under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 29; or
- (b) fails to attend before an authorised committee as required under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 30(4); or
- (c) fails to answer a question asked by the Assembly, or to produce a document or other thing to the Assembly, as required under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 32(6); or
- (d) fails to answer a question asked by an authorised committee, or to produce a document or other thing to an authorised committee, as required under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 33(8);

commits a misdemeanour.

Maximum penalty—2 years imprisonment.

'(2) A person can not be convicted of an offence against subsection (1)(a) or (b) if the Assembly has excused the person for the failure mentioned in the subsection.

'(3) In this section—

authorised committee see the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, schedule.'.

Amendment 2 amends clause 3 consequential to the insertion of new section 58. Amendment 3 amends clause 3 of the bill to insert a provision to clarify that a member of the Legislative Assembly does not give an answer during an examination before the Legislative Assembly only because the member answers a question during question time, a debate or the conduct of other daily business of the Legislative Assembly.

Amendment 4 amends clause 3 of the bill to renumber new section 57 as a consequence of subsections (3) and (4) being removed and included in new section 53. Amendment 5 amends clause 3 of the bill to renumber new section 57 as a consequence of subsections (3) and (4) being removed and included in new section 53.

Amendment 6 amends clause 3 of the bill to insert new section 58, 'Witness refusing to attend, answer question or produce a thing before Legislative Assembly or authorised committee', into the Criminal Code. The Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, chapter 3, part 1, specifically contains the powers of the Legislative Assembly or authorised committee to require attendance and the production of any document or other thing. This part also sets out the relevant process to require attendance before the Legislative Assembly or authorised committee, to produce to the Legislative Assembly or authorised committee any document or thing and answer a question asked by the Legislative Assembly or an authorised committee.

New section 58 has been redrafted to take into account the operation of the scheme provided for in chapter 3, part 1 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. New section 58 applies where a person fails to attend before the Legislative Assembly as required under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 29; or fails to attend before an authorised committee as required under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 30(4); or fails to answer a question asked by the Legislative Assembly or to produce a document or other thing to the Legislative Assembly as required under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 32(6); or fails to answer a question asked by an authorised committee or to produce a document or thing to an authorised committee as required under the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, section 33(8).

Subsection (2) provides that a person cannot be convicted of an offence against subsection 58(1)(a) or (b) if the Legislative Assembly has excused the person for the failure mentioned in the subsection. Subsection (3) contains the definition of 'authorised committee' relevant to new section 58. The term is as per the definition in the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr BLEIJIE (4.18 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mr BLEIJIE: I move the following amendment—

7 After clause 5

Page 5, after line 25—

insert—

'Part 4 Amendment of Crime and Misconduct Act 2001

'6 Act amended

'This part amends the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001.

'7 Amendment of s 49 (Reports about complaints dealt with by the commission)

'(1) Section 49—

insert—

'(2A) If the commission decides that prosecution proceedings for an offence under the Criminal Code, section 57 should be considered, the commission must report on the investigation to the Attorney-General.'

'(2) Section 49(3), 'subsection (2)'—

omit, insert—

'subsection (2) or (3)'.

'(3) Section 49(2A) to (4)—

renumber as section 49(3) to (5).'

Amendment 7 inserts new clauses 6 and 7 into the bill to amend the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. Clause 6 provides that part 4 amends the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001. Proposed new clause 7 amends section 49 of the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001 by inserting a new provision that, if the commission decides that prosecution proceedings for an offence under the Criminal Code's section 57 should be considered, the commission must report on the investigation to the Attorney-General. The amendment also provides for what such a report must contain.

Amendment agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.19 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

8 Long title

Long title, 'and the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*'—

omit, insert—

'the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 and the Crime and Misconduct Act 2001'.

This amendment amends the long title of the bill to insert those words and to reflect that this bill is for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Parliament of Queensland Act and the Crime and Misconduct Act for particular purposes.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 20 June (see p. 819).

Second Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.21 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its timely consideration of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012. I note the committee tabled its report on the bill on 6 July 2012. I now table a copy of the Queensland government response to that report.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 3—Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012, government response [\[666\]](#).

In its report the committee made two recommendations about the bill. Recommendation 1 is that the bill be passed and, again excitedly, the Queensland government supports wholeheartedly that recommendation. Recommendation 2 is that the Attorney-General monitor and review the consequences of this legislation on the courts and other criminal justice agencies and report to parliament within two years from commencement. The Queensland government is cognisant of the potential consequences flowing from the implementation of this bill, in particular the future impact on prisoner numbers with resulting costs to Queensland Corrective Services. Agencies involved in the criminal justice system will monitor the impact of the proposed amendments. In addition, the efficacy of the courts in delivering justice outcomes, including timeliness, is considered through the report on government services, otherwise known as ROGS. The ROGS is delivered on an annual basis and will provide a mechanism to assess changes in the timeliness of court responses to criminal matters generally. Accordingly, the Queensland government does not consider that a report back to parliament is warranted in this instant.

As I outlined at the time of the introduction of the bill into the Legislative Assembly, the bill fulfils the Queensland government's pre-election pledge that within our first 100 days of forming government we would toughen sentences for evading police, murder and serious assaults committed upon Queensland police officers. The bill also abolishes Queensland's Sentencing Advisory Council to achieve a more efficient use of public resources through the rationalisation of the law reform functions across government. The bill signifies our intention to be tough on crime and to strive to ensure that adequate punishments are being handed down by the courts for serious criminal offenders. I will have a lot more to say on the bill as the debate progresses, but at this instant I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.23 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012. There are three primary objectives to this bill. The first is to amend the Criminal Code to do a variety of things: to increase the non-parole period for multiple murders from 20 to 30 years; to impose a new minimum non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment for murder of a police officer in certain circumstances; and to increase the maximum penalty for assault of a police officer from seven years to 14 years imprisonment in certain circumstances. The second is to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006 to increase the non-parole period for murder from 15 to 20 years imprisonment. The third is to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to abolish the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. Finally, the bill amends the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to introduce a mandatory minimum penalty of \$5,000 and two-year licence disqualification for the offence of evading police under section 754.

I propose to deal with the changes to mandatory minimum non-parole periods for murder together even though they are in different pieces of legislation. In Queensland the penalty for murder has been life imprisonment, which cannot be mitigated or varied, since 1922. In most Australian jurisdictions the penalty for murder is a maximum of life imprisonment, with a residual discretion in the sentencing judge to impose any penalty up to life imprisonment. Only South Australia and Northern Territory also have mandatory life for murder. These amendments increase the minimum term that a person must serve when convicted of murder in Queensland. For murder, the minimum that anyone must serve will now be 20 years. For multiple murders it will be 30 years and, where the victim is a police officer and basically the murder is a consequence of them being a police officer, the minimum will be 25 years.

There were a number of submissions to the committee which expressed caution in relation to increasing the minimum sentence to be served. The Supreme Court unusually made a submission to the committee. I say 'unusually' because as the submission itself says—

The Judges adopt the position that it is generally inappropriate for them to comment on matters of policy. The determination of government policy and the content of legislation are the provinces of the executive and legislative branches respectively. It is inappropriate for the courts and their members to be involved in debates about the merits of legislation and executive action.

The court felt that the objectives of the legislation could be achieved by laws which include a residual discretion to depart from what would otherwise be a mandatory sentence or a mandatory non-parole period, with such discretion to be exercised in a carefully defined and truly exceptional circumstance.

I want to take this opportunity to express the opposition's deep concern about mandatory sentencing which reflects the concern raised by the Queensland Law Society. The Queensland Law Society felt that mandatory sentences can lead to serious miscarriages of justice because the individual circumstances of a case cannot be taken into account. When many other members of the LNP government were on this side of the chamber, they also expressed concern about the inability of mandatory sentences to take account of the individual characteristics of every case. As the member for Southern Downs said in February 2010 when discussing the mandatory minimum penalty of life imprisonment for murder during debate on the Criminal Code (Abusive Domestic Relationship Defence and Another Matter) Amendment Bill 2009—

However, I think it is very important that we do point out that within legal circles and academia, and probably also privately in the judiciary, there is concern about the lack of sentencing discretion which limits their capacity to take on board the extraordinary circumstances of a particular case and the potential disproportionate application of a particular penalty for the crime of murder when, in the minds of some people, there may be serious circumstances of mitigation.

That was the member for Southern Downs. During debate on the bill the member for Indooroopilly also reflected on the inflexibility of the mandatory sentence for murder to take into account the particular circumstances of each case. The member for Kawana, who is now Attorney-General, also supported the amendment contained in the bill and noted its capacity to expand the court's scope for sentencing. The member for Glass House asked the then Attorney-General to address the issues he raised, which included the suggestion—

A discretionary sentencing regime would make available the full range of sentencing options including those community based options that may in such cases best ensure the defendant is not likely to re-offend by requiring the defendant to complete programs or attend counselling.

There does appear to be a substantial change of heart about mandatory sentencing from the other side of the chamber. This issue was highlighted also in the submission by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, which pointed out that juvenile offenders were treated the same as adult offenders for murder. This is appropriate, as murder is the most serious of offences and juvenile offenders who are convicted of murder as opposed to manslaughter must have had a high degree of culpability. But to sentence them to minimum terms of 20, 25 or 30 years reduces the likelihood of them being able to be successfully reintegrated into society upon release.

The other matter I would also raise as a concern is for the propensity for a person charged with murder to plead not guilty on the slim chance that they may be convicted of a lesser offence such as manslaughter. The chance of this occurring will increase if the minimum non-parole period is increased. This could well result in longer trial delays, which means witnesses and families of victims have to wait longer for an outcome and innocent people or people acquitted at trial spending more time in jail pretrial. This may also have consequences on the resources of the courts, the DPP and Legal Aid. I ask the Attorney-General to give a commitment to keeping an eye on this matter and ensuring that these amendments do not result in undue delays. I notice that he has nodded and smiled. This is just a concern that I hold and I would ask the Attorney-General to give a commitment that the effects of this amendment will be monitored, except that it will only apply to persons sentenced henceforth and so it will be at least 20 years before we see any consequences and because juveniles are rarely convicted of murders, many more years before we see any pattern emerge.

The increase in the minimum non-parole period for multiple offences for murder, we would also not oppose. The increase in the minimum non-parole period for murdering a police officer is a little more problematic. On this side of the chamber we hold all life to be of equal importance and do not really see the distinction between the murder of a police officer and anyone else. We, of course, value all life being equal. I have a relative who is a police officer. We, of course, value the dangerous and often life-threatening work that our dedicated police officers do and the fact that they take their life into their own hands each and every day. But so do many of our other government workers: paramedics, ambulance drivers, child safety workers, or workers trying to move a child from an armed parent. What about the murder of a child, an elderly person, or someone with an intellectual disability? What about a mother protecting her child? Surely that is a duty similar to that of a police officer. The courts already have a discretion to impose a non-parole period of more than 15 years in any situation. In fact, the murder of a police officer or any other public officer carrying out their duties has long been a circumstance of aggravation that will result in the courts imposing a much more severe sentence. That is only right, because the work that police officers and other public officers do protects us as a community and makes the community safer for everyone. As the Bar Association pointed out in its submission, the system as it currently operates is working very well and the absence of appeals by the Attorney-General against the way in which that discretion has been exercised in the past underscores this point. We will not be opposing this amendment, but we have some concerns about it.

I now move to amendments to the Criminal Code to increase the maximum penalty for serious assault on a police officer from seven years to 14 years. The maximum penalty for this offence was increased to seven years in response to the call by the Police Union to do so. It recognised the fact that police officers often are put in dangerous situations where they are more likely to be assaulted than are ordinary members of the public and this is in the process of protecting the community. It was also recognised that there are other vulnerable victims who are deserving of similar protection. So this section has been amended to include a variety of other classes of victims, including Corrective Services officers, people aged over 60, people who rely on a guide-dog, wheelchair or other remedial device and any other public officer assaulted in the exercise of their duties. The maximum penalty for these classes of victims of seven years was in keeping with the community's standards. To further increase the penalty only for police officers is a problem for the reasons I outlined before about the minimum non-parole period for murdering a police officer. It is difficult to single out only one class of victim in this way without making the laws disproportionate.

But a further cause for concern is the length of the maximum term of imprisonment. Fourteen years is the maximum penalty that is usually reserved for the most serious of offences. Whilst we recognise the important job that police officers do in this state and the inherent risk of danger that their job puts them in, this would make the penalty for spitting at a police officer the same as causing grievous bodily harm to any other individual. When the amendment to the section was first mooted, police were happy with the seven year maximum penalty. They were pleased when the amendment passed the House. The Attorney-General has said that he will monitor the effect of the amendments and, if they result in fewer assaults on police officers, he will consider extending these amendments to apply to other public officers. This means that there is no clear policy objective in decreasing the number of assaults on police officers in these amendments, because there is no evidence as yet that this will be the effect. I urge the Attorney-General to reconsider this part of the bill and perhaps wait until there is some evidence from other jurisdictions where there might have been similar amendments made that support these amendments.

There is an incremental increase in penalty without any research or policy basis to support it. It is also the doubling of an already more than double penalty that was introduced just a number of years ago. I am concerned that if, as the Attorney-General has indicated, he later increases the penalty to apply to other public officers, the police will then ask for a further increase in the penalty for assaulting a police officer or will the Attorney-General give an assurance that, when he monitors the effect of these amendments, if they do not result in a decrease in the incidence of the offence he will repeal these provisions?

I now move to the amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act to abolish the Sentencing Advisory Council. The Attorney-General made the announcement a number of months ago that he would abolish the council and moved swiftly to do so. These amendments merely give legislative effect to a decision made and carried out. We opposed the move when it was announced and we are still opposed to it. The deputy opposition leader made a speech during the matters of public interest debate in this House on 29 May about this subject. In that speech he pointed out that the members opposite, when in opposition, were wholeheartedly in support of the Sentencing Advisory Council. During the debate on the bill establishing the council the Attorney-General himself said—

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

Mr Bleijie: You're verballing.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Later in the debate he said—

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

The member for Ipswich, when he was president of the Queensland Law Society, wrote to the then Attorney-General, Kerry Shine, in 2009 asking the government to establish a sentencing council to advise on sentencing policy. He pointed out in his letter that—

... disconnection between what people might consider appropriate sentences for crimes ... and what sentences are imposed.

As well he said that a Sentencing Advisory Council could put an end to the cynical law and order debate that politicians engaged in in the lead-up to the election.

The submissions made to the parliamentary committee were resoundingly in favour of the retention of the council, because the work undertaken so far has been exceptional in its quality. The Attorney-General has said that the Sentencing Advisory Council duplicates the work of the Law Reform Commission. However, its work is very different in nature. The Law Reform Commission often spends years working on its projects whereas the council had a much quicker turnaround on referrals. More importantly, though, unlike the commission, the council has representatives from across a whole range of community organisations and so brings a whole range of perspectives to the table. That means that the purpose of the council to bridge the gap between the community and the justice system in terms of

sentencing policy can be much more efficiently achieved. I would ask the Attorney-General if he will give an assurance that if the Law Reform Commission is to take over the role of the council that he will refer all outstanding projects to the commission so that they can be completed and that he will adequately resource the commission to ensure that they have the capacity to undertake the referrals.

Mr Bleijie: No.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I now turn to the final amendment, which is an amendment to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, to introduce a mandatory minimum penalty of \$5,000 and a two-year licence disqualification for the offence of evading police under section 754. This amendment is in response to the coroner's recommendation and the CMC inquiry into police pursuits and the tragic death of a young schoolgirl at Redcliffe during a police pursuit. The policy objective of the amendment is indeed noble. It seeks to impose a greater deterrent to motorists wanting to evade police. In particular, the mandatory licence disqualification seeks to ensure that someone who is a drink driver and will therefore have an automatic licence disqualification has no incentive to evade police. Police cannot pursue a suspected drink driver under the current policy so if they are not caught immediately or within two hours they cannot be breathalysed. We have no issue with the policy behind this amendment and in principle we can see that it has merit. We have the same concerns that we had about the increase in the mandatory minimum non-parole period for murder. As the Supreme Court pointed out in its submission, mandatory sentences do not allow the special circumstances of an offence to be taken into account. However, in this case it would be even more dangerous than that. If a person has a momentary failing and seeks to evade detection by police because they think they might be over the limit, but then in a moment of clarity 50 metres down the road they stop, they will still be subjected to the mandatory licence disqualification period.

There has obviously been a lot of work that has gone into this bill. I note that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General has been bearing the heavy workload of the government's legislative program as is usually the case. I congratulate the hardworking departmental officers on their application and diligence in being in a position to bring this bill before the House. I would also like to express my disappointment that a more fulsome examination by the committee was not possible. Submissions were required to be, by their very nature, rushed to fit the very short time frames. I am, as usual, overwhelmed by the generosity of those stakeholders who took the time out of their busy schedules to make the submissions that they have made. They were fulsome, they were informative and they were very highly considered. We are fortunate indeed to have the benefit of the ideas and views of many legal minds in this state, but I am sure that they would have preferred more time to put their thoughts together. In conclusion, once again I ask the Attorney-General to please be mindful in the future of the pressure that these repeated requests for submissions within such short time frames can have on stakeholders.

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (4.43 pm): I rise to join the debate on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012 introduced by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the honourable member for Kawana, on 20 June. It was referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee which reported back to parliament on 6 July. This bill seeks to amend the Criminal Code, the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1945, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Youth Justice Act 1992.

The LNP went into the last election with a promise to the people of Queensland to get tough on crime. The introduction of this bill shows our commitment to fulfilling another one of our pre-election pledges—that is, to toughen sentences for murder, evading police and serious assaults committed upon Queensland police officers. Undoubtedly, the offence of murder is the most heinous crime an individual can commit, yet soft laws under successive Labor governments did not send a strong message to would-be killers that they would be locked away for many years. Rather, the opposite was true. By increasing the non-parole period for single and multiple murders we are ensuring that the punishment fits the severity of the crime.

Provisions to increase the penalty for serious assaults on police are long overdue. We recognise that it is about time police officers got the protection that they rightly deserve. Day after day and night after night these dedicated, brave men and women perform their duties in an increasingly high-risk, dangerous environment. Through the passage of this bill our brave police officers can now be confident they finally have a government behind them supporting them in the performance of their duties. An attack on a police officer is totally unacceptable behaviour and should result in serious punishment of perpetrators. As our Premier stated, criminals should be afraid of this LNP government. They should clean up their act or get out of Queensland.

This government will recruit 300 new police officers during the next 12 months, working towards a total of 1,100 police officers over the next four years as part of our promise to revitalise front-line services. I congratulate our Minister for Police and Community Safety for the significant efforts that he is making in this regard. It is interesting to note that in February 2010 the actual police strength of the

Coolangatta police division in my electorate was 39. In September 2011 it was down to 33 officers. However, within four months of the Newman government taking office Coolangatta has already been allocated two new officers and 100 more officers are scheduled over the next six months for the Gold Coast and Logan regions. What a different story to years of Labor neglect, that is for sure. The LNP government is committed to working towards a solution to the law and order problem and delivering other election promises to revitalise our front-line services. The Gold Coast, like many cities, has witnessed the intensity of the violence of crimes as powerful new drugs come onto the market and excessive alcohol consumption so often leads to aggressive behaviour. I have spoken many times in the House about Labor's failure to support our officers and the effect this has had on their morale and self esteem. With only four months of government, we have shown how serious we are about boosting our front-line police resources and therefore also police morale.

People who seriously assault or murder a police officer whilst they are in their line of duty should be severely punished for their actions and this bill will do just that by inserting a new minimum non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment for the offence of murdering a police officer. We only have to look at the tragic circumstances that unfolded in May of 2011 that saw Gold Coast officer Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding have his life cold-bloodedly snatched away from him in the course of his duties. Criminals responsible for the murder of a police officer will now face a minimum of a quarter of a century behind bars; a clear message of how intolerable and abhorrent their behaviour is.

In addition, this bill will double the maximum penalty for the serious assault of a police officer to 14 years. How often have we seen the despicable footage of a police officer trying to do their job while being spat at, bitten, assaulted or treated in an appalling way? Too many times, I say. The Queensland Police Service Annual Statistical Review 2009-10 reports that in the South-East region there were 343 assaults on officers. I am very sorry to say that 191 of those occurred on the Gold Coast. In 2010-11 there were 323 assaults on officers, with 198 of them occurring on the Gold Coast. These are some of the highest figures in the state and show the alarming reality that our officers face every day in part due to underresourcing through years of Labor neglect on the Gold Coast.

Policing, as I have said, is inherently a dangerous occupation, with almost 13,000 assaults on police being reported between 2007 and 2011. This figure represents approximately 250 reported assaults per 1,000 officers. I do not wish to single out specific locations as hot spots, but late night entertainment precincts have certainly had more than their fair share of vicious assaults. It is no secret they require a heftier police presence on weekends and that is why we have decided to extend our drink-safe precinct trials. This bill sends a clear message to those who treat our officers with such disrespect and contempt that their behaviour is not on. If an offender is armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon the maximum penalty of 14 years will also apply.

Our officers unreservedly deserve the support of the government and comfort in the knowledge that those who seriously assault or murder a police officer will face lengthy punishment. In my electorate of Currumbin we are served by the Palm Beach and Coolangatta police stations, as well as the Elanora Police Beat. All officers in those workplaces and throughout the state are to be commended for the work that they carry out every day to protect residents. Often theirs is a thankless task so, on behalf of Currumbin residents, to Inspector Damien Crosby, Senior Sergeant Chris Ahearn, Senior Constable Kurt Foessel and their officers I say 'thank you'. Through this bill the LNP government acknowledges the important role you play in our communities and the high-risk work that you undertake on a daily basis to keep us safe. On 19 July the Palm Beach police officers carried out an operation during which five offenders were arrested for 16 drugs and weapons related offences. Inspector Crosby reports that this is further evidence that those persons prepared to risk involving themselves in drug related activities will inevitably be detected and prosecuted. Our officers work hard every day to tackle crime and this bill will support their efforts.

As I have said, this government pledged to Queenslanders that we would get tough on law and order issues by supporting our police officers in their fight against crime. We are amending the offence for evading police by inserting a mandatory minimum penalty of a \$5,000 fine and a two-year disqualification from holding or obtaining a driver's licence. In some alarming statistics that the Attorney-General raised in his explanatory speech, the number of people evading police has risen every year since 2007, with the most common penalty being a fine of a mere \$300. Police pursuits are dangerous to our community and implementing steps such as this acts as a clear deterrent to such behaviour. Together with our tough hooning laws, we are determined to clean up our streets.

Finally, this bill will effectively abolish the Sentencing Advisory Council, which duplicates the functions of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. That will enable a more efficient use of public resources, whilst cutting unnecessary work without hindering the important function that law reform has in government. I congratulate the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for the introduction of this legislation, which sends a clear message to Queenslanders that they can be sure the LNP government is taking a proactive approach to law and order. For years the Labor government took our police for granted, but the LNP values their sterling efforts. We will grow a four-pillar economy and, in doing so, we

will revitalise our front-line services by supporting our police officers. Criminals should be very afraid of this government; after all, this bill provides the statutory ability for the courts to provide adequate penalties for criminals and provides the protection our police officers and community so deserve.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (4.52 pm): Today I rise in support of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which brings about much-needed change to our Criminal Code. For too long those changes have been passed from one government to another, but today that stops. Today our government, in keeping track with its election promises, is delivering tougher sentencing for violent offenders who commit the most heinous of crimes. This amendment bill establishes a non-parole period of no less than 30 years imprisonment for offenders who commit multiple murders. This bill also brings about a new minimum non-parole period of 25 years for the murder of a Queensland police officer. The bill will ensure that criminals like the murderers of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding, Constable Brett Irwin and their fellow officers slain in the course of their duties will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

The Queensland Police Service is on the front line of our communities. Police officers are the guardians of law and order and, time and time again, they go into harm's way to protect and serve our community. As such, sadly there are times when a police officer pays the ultimate sacrifice. At other times they are thrust into dynamic and dangerous situations while dealing with the public. I am so proud to be part of a government that seeks to increase the maximum penalty for a serious assault on a police officer from seven years to 14 years imprisonment, doubling the time an offender will spend in jail. On 26 July I attended a Police Service ceremony where the police officers of the Logan district were presented with medals for 15 years service and up to 30 years service, promotions and so on. It was a great ceremony and they all deserved what they got, but it is not enough. We have to do more for our policemen and women who are out there in harm's way. We have to encourage them to continue to protect and serve. We must honour our Police Service and the men and women who serve with distinction and honour within our community. This amendment bill is a step in the right direction to achieving that very notion.

In my electorate of Logan, like many other electorates across our state, hooning offences are eroding the sanctity of a once tranquil community. Hooning is an offence that goes well beyond individual recklessness. It is an offence that, time and time again, is proving to be a clear and present danger to the safety of our citizens. Our government's tough new legislation to tackle hoons is a commendable step. This amendment bill seeks to support that legislation further by imposing a mandatory penalty of a \$5,000 fine and two-year licence disqualification for offenders who dangerously and recklessly disregard public safety, not only of motorists but also of pedestrians, when they evade police. I reiterate that these are mandatory minimum penalties. It is about time that we start listening to the community and bring these laws up to meet their expectations. When an offender attempts to evade a police pursuit, they risk their lives and the lives of the innocent people around them.

This legislation seeks to provide an alternative to the current police pursuit policy. It seeks to create a safer approach for the community when dealing with dangerous driving on our roads. For too long the penalties imposed on an offender who evaded police was, on average, a mere \$300 fine. In my opinion, that is extremely disproportionate to the real danger that that behaviour poses to our community. This amendment bill establishes a much-needed balance in consequences for such offences and restores accountability within our legal system to punish those who blatantly disregard public safety. These amendments will ensure that the punishment afforded to an offender meets the severity of the crime. It will take steps for the due process of our court system to restrict such violent offenders from engaging with our community. These new minimum sentences will promote better protection for our Police Service and our community at large. Time and time again, while visiting PCYCs, Neighbourhood Watch groups, crime prevention groups, community action groups and so on, I am told that the punishment never fits the crime. Criminals are getting off too easy. Again I say that we are elected to listen to our communities and the laws should reflect what they want. This is what they want.

This amendment bill seeks to support another election promise of the government, which is the dissolution of the Sentencing Advisory Council. The functions of that council mirror those of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. Therefore, the bill seeks to reduce the red tape and the bureaucratic entanglement that currently exists within the legal system. I am proud to commend this bill to the House. I am proud to take part in this legislative process to restore personal accountability, making our communities safer places. I am proud to be supporting legislation that once again honours the service and the sacrifice of our Police Service. We cannot afford to continue this cycle of lukewarm stances on violent offenders. We cannot let society continue to struggle with the burden of offenders who have been found guilty and convicted of murder, yet receive light sentences. To take a personal life unnecessarily is a grave action. It is one so soulless that it is almost devoid of humanity. Now we have the ability to enforce tougher penalties that properly punish offenders in a manner reflecting their crime.

When an offender sets out to commit a crime, it is not out of desperation. It is not due to the lack of basic entitlements such as clothes and food. It is perpetrated out of a wanton need for destruction, their own personal enjoyment and the desire to inflict pain and loss on hardworking people. It is time that we fight back with strong legislation such as this to protect the very people of our great state who every day put their lives in harm's way for us. Crime will always be an issue in any society. To combat it and to mitigate the appalling impact it has on our community we must provide our police with the right training, the right tools and, most of all, supportive legislation to ensure that justice can be served and that perpetrators are accordingly persecuted under the amended legislation that we put forth today.

This amendment bill does not seek to set down just a heavy response to a violent crime; it seeks to set down a firm deterrent to any would-be offender. Today we send a clear message: 'If you break the law, you will be caught. You will be punished.' To those who commit murder and deprive innocent people of their right to live: 'You will go to jail and you will pay your debt to society and to your victim, more appropriately.'

To be a part of a team that is taking the much needed steps to introduce this amendment bill is something for which I will always hold my head high. I commend the honourable Attorney-General for his tireless efforts bringing about this much needed amendment. The energy of this government is evident by providing the legislative mechanisms for a safer Queensland and it is without a doubt on its way to establishing a safe and brighter future. I therefore commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to speak briefly on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I am so very pleased to speak in support of this very important and much anticipated bill, and I certainly congratulate the Attorney-General in bringing this forward. The bill represents implementation of a core LNP election platform and, again, it is great to see that we have wasted no time in bringing such important legislation forward to deliver for the people of Queensland in an area I know is most important to them.

People across the state have been let down on so many levels by Labor governments of the past two decades. It was disappointing to so many people to see such a long line of 'go soft on crime' initiatives, and I know from talking with those in my electorate who have been the victims of crime that there has been disbelief and utter despair at the seemingly inadequate punishments handed down by the courts under the previous 'slap on the wrist' mentality of the Labor government. I also know very well the absolute frustration and disappointment of our hardworking Queensland police when they put in so much effort to keep our community safe only to have dangerous criminals back on the streets after little in the way of penalty for their attacks on our community.

In my maiden speech in this place I said to those who break the law, 'Look out. Our new government is coming for you.' I am so glad to see some real action on the part of this government through this bill today. Just like the Penalties and Sentences and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 and the Criminal Law (Two Strike Child Sex Offenders) Amendment Bill 2012, this bill really does send that message.

The bill's objectives include measures I know will be well received. Increasing the non-parole period for those convicted of multiple murders from 20 to 30 years and increasing the non-parole period for those found guilty of the murder of our police is so important. We heard the member for Logan mention those two great officers who were cut down in the line of duty. God bless them.

In addition, the maximum penalty for those found guilty of serious assaults on police will be effectively doubled from seven to 14 years. This not only sends a message to criminals but it demonstrates that we value and care about our police and we will do what we can to protect them and to give them justice when they are attacked in the line of duty.

Very importantly, the Corrective Services Act 2006 will be amended to increase the non-parole period for murder from 15 to 20 years. This aspect particularly demonstrates a reflection of community sentiment. There are those who will say this is tough, and they are right. The victims of murder have no release date. They get no parole and their loved ones serve the hardest time, carrying a heavy burden with them for the rest of their lives. I know this is something my community think about and they will get some sense of satisfaction that those most dangerous to our society will be dealt with more harshly and serve at least 20 years for taking a life.

Other objectives will be the amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 that will see Queensland's Sentencing Advisory Council abolished, achieving a more efficient and effective use of Queensland's resources to rationalising the functions of law reform and associated functions.

One other aspect of this bill deals with evading police. We have seen some horrific consequences in the past where criminals have attempted to evade police. It is not just the lives and property lost that is important to the community; it is the potential for such loss that really worries people. I know from my discussions with local police that they are frustrated and disenfranchised by existing police pursuit laws and the lack of fitting punishment for those criminals who evade police.

This bill is a means to ensure that those who flout the law and put the community at risk will be handed real punishment. The introduction of a minimum penalty of \$5,000 and the loss of their licence for a period of two years is really going to hit hard for some of these people. These measures will make a difference, as I know there are many instances where people have thought nothing of making a dash in their vehicles in an effort to evade police. I personally have witnessed these sorts of incidents happen on the Warrego Highway in my electorate.

For some of these young people who are hooning on our streets—and I can tell the House that they think nothing of doing that—the potential loss of their licence is really going to speak very loudly. I know that there are many parents who will take great delight in reminding their sons and daughters that there will be some serious consequences for them if they do break the law in this way and are subject to losing their licence.

This is as much about protecting those sorts of people—these so-called hoons—from harm as it is about protecting the rest of the community. As we know, there have been many instances where people have lost their lives for the chance of simply avoiding arrest. I am so very glad to see this bill brought to this place. I look forward to seeing the benefits of it and seeing people get some satisfaction that justice is seen to be done. Therefore, I am very happy to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.06 pm): The Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012 has a number of significant components, including greater minimum non-parole periods for convicted murderers, a greater maximum sentence for assaulting police officers, a minimum sentence for the offence of evading police and the abolition of the Sentencing Advisory Council.

I recognise that most of these elements, with the exception of the abolition of the Sentencing Advisory Council, were LNP election commitments. The changes to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 give effect to an earlier decision by the Attorney-General to wind up the Sentencing Advisory Council. We opposed that decision at the time and we oppose it still. No coherent reason for the council's dissolution has ever been offered by the government.

There has never been an explanation as to why the LNP, after years of supporting the council, should suddenly make an about-turn. Perhaps the Attorney-General did not like the advice that the council had provided previously. That would not surprise me as this government has shown a disturbing reluctance to listen to experts, particularly in the area of criminal law. The Attorney-General seems to be taking his new job as the first legal officer of the state to pursue his biases, absent evidence and absent logic.

The Sentencing Advisory Council played an important role in undertaking significant research. It is shame that the Attorney-General has decided to disband the council, despite longstanding support of those on the benches opposite.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The member for Rockhampton is not taking interjections.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, the member for Rockhampton is not taking interjections. I call the member for Rockhampton.

Mr BYRNE: I now move to the provisions of this bill amending the minimum non-parole periods for criminals convicted of murder. I plan to spend the majority of my speech on this issue. Murder is, without doubt, the most serious crime an individual can commit and is rightly the only offence which is subject to mandatory life sentencing in Queensland. The Labor Party has traditionally opposed mandatory sentencing. However, we believe that when an individual takes a life the only appropriate punishment is a life sentence. The mandatory life sentence was instituted by a Labor government in 1922, and it has been supported since that time by governments of both persuasions.

The bill before this House concerns the minimum period someone convicted of murder must spend behind bars before being eligible for parole. It proposes to increase the non-parole period from 15 to 20 years for a single murder. It also seeks to increase the non-parole period from 20 to 30 years for the perpetrator of multiple murders. Lastly, the bill includes a new category of murder that of the murder of a police officer. Such an offence would attract a minimum non-parole period of 25 years.

Judges are of course free to use their discretion to impose minimum non-parole periods higher than those prescribed in legislation. For example, Max Sica, who was recently convicted of three murders, was given a minimum non-parole period of 35 years. That is 15 years more than the prescribed minimum. It is important to recognise what this means. There is a fairly widespread misunderstanding that a life sentence means only a period of 15 years. That is not the case. An individual serving a life sentence is subject to a court order for the rest of his or her natural life. They may, after having served 15 years, be granted parole, but they are still subject to a variety of restrictions under parole and any violations can lead to the perpetrator being re-imprisoned.

The rate of recidivism for offenders convicted of homicide is extremely low—no doubt due in part to the length of their sentence. It is also true that the vast majority of murders are crimes of passion. They are committed in the heat of the moment and therefore are not premeditated. Therefore, the increase in the minimum non-parole period will have, at best, a very small deterrent effect. However, sentences are not just designed for their deterrent effects. They should also reflect community expectations of the appropriate punishment for a crime. It is indeed sad that the Attorney is abolishing the Sentencing Advisory Council, which was the best organisation to assess community expectations.

I am broadly supportive of the increases in the minimum non-parole period for convicted criminals who have murdered one or more individuals. I understand the Leader of the Opposition will be moving amendments to allow for a reserve discretionary power for—

Ms Palaszczuk: No, we're not.

Mr BYRNE: We are not going to do that?

Ms Palaszczuk: No.

Mr BYRNE: Okay. I withdraw that section. I believe that such a discretionary—it would also allow us to avoid a number of other problems—no, we are chopping that out.

Mr McArdle: Weren't you told, Bill?

Mr BYRNE: No, I wasn't, unfortunately. I also believe that every life has a value and every life is sacred, but it is not for us politicians to draw a distinction between the life of one individual over the life of another. Police officers are not the only people who do difficult and dangerous jobs on behalf of the state. Sadly, paramedics, doctors, nurses, emergency service workers and child safety workers are often threatened as well. I, therefore, think it is inappropriate to legislatively privilege the life of a police officer over the life of any other person. Moreover, the murder of a police officer would most likely occur in one of two ways—either during the commission of another crime or in a premeditated manner where the victim was specifically targeted by a criminal organisation. Both of these would be considered aggravating circumstances by the courts and would be taken into account during sentencing.

I would like to thank the staff of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for their hard work during the committee's consideration of this bill. I would also like to thank the many organisations which took the time to provide submissions to the committee. I note that many of the organisations complained about the truncated time in which to provide submissions. This is becoming a hallmark of this government and the Attorney-General in particular. The Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group explained that they received the invitation to make a submission on 26 June but the closing date for submissions was the 28th. In addition to the Homicide Victims Support Group, a number of other organisations also complained about the time frames, including the Queensland Law Society, the Supreme Court, the Prisoners Legal Service, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and Amnesty International, Queensland-Northern New South Wales Branch. I join with these organisations in calling on the government to start treating the committee process seriously and allow a reasonable period for organisations to prepare submissions.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.14 pm): I rise to support the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 2012. This bill implements the LNP's pre-election commitment to strengthen sentences for evading police, murder, murder of a police officer and serious assaults on police officers. It will also cut some red tape by abolishing the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. I wish to address some comments just made by my colleague on the committee. I appreciate very much the Attorney-General standing up and quickly implementing our election promises. I think those groups who feel they were not given adequate time need to look very clearly at how long we said we were going to do this for the people of Queensland in the lead-up to the election. We clearly stated that we would be strengthening law and we clearly stated that we would be bringing these things in, and that is what we have done. So any groups that suggest for a moment that they did not have time to prepare a submission clearly did not hear about the election on 24 March.

I will now move to the objectives of the bill. The bill itself delivers on our pre-election commitments, as I said. It will amend the Criminal Code and the Corrective Services Act 2006 to increase the non-parole period for murder from 15 to 20 years imprisonment for a single murder and from 20 to 30 years imprisonment for multiple murders. It will amend the Criminal Code to insert a new minimum non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment for the offence of murder where the victim was a police officer. It will amend the Criminal Code to increase the maximum penalty for the offence of serious assault of a police officer from seven years to 14 years imprisonment. It will also amend section 754 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to introduce a mandatory minimum penalty of \$5,000 and two-year licence disqualification for the offence of evading police.

I will now address some of these parts of the bill. Firstly, with regard to the offence of murder, obviously murder is the most serious crime that someone can commit and the state needs to treat it as such. The constituents out there whom I have spoken to had for a long time been disturbed at the growing trend of Labor being soft on crime. We are sending a clear message that we will not be soft on crime.

A government member interjected.

Mr WATTS: I take the interjection: it is a strong message and it is a message that people who commit these crimes should be listening to loud and clear—those people who are thinking of committing crimes and who do not want to be held accountable for their behaviour.

Further to this, with regard to the offence of murder, the Criminal Code will be read in conjunction with the Corrective Services Act 2006, which prescribes the minimum non-parole period for the offence of murder—that is, the minimum period an offender must spend in prison before they become eligible for parole. Often we hear about a sentence that may have been imposed by a court for a murder and that there is a family out there who is missing a loved one. Then, several years later, the person who committed that offence gets out on parole but the family does not have their loved one back in their lives. I believe that a minimum mandatory sentence in this case is warranted and I support the Attorney-General for introducing it. The bill ensures that the punishment for murder fits the severity of the crime and it promotes community safety and protection from these serious offenders.

With reference to the murder of a police officer, we have heard some comment from those opposite in regard to police officers and other emergency services officers and people being treated equally. Police officers are there to uphold the law and to maintain civil authority. They do not have the discretionary capability to refuse to go into a dangerous situation. They have to manage a dangerous situation and they have to put their lives in danger. Other emergency services officers often find themselves in danger but they do have some discretion. When considering this, we need to look at the police officer as a special category, and I agree with the Attorney-General for doing this and I welcome the fact that he will monitor it going forward.

Police officers who put themselves in danger deserve the full protection of this legislature. The reason we have a civil society is that this legislature creates laws and the police then enforce those laws. Why should their loved ones have to sit at home and wonder what would happen if something were to happen to their loved ones, whether it be an assault, which I will address later, or murder, the most heinous crime? What kind of society would we have if we did not protect those people who protect our society? I believe that this amendment and increase in penalty is wholly justified. I support the Attorney-General in introducing it.

Mr Bleijie: Hear, hear!

Mr WATTS: Thank you, Attorney-General. I will go through a little bit of the detail. The bill inserts into the existing punishment regime, under section 305 of the Criminal Code, a new and specific minimum non-parole period of 25 years imprisonment for the murder of a police officer where the offender did the act or made the omission that caused the police officer's death. This applies when the police officer was acting in the performance of their duty and the offender knew or ought reasonably to have known that they were a police officer. It also applies when the act occurs because the police officer is a police officer. This ensures that an offender who kills a person for no other reason than that they are a police officer will be captured by this amendment. I think that is critically important. I think we need to think about that for a moment. Think about a police officer who goes and does their job, whether it be against a bikie gang, a drug dealer or whatever else. I absolutely believe that we should be catching someone who specifically targets a police officer because they have been an undercover operative or because they have gone out there and done some of the dirtiest heavy lifting that needs to be done in this state to protect our society. I would suggest the penalty should be higher, but I will agree with the Attorney-General on 25 years imprisonment on this occasion.

The last category of this crime is where the act occurs because of, or in retaliation to, the actions of the police officer or another police officer in the performance of their duty. I think it is important to understand the context here. We are not talking about handing out these sentences willy-nilly; these are people who have been found guilty of murdering a police officer in the circumstances I have just outlined. I believe police officers deserve the full protection of this legislature. I absolutely support that position.

With reference to serious assault, as many members would know, I have been involved in pubs and clubs around Queensland. I have seen many people exhibit poor behaviour on the street. When these people have to be dealt with, when ultimately security cannot control the situation, when the situation gets really out of control, the police are called. When the police arrive they have no choice but to go in and maintain civil order. When these police go in, by definition, they are putting themselves in harm's way if it is an aggressive situation. Quite often these police may be bitten, spat upon or assaulted and all of these categories need to be captured. Can honourable members imagine being a police officer who gets spat on by someone who has been in a fight and who has blood spraying out of their mouth as they do so? Imagine if that blood lands all over the police officer's face—in their eyes and everything else. When that officer goes home that night he then has to tell his wife that for the next six months he will need to keep his distance. When he goes home that night and he wants to hug his children he needs to understand that he may have contracted a serious disease from that person who

committed the assault on him, the police officer. I think it is fundamentally important that we protect the police whilst they are out there protecting us. They absolutely should not have to go home and explain to their families that they have to wait six months for blood test results and other tests to come back. If they are put in that situation by someone, then that should be considered a serious assault and it should have a 14-year sentence attributed to it. I do not think seven years is long enough. I have stood there and watched people spit blood at and assault police. I think it is absolutely disgusting behaviour and I think the community of Queensland want us to be strong on law and order, and this bill certainly achieves some of that.

The increased maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment will apply in the following circumstances: if the offender bites, spits on or applies bodily fluids or faeces to the police officer. Just think about that for a moment. These days people casually think that spitting is not such a big deal. As I said, it is a big deal, particularly if someone has already been involved in a fight and they have blood all around their mouth while they are spitting. I believe that, in those circumstances, a maximum penalty of 14 years sends a strong message. There will be judicial discretion such that, potentially, 14 years is not the punishment handed down. The fact that that is the maximum sends a strong and clear message both to the community and to the judiciary that we are serious about being tough on crime.

Another situation where this would apply is where the assault involves bodily harm as defined under section 1 of the Criminal Code. This penalty would also apply if the offender is, or pretends to be, armed with a dangerous or offensive weapon or instrument. In the absence of any of these circumstances, under section 340 an assault of a police officer will attract the maximum penalty of seven years. So if those circumstances do not exist, we are talking about seven years, which is the current situation. I think the increase sends a strong message to the community, it sends a strong message to people who fear crime, it sends a strong message to perpetrators of crime and it sends a strong message to the police that we will support them in maintaining civil and good order in our society.

The bill restricts the penalty increase to such crimes against police officers rather than extending it to other front-line officers to reflect the prevalence of these forms of assaults against police officers as a profession. I think that is important. I am not saying that others might not be deserving of this, but in the first instance we need to consider the police officers and we need to ensure that they are protected to the full extent of the law. I think 14 years is a good improvement on the current situation.

Regarding the 'evade police' provisions, we all know how dangerous it is for cars to speed through suburban streets and hoon around. We also know that the best way to stop that is to have police out there enforcing the laws, stopping those cars and preventing those kinds of actions. I can tell honourable members now that if, when my kids are walking home, a car goes screaming past chased by a police car and the guy is found guilty and goes to court and receives a \$300 fine, I certainly would not consider that serious protection of the streets of Toowoomba. I would not consider it serious protection of my children and other children as they walk those streets. I think this particular amendment is an excellent improvement. It sends an absolutely crystal clear message that, if people run when they are caught doing the wrong thing the punishment will be severe—far worse than the punishment would have been if they had stopped and allowed the police to deal with the initial offence. We need to think about that for a moment. If people know that it is \$5,000 if they run but it is only a couple of hundred bucks for the offence they might have committed in the vehicle that they had just stolen or whatever else, then they should pull over and not endanger every other road user. That is incredibly important for us to consider.

I am mindful of the time, so I will move on to the abolition of the Sentencing Advisory Council. There has been some chatter that this was not one of our election promises, which makes me concerned that those opposite did not understand what we were talking about when we said we were going to reduce red tape, duplication, excess bureaucracy and other kinds of facilities that they had set up in their pursuit of spending all of the Queensland taxpayers' money. The council was set up in December 2010. To date, the main focus of the council's work has been to provide advice to the Attorney-General on sentencing matters. This function effectively duplicates the law review functions of the Queensland Law Reform Commission. This bill dissolves that council to enable a more efficient use of limited resources. For those who are not sure what 'efficient use' means, it means we will not waste the taxpayers' money duplicating processes.

I would like to thank the departmental staff. I would like to thank the Attorney-General. I would like to thank the committee and the support staff who helped members of the committee to get across some of these things in a very short time frame. I think this is a well-drafted bill. I think it is a good bill to put forward. It provides protection to our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (5.30 pm): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 21 August 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (5.30 pm): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Public Service, Jobs

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): If you look at the *Courier-Mail* website at the moment you will see the headline ‘Newman out of touch with “thankful people”’. Today in the parliament we have heard a lot about election commitments and about what this government promised. But I know there is one thing the government did not go to the election with—that is, the massive job cuts that are now occurring under this government.

Let us recap on the week that was. We had the Minister for Transport and Main Roads announce that some 1,970 jobs were going, going, going to be gone—in Transport and Main Roads around 1,300 staff, in RoadTek around 600 staff and in TransLink around 70 staff. In relation to the new Supreme and District courts complex, which will be opened tomorrow—I am quite sure the Attorney-General will be there helping to cut the ribbon—we have heard of the potential that 200 court reporting staff will also be gone. There are also rumours now circulating that this government plans to shut Magistrates courts across Queensland. Is this true or not? This will have a huge impact in regional communities. Government members should be under no illusion: people will be going to their electorate offices and talking about the job cuts, because it is a real issue.

Tomorrow morning 612ABC will be running a phone-in to the Cereal Box asking, ‘What would you say to the Premier, if you ran into him at the service station, about the job cuts?’ I know what most people would say. They would say, ‘We want to keep our jobs.’ I do not recall before the election seeing one LNP television advertisement or one LNP brochure talking about the potential for 20,000 job cuts.

Each and every member of the LNP government should hang their head in shame, because the people out there are losing trust in their government. They are losing trust in your government because you have breached that fundamental trust by not telling them the truth. I note that the Premier is in the chamber. Here is a chance for everybody to tell the Premier what they think about these massive job cuts, because these cuts affect real people and families who have mortgages to pay. These are real people with real jobs, and you are treating them with contempt.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you will direct your comments through the chair and cease using the term ‘you’ in respect of other members in the House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Government members will hear firsthand what people have to say when they go back to their electorates.

(Time expired)

International Geological Congress

Hon. AP CRIPPS (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.33 pm): I rise at the end of the parliamentary sitting week to alert everyone in the House as to the origin of my unique and very handsome tie that I have been wearing in the House for the whole week. It has drawn some unfortunate and very disparaging remarks from the Premier, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads in particular, who are all style aficionados, something I cannot claim to be.

There is a good motivation behind me sporting this unique and handsome tie. That is because next week Brisbane will be hosting the 34th International Geological Congress, an event which will showcase Queensland’s mineral and energy resources and exploration potential as well as the quality of work done by our geoscientists. The tie is of course a geological map of South-East Queensland overlaying the city of Brisbane. The event will attract to Brisbane about 5,000 geologists from more than 100 countries, including some of the world’s most renowned authorities in the field of geoscience. The congress is the largest geological event to be held in Australia and is expected to bring more than \$18 million in economic benefits to Queensland.

Our support for the Geological Survey of Queensland reflects our commitment to resource industry development in general. For example, we have extended the Greenfields 2020 program, allocating \$18 million to it over the next four years. Expenditure on exploration increased from \$244.3 million in 2004 to a record \$1.36 billion in 2011, and the Newman LNP government intends to do everything it can to maintain this impressive momentum. Initiatives generated by the Geological Survey of Queensland under the Greenfields 2020 program have generated new precompetitive resource data, all of which helps to reduce the risks associated with exploration activity.

The Geological Congress concentrates the attention and expertise of our geologists in one place at one time. The theme for the 2012 congress reflects the crucial role that geoscience plays in the quest for sustainable development and shows how geoscience contributes directly to the future of the world's resource based industries, land and water management and mitigation of geohazards. The majority of the attendees are expected to be from overseas, with especially large contingents coming in from Russia and China. The Geological Congress will be hosted by the Australian Geoscience Council, the peak body for the professional and learned societies, and will take place in Brisbane next week, from 5 to 10 August 2012.

Men of the Trees

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (5.36 pm): I rise in the House this afternoon to pay tribute to a fantastic group of volunteers associated with an organisation known as Men of the Trees. The members of Men of the Trees attend plantings on most Saturday mornings from late January through to early December. National Tree Day, which was last Saturday, is Australia's biggest community tree-planting event and is coordinated by Planet Ark. Since Tree Day started in 1996, more than 1.5 million volunteers have planted over 11½ million native trees and shrubs.

Each year Men of the Trees hosts a planting site for National Tree Day, and this year's site was at Arbor Street Reserve, adjacent to Ferny Grove Police Station. As usual, the event was well attended, with around 80 volunteers. This year, around 850 trees were planted throughout the morning, with volunteers then enjoying morning tea prepared by the local Apex organisation. Fran and Marion diligently provide outstanding support to the organisation Men of the Trees and clearly have quite an extensive understanding of and experience in forestry and horticulture. They were, again, integral to the success of the day.

This year there was large awareness of National Tree Day which saw a variety of local groups, such as the local scouts and girl guides, providing their support. This planting adds to the significant contribution in the local area that Men of the Trees is continuing to provide through other local projects located at Keperra Picnic Grounds, Bunya Crossing at Wongan Creek, Yingally Drive at Arana Hills and Bob Cassimaty Park at Ferny Grove. This last site, Bob Cassimaty Park, while being managed by Men of the Trees, was made possible through the collaborative efforts of Brisbane City Council and Queensland Rail.

Over the last 18 months that this project has been undertaken thousands of trees have been planted at areas adjacent to Kedron Brook. The involvement of QR has been undertaken as an act of goodwill by the department to offset concerns regarding the loss of established trees raised by the community during the construction of the new park-and-ride facilities at Ferny Grove Railway Station. It was at one of these planting events throughout the campaign that the now Premier made the announcement of the Everyone's Environment initiative. This welcome initiative, now on the eve of commencement, will provide outstanding organisations such as Men of the Trees, Kedron Brook catchment environment group and other organisations with welcome funds to undertake projects that ensure our local environment and the community at large benefit from this policy initiative. I encourage these organisations and other groups such as schools and scouting groups undertaking weed eradication, cleaning our waterways and general clean-ups to apply for grants as they become available.

(Time expired)

Ride for Isabel

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.39 pm): Last Friday was the start of the third annual Ride for Isabel to raise awareness and funds for Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support, or SANDS, Queensland. The ride honours the memory of my baby daughter Isabel, who was stillborn at 41 weeks in 2008. There really are no words to describe the pain of losing Isabel and my wife, Kerry, and I vowed to do whatever we could to raise funds for this parent-driven organisation that provides much needed counselling and support services for families and those affected by the sudden death of an infant or through reproductive loss. All proceeds from the Ride for Isabel go to SANDS Queensland to support counselling and bereavement services as well as events like the Walk to Remember in Cairns. Starting as a one-day 85 kilometre ride in 2010, the ride has grown to an almost 300-kilometre cycling event over three days. Since its inception, the ride has raised more than \$11,000 for SANDS Queensland, and we are hoping

to add a few more thousand dollars this year once the tally is finalised. Last Friday morning I joined other riders and hopped on my bike at Smithfield and rode up the Kuranda Range and had morning tea at Mareeba's Coffee Works, lunch at Atherton and ended up in Milanda. On day 2 riders rode to Milla Milla and down the Palmerston Highway, with an overnight stop at Innisfail. On day 3, after morning tea at Abbeyfield in Babinda, the ride concluded at Gordonvale.

From the outset I knew that the 2012 ride would be particularly hard for me, but it was not because there was an extra day this year. In September 2010 I was gearing up to take part in the Cardiac Challenge, a ride from Cairns to Cooktown, to support the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation. The night before the ride I had given a speech and revved up the riders at Cazalys but hours later fell very ill for several days. Since that time I just have not been right. I continue to feel lethargic and weak and have had numerous tests to find out the cause. I said when I launched the Ride for Isabel in 2010 that it would happen every year, even if I was the only one doing it. A few months ago, even that could have been in doubt.

While I still do not know what the cause of my sickness has been, I am on the mend and am feeling stronger by the day and I really enjoyed getting back on the bike for this very personal and important event. Because I have not been well and because I have been suffering from the flu, I could not do every single kilometre of the ride this year but just about all of it. But any disappointment was wiped away when my family were there to greet me at the end of the three days on Sunday. It was also special for another reason. It was our 12th wedding anniversary and the day we announced to our family that we have a new baby on the way. A big thanks to Glenys Duncan, Coral Lee Kemp and Judy Phillips for their amazing job organising this year's Ride for Isabel and also to our sponsors and supporters—Piccones IGA Edmonton, Coffee Works at Mareeba, Julie's Tasty Treats, McDonald's, Avis, Piefection, Sibby's Bakehouse, Innisfail PCYC, the Lions Clubs of Milla Milla and Gordonvale, the Queensland Police Service, the QFRS, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Babinda Harvest Festival committee, Yum Yums Cafe, Malanda Falls Caravan Park and the Department of Transport and Main Roads. I know that the Ride for Isabel is growing in popularity and is now firmly established in our local cycling calendar.

Box Flat Mine Disaster

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (5.42 pm): This past Tuesday marked the 40th anniversary of the Box Flat mining disaster at Swanbank in Ipswich. Although the site is not in my electorate of Ipswich West, several of the miners killed were residents of the electorate and the events have had a long-lasting impact on the region, and many surviving relatives and friends still grieve today. At 2.47 am on Monday, 31 July 1972, an explosion devastated Box Flat No. 5 and No. 7 collieries, taking the lives of 17 and severely injuring others. This tragic event marks a most dark period in the otherwise rich mining history of the region. I wish to channel the words of former Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen through his motion of condolence at the time in remembering those who were lost when he said—

This House desires to express its deepest sympathy with the relatives and friends of the men who were killed and with those who were injured in the tragic mine disaster.

In Ipswich and its surrounding districts we will never forget that there were many people who were lost that morning. Those from my electorate include Mervyn Verrenkamp and William Rae Drysdale of Marburg, John Roach of Brassall and William Marshall of Leichhardt. Other men from the region who lost their lives were Kenneth Frank Cobbin, Maurice Talt and Andrew Haywood of Silkstone; Leonard Rogers, Brian Randolph and Daryl Reinhardt of Eastern Heights; Brian Rasmussen and John McNamara of Sadliers Crossing; William Drewett and Harold Reinhardt of Raceview; Walter Williams of Ebbw Vale; Walter Murphy of Ipswich; and Robert Jones of Booval. Sadly, on 20 February 1974 another miner, Clarence Wolski, passed away as a result of the injuries he sustained in the explosion at Box Flat.

May God bless those men and their families and may He provide comfort to those who survived the disaster and especially those who rallied to its recovery. We must never forget or fail to pass on the memory of the Box Flat disaster. It is important to our local history and hopefully it is a disaster the scale of which we will never again see in the region.

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.44 pm): I am sure all honourable members would be aware that last week was Catholic Education Week—a fantastic occasion indeed. As the product of a Sisters of Mercy education in Brisbane, I am always a strong supporter of Catholic Education Week. I am also very blessed to have in the electorate of Broadwater a fantastic Catholic school, St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School, a school that has its foundations in the Ignatian tradition of St Francis, who was of course known for his courage and his faith. To celebrate Catholic Education Week, St Francis took the opportunity to launch its new vision and mission statement for the school and it celebrated a fantastic liturgy in order to launch that mission and vision statement. That statement has

five main points—focus, be, develop, lead and nurture: it wants to focus on children, who are our future; it wants us to all be faith driven; it wants to develop a great culture and spirit; it wishes to lead with quality education; and it wishes to nurture growth. A by-product of all of that is of course the statement that shining eyes light the way. It was fantastic for me to be able to go to that school and meet with the senior leaders and talk to them about what their education means to them and particularly what Catholic education has meant to them in that school.

I want to thank not only the leaders who participated in that liturgy and made it so very special but particularly the dancers who participated in a fantastic display that announced the new mission and vision statement to the entire school community. I also want to thank school principal Mr Peter Anderson. He is a fantastic leader at that school, and I want to thank him for the invitation to attend. I also thank Father Barry Grayson, the parish priest at Holy Family which is attached to St Francis. He led a fantastic liturgy. The entire school community had the chance to get together and really celebrate what a fantastic school it is. Its motto is 'Let your light shine'. I really think that its new mission and vision statement illustrates how it is letting its light shine. I have no doubt that the school will continue to shine into the future.

Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service; Minister for Housing and Public Works

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.47 pm): In another attack on vulnerable people in need, this heartless 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg is closing a valuable service in the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service. This service offers invaluable assistance to people in need who have difficulties with landlords and the department of public housing. It sets out to resolve issues between the parties and protect tenants' rights. In Ipswich alone this service had 6,000 contacts. That is 6,000 families needing assistance with a dispute who have nowhere else to go; 6,000 families who have lost their voice. I table for the House page 6 of the *Ipswich News*.

Tabled paper: Extract from the Ipswich News, dated 1 August 2012, regarding the Ipswich Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service [\[667\]](#).

It shows that Ipswich MP, Ian Berry, has finally broken his silence about local issues but then admits that he is a lame duck, unable to convince the LNP cabinet about this much needed service. Then the Ipswich MP says that residents can get advice from the RTA, which we in this House all know to be untrue. 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg must be in his Manhattan apartment, as he is nowhere to be seen in the Ipswich community. He is catching a Broadway show when his tenants sing out for help. 'Mamma Mia!', they cry. He thinks he is the 'Lion King', but he is more like 'Cats' and the tenants are 'Les Miserable'. It is a 'Chorus Line' of 'Wicked' and 'Beauty and the Beast' while he is the 'Fiddler on the Roof'.

Mr Newman: Who wrote this for you?

Mrs MILLER: I hear an interjection from the Premier. Can I say, 'Hello, Dolly', Premier. 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg cannot see that the money invested in this scheme saves money, as it supports people in private rental so that they are not placed on the public housing waiting list and it efficiently deals with large numbers of disputes, streamlining QCAT time in dealing with them.

TAAS is funded out of the interest of rental bonds. TAAS provided a very cost-effective delivery of service from this funding, with 95 dedicated workers across 29 service outlets across Queensland. Queenslanders are unsure what the rent would be on 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg's 'Plaza Suite', but he should move out and be the 'Music Man' for tenants so that they can hear 'The Sound of Music' and hope that 'They're Playing Our Song'.

Southport Electorate, Unemployment

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.50 pm): That is what we expect to hear from the other side of the House. All they have are silly stories that take us nowhere. They are attacking us in the media about the loss of jobs, yet I rise tonight to say that I have been given some new information about the employment situation in the electorate of Southport. Nearly 18 months ago—in December of 2011—the total number of people unemployed in my electorate was 2,536. The latest figures that I have been able to secure today show that, as at the end of March, there are now 4,463 people unemployed in the electorate of Southport. That is a loss of 1,927 jobs in just 18 months. Is it any wonder that the people of Southport voted to get rid of the tired old Labor government that we had seen and its local member? The members opposite were ranting about jobs, but they were quietly sending local businesses broke. In the electorate of Southport—

A government member: They don't care about working families.

Mr MOLHOEK: That is right. In the electorate of Southport, there are over 8,000 registered businesses and many of them are struggling. In fact, of those 8,000 business, 7,600 of them are small businesses. I can imagine where the loss of jobs has come from. Of those businesses, 332 are medium

sized businesses and just 18 are large businesses. Labor continued to rant about its great record and its 20 years of mismanagement, but how come we are shedding jobs—1,900 jobs lost in my electorate in just 18 months under the previous Labor member and under the previous tired old Labor government?

I am pleased to advise the House tonight that earlier this week I hosted a breakfast with members of the Southport Chamber of Commerce and Industry, members of the Southport Forum and also the Committee for Southport and we are starting to work together and identify the many opportunities that are available in the electorate. We are working on ideas and thoughts as to how we can get things back on track in the electorate of Southport. I can tell members that those 20 people who gathered with me last Monday morning were people from some of the social service provider organisations, people involved in the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, local business owners, local town planners, architects and designers. We came together to talk about how we can get Southport back on track.

I am pleased to say that we have agreed that there are plenty of opportunities and we are looking forward to what this Newman government will deliver for Queensland. With the promises that we have heard from the Premier and the Treasurer, I can tell members that there is great optimism in the electorate of Southport. We want to get not just those 1,900 people working but also get the jobs back of those 4,000 unemployed people in Southport.

Gladstone Electorate, Events

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.53 pm): Last week demonstrated yet again what an amazing community my electorate has. On Saturday, we joined with Red Cross representatives to recognise donors who have given 50, 100 and 150 donations and one very generous donor who is involved in the cancer treatment program. It is a very invasive program that he has undertaken and I congratulate him. The Calliope River Historical Village Markets, an arts and craft market, were held on both Saturday and Sunday. A small organising committee runs the Calliope River Historical Village Markets, but they are custodians for a great deal of history right across my electorate and I commend them for their constant work. Harold Harvey, the president of the committee, celebrated his 80th birthday on Saturday and there is no holding Harold back.

Then, of course, we had our Relay for Life, which is an amazing mix of fun and exhaustion to raise funds for cancer research and for cures. On behalf of the community I would like to congratulate Col Chapman, who is a councillor on the Gladstone Regional Council but who is also the chair of the organising committee, and his hardworking team. Yet again they did an amazing job. They have this competition on a Saturday night called Miss Relay. It takes us 12 months of therapy to get over it. It is blokes dressed up as women. Some of them are frighteningly convincing and others of them are frighteningly unconvincing. I still believe it takes us 12 months of treatment to get over it. Colin Bourke usually auctions off items that have been donated and that is an additional fundraising opportunity. It is really tragic, actually, but Col is a Blues supporter. We just about had him sitting on a bid for a Maroons jersey. He came that close to having it but, sadly, somebody lifted him off it. Also on the weekend there were a number of football games and school fairs. The Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School had its fair and, without being unparliamentary, one of the games that the kids had to play was a most interesting dunny toss. I do not think many of the kids knew what a long-drop toilet was, but they received an education.

I congratulate everybody in the community who not only on that weekend but also constantly support people in need in my community—the volunteers, those people who are on these committees without any financial recompense but who have the knowledge that they are adding to the quality of life for many people in my community. I congratulate one and all. The strength of a community is not measured by its money; it is measured by its people.

Flagstone State Community College Careers Expo

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (5.56 pm): It is with great pleasure today to rise to speak about the outstanding efforts that are being undertaken in my electorate of Logan in promoting to our youth the options to further their skills and make the transition from school life into the workforce as seamless and as supportive as possible. On Friday, 20 July, I had the privilege of opening the Flagstone State Community College Careers Expo on behalf of the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Flagstone State Community College, supported by both the Logan Country Chamber of Commerce and the Logan Country Junior Chamber of Commerce, hosted the third annual expo at the school, with the first two generating very positive feedback. The careers expo provided students with the unique opportunity to interact and engage with career, vocational and tertiary educational providers. This expo, spearheaded by students from the Junior Chamber of Commerce and supported by their teachers, reached out to students not only from Flagstone but also from surrounding areas such as Park Ridge and Hills College.

The Flagstone State Community College, in reaching out to other schools in the region, gave students who would otherwise not be able to attend the larger careers expo held in urban areas owing to limited public transport and infrastructure the chance to engage with career providers that would otherwise be out of reach. The success of the expo would not have been achievable without the tireless efforts of the students of Flagstone State Community College, especially Karly Bannick, President of the Logan Junior Chamber of Commerce, and Trent Bonnor, Vice-President of the Logan Junior Chamber of Commerce. In addition to completing their academic studies, both Karly and Trent dedicated their spare time to organising and hosting the expo. I would like to commend their efforts today before the House.

I must also acknowledge the strong contribution made by the exhibitors, whose invaluable knowledge and guidance will undoubtedly provide the next generation of apprentices, tertiary students and full-time employees with the options that are so sorely needed in our growing state. The expo received a wide range of exhibitors across-the-board. From hospitality to engineering, from law enforcement to defence and from apprenticeship schemes to university programs, students in my electorate were able to gain firsthand knowledge for the next and crucial step in their lives. With expos like this targeting year 11 students who are about to take on the stressful and demanding rigours of their final year of schooling, providing options to them gives them much needed guidance. I look forward to next year's careers expo and, once again, being involved and supporting the next generation of Queenslanders.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.59 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, 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, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young