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THURSDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2012



The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Reflections on the Deputy Speaker by the Premier



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 24 September 2012 I received a letter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition about an exchange in the House on 23 August 2012 between the Manager of Opposition Business and the Premier during consideration in detail on the Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This exchange eventually led to the Deputy Speaker requiring a withdrawal from the Premier. The complaint is that the Premier disrespected the Deputy Speaker in the chair by failing to withdraw as required by the Deputy Speaker, and in doing so was disrespectful to the authority of the chair.

Before proceeding to consideration of the matter at hand, I wish to make some very important points. Standing orders, practice and procedures prevent, amongst other things, unparliamentary language, personal reflections on other members and members addressing each other directly across the chamber. The chair has the right to require the withdrawal of reflections and unparliamentary language, without being prompted.

In regard to this incident, I note that the Premier did withdraw, although it did take some time and a number of prompts from the chair. I would remind all members that they should follow directions of the chair in a timely and respectful manner. However, I also note that, in this instance, the Deputy Speaker saw no need to resort to the available procedures in standing orders and ensured that the unparliamentary language was withdrawn. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

PRIVILEGE

Speaker's Ruling, Referral to Ethics Committee



Madam SPEAKER: I inform the House that yesterday I received correspondence from the Leader of the Opposition concerning the evidence given by the Director-General of the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the estimates hearing of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee on 18 October 2012 and inconsistencies between that evidence and the minister's answer to a question without notice on Tuesday of this sitting week.

I have referred this matter to the Ethics Committee to allow it to consider this concurrently with another matter. I draw to the attention of members that, as this matter is now before the committee, standing order 271 now applies and the matter should not be referred to in the Assembly.

PRIVILEGE

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



Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, on 10 September 2012 I received a complaint from the member for South Brisbane about statements made by the Premier in an answer to a question without notice by the member for Woodridge on 1 August 2012. The complaint is that the Premier deliberately misled the House in his answer by alleging that the previous government did not build any new roads in the period from 1989, with the exception of the Gold Coast motorway, commenced when the member for Gregory was transport minister in the Borbidge government, and that the previous government built nothing at all and did not invest in public transport. The member for South Brisbane attached to her complaint a quantity of information seeking to disprove the Premier's statement and demonstrate that the previous government invested heavily in roads and public transport.

As I have stated in respect of other rulings this week, in deciding whether or not a statement was intended to be deliberately misleading, I think it is essential to consider both the context of the statement and the forum. It is also important to consider the significance of the issue.

I recommend that all members of the House, particularly new members, take the time to read Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee report No. 17 which provides some very sensible advice about the contempt of deliberately misleading the House and when members should make complaints about such issues. In that report, the committee noted that, whilst exaggeration is considered in some quarters to be a legitimate part of the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate, the committee believed this is not the case with members' considered statements to the House, such as personal explanations and ministerial statements.

The committee agreed with the comment of the Clerk of the House of Representatives of New Zealand, David McGee, in his text that—

Remarks made off the cuff in debate can rarely fall into this category—

of deliberately misleading the House—

nor can matters about which the member can be aware only in an official capacity. But where the member can be assumed to have personal knowledge of the stated facts and made the statement in a situation of some formality (for example, by way of personal explanation) a presumption of an intention to mislead the House will more readily arise.

In this case, the context is an answer to a question without notice, not a considered, prepared statement. The Premier, therefore, was essentially talking off the cuff. There is little doubt in my mind that the Premier's statement, such as the previous government built nothing at all and did not invest in public transport, was essentially hyperbole as opposed to deliberate misleading.

I further refer members to my statements yesterday on matters such as these. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

PRIVILEGE

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

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 18 September 2012 I received correspondence from the Leader of the House about statements made by the Leader of Opposition Business on 14 September 2012, alleging that five members, including the Leader of the House, had been required to apologise for using the figure of \$100 billion in debt. The complaint is that the Leader of Opposition Business has misled the House in that only four members had apologised and one, the Leader of the House, had clarified the record.

I refer to my earlier statements this week regarding context, audience, degree of importance and off-the-cuff remarks. I regard this matter as not only hyperbole but also trivial. I will not be referring the matter to the Ethics Committee.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Deeral, Mr E

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.37 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Eric Deeral a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Madam Speaker be requested to convey to the family of Mr Deeral the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of members of the Deeral family and the traditional custodians who have travelled to be with us here today. Welcome you to all.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr NEWMAN: Mr Deeral was born on 23 August 1932 at the Hope Vale Lutheran mission. He was a proud member and an elder of the Gamay clan of the Guugu Yimithirr nation, and a fierce and strong advocate for Indigenous Queenslanders. While Hope Vale was always in his heart, Mr Deeral was educated at the Woorabinda Central School, because he was evacuated to Woorabinda during World War II. Mr Deeral left school at the age of 13 and worked as a labourer, bush worker and stockman. It was this experience that exposed him to the many issues affecting Aboriginal people and gave him the desire to see things changed for the better.

He became a public servant and was chairman of the Hope Vale Mission Community Council from 1957 to 1970 and worked as a liaison officer with the Aboriginal affairs department in North Queensland from 1960 to 1973. In 1973, Mr Deeral was appointed as a consultant to the then minister for Aboriginal affairs in the Bjelke-Petersen government, the Hon. Neville Hewitt.

In 1974, Mr Deeral was selected by the National Party to stand for the electorate of Cook. At the state election on 7 December 1974 he was successful in a tight electoral contest against six other candidates. This was an historic victory in Australian history as Mr Deeral was not only the first

Indigenous person to be elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly but also the first Indigenous person to be elected to any state parliament in Australia. Indeed, at this time, Mr Deeral and Mr Neville Bonner of the Liberal Party, who represented Queensland in the Australian Senate from 1971 to 1983, were the only two Aboriginal politicians in Australia.

Mr Deeral's maiden speech in this House in March 1975 reflected both his Indigenous heritage and his role as a representative for all of the people of the Cook electorate. In his speech, Mr Deeral noted that he was not in the parliament to press for the advantage of any particular group but to represent honestly and fight for the advancement of the Cook electorate and for the people who lived there. Interestingly, Mr Deeral also observed that he doubted if any member of any parliament in Australia had come from a family with such a lengthy association with their electorate. He noted that the Deerals, his family, had lived in Cook for over 20,000 years, so if length of residence was any indication of really interested representation then he would surely have a huge advantage.

During his time in this House, Mr Deeral was a strong advocate for greater development of the 'top end' of Queensland, including the construction of all-weather roads to allow tourism and other industries to develop. He also ensured that improvements were made to local schools and medical access. He also lobbied strongly to create job opportunities for people in the cape instead of relying on handouts, a philosophy that is also very close to my heart. In this regard, he was an early critic—a trailblazer, well ahead of his time—of passive welfare and the effects of paternalistic policies directed by others towards Indigenous people.

Mr Deeral contested the seat of Cook at the state election of November 1977. However, he was narrowly defeated by the Australian Labor Party's candidate, Mr Robert Scott, whom Mr Deeral had himself narrowly defeated at the 1974 election.

Following his time in the parliament, Mr Deeral remained active in Indigenous and community affairs. He was the first chairman of the Aboriginal Coordination Council established in 1985 to advise the Queensland government on the wellbeing of Aboriginal people living in communities. He was a representative of the Queensland Coordination Council in 1988 and in the same year was a delegate to the World Heritage Organisation which met in Paris.

In the early 1990s, Mr Deeral also was chairman of a legislation review committee, which examined Queensland legislation and its impact on Aboriginal land rights. In 1995, Mr Deeral directed a project on the positive role elders could play in reducing the number of Aboriginal people in Queensland prisons and youth detention centres. From 1998 to 2003 he was a member of the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board and played a key role in the establishment of the Cooktown museum.

In July 2002, Mr Deeral was appointed interim chair of the Aboriginal body formed in response to the Fitzgerald Cape York justice study and in 2003 he was involved in the Hands on Parliament inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in Queensland's system of democracy. I observe that during this parliamentary inquiry Mr Deeral was asked about the idea of dedicated Indigenous seats in the Queensland parliament but that he noted that he did not support such an idea because we are Australians and we should all be able to work together.

As a mark of the respect in which Mr Deeral was held, the annual Indigenous youth parliament was renamed in his honour earlier this year. He was able to travel from Hope Vale for the occasion and inspire the current generation of young Indigenous leaders. Later today Madam Speaker and I will host a ceremony in the Legislative Council chamber and in the presence of Mr Deeral's family will unveil a plaque in his honour that recognises him as being the first Indigenous person to be elected to an Australian state parliament.

Mr Deeral was a leader at a time when his people needed leadership to overcome decades of discrimination and deprivation directed towards his people. To this end, he made a huge contribution to the advancement of Indigenous and community causes, and had a positive influence on many of today's Indigenous leaders.

Mr Deeral passed away on 5 September 2012, and a funeral service to celebrate and remember his life was held at the St John's Lutheran Church, Hope Vale, on 13 September 2012. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service that he gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of this government, I take the opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Deeral's family and friends. May his legacy continue to inspire future generations.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.45 am): I rise to pay tribute to Eric Deeral, a former member for Cook. Mr Deeral was a member of the Gamay Warra clan of Guugu Yimithirr people and was born at the Hope Vale mission. Eric left school at 13 to work as a stockman and became chairman of the Hope Vale Community Council at the age of 25. Mr Deeral holds a singular honour as the first, and so far only, Aboriginal man or woman to serve as a member of the Queensland

parliament. While Mr Deeral will always be the first Indigenous person in this parliament, he does not need to be the only one. I am sure he would celebrate the election of more Indigenous men and women to this place. I think both sides of the House should make a concerted effort to have more Indigenous representation in this House over the years to come.

Mr Deeral's election in 1974 was interesting to say the least. Eric was one of the two officially endorsed National Party candidates for the seat of Cook. Eric emerged with the most votes and wrested the seat from Labor. As the first Indigenous member of this place, Eric had a special role in representing the Indigenous people of Queensland. He could speak with authority on the disadvantage faced by Indigenous people. I want to quote from Mr Deeral's maiden speech, which the Premier mentioned earlier. He said—

The Deerals have lived in Cook over 20,000, so if length of residence is any indication of really interested representation, I must surely have a huge advantage.

In his election to this place and in his example, Eric has inspired another generation of Aboriginal leaders, including Noel Pearson. I understand that Eric was a central figure in Mr Pearson's honours thesis on the Hope Vale mission. While Eric obviously had a special interest in and a special perspective on Indigenous issues, he represented every member of his electorate equally. He championed infrastructure improvements for the Cook electorate, including sealed, all-weather roads from Karumba through Normanton, Croydon and Georgetown to Cairns. He also pushed for improved telecommunications infrastructure on the cape and tourism developments.

After leaving this place in 1977, Eric continued to advocate for a number of advances and issues close to his heart. He was a delegate to the Queensland Aboriginal Coordination Council and served as chairman of the legislation review committee that reviewed Queensland legislation impacting on Aboriginal land rights during the early 1990s. He also helped to develop the elder visitor programs to several Queensland correctional centres, which the Premier also raised in his speech.

Earlier this year, the Speaker made the wise decision to rename the Indigenous youth parliament in Mr Deeral's honour. I am glad Mr Deeral will continue to live on and receive the recognition he deserves through the youth parliament. I am also pleased that the youth parliament was renamed while Eric was alive to see it.

I place on record the recognition of and the gratitude for Mr Deeral's efforts both in this parliament and in the wider community. I acknowledge that some members of his family and his clan are here today. He will be sadly missed.

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (9.48 am): I rise to speak to the condolence motion to mark the passing of Queensland's first Indigenous parliamentarian. I would like to acknowledge the members of the Deeral family and the traditional custodians who have travelled to be with us today.

Mr Deeral demonstrated leadership and advocacy at a practical level which focused on results and lifestyle improvements for the people he represented. He acknowledged that his Aboriginality meant that he would be seen as a spokesman for Indigenous people. He was happy to accept that role but he was equally adamant that he represented the whole of the Cook electorate and would fight to see that every one of his constituents got a fair deal. He was forthright in seeking improvements to infrastructure and for improvements to education and health services. In that sense he was something of the classic member of parliament.

In other ways he was ahead of his time in promoting issues which still have currency today. For example, in his maiden speech Mr Deeral highlighted the damage done to Indigenous people by the welfare mentality. On 18 March 1975 he told this place—

The people responsible for handing out cash for no effort are condemning them to oblivion.

He went on to say—

No man can continually accept hand-outs without losing his initiative and self-respect.

These are issues that are still active today, and the sentiments expressed in that maiden speech are echoed by Noel Pearson and other Indigenous leaders still today. It is disappointing that almost 40 years later little progress appears to have been made in improving the economic sustainability for Indigenous communities. I think Mr Deeral would rightly be disappointed that his successors at all levels of government have been unable to bring his vision to reality. He saw that the future for Indigenous people lay in self-sufficiency rather than dependency, and he devoted his life to making that happen. Mr Deeral served just one term as the member for Cook, but his connection and active commitment to the electorate continued for many years after, while ever he was physically able to do so.

The former member for Cook was proud of both his heritage and his connection to the country he represented. Unfortunately, I never had the pleasure of meeting Mr Deeral, but there was no shortage of people prepared to tell me what a passionate and committed member of parliament and community advocate he was. It was an honour for me to attend his funeral on behalf of the government and to have the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution he made as a member of parliament and as a respected member of his community.

He saw what needed to be changed about disadvantage suffered by Indigenous people across all measures of society and set about trying to make a better life for his people. He was a great example to Indigenous people and elected representatives alike. It is incumbent upon all of us to live up to the example he set. Mr Deeral will be sadly missed not just for what he achieved but for what he inspired others who followed him to achieve.

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (9.52 am): I acknowledge and welcome the family and friends of Mr Eric Deeral who have travelled from Hope Vale in honour of their father, brother, relative and friend. I first met Eric Deeral in the late 1980s at his home town in Hope Vale in Cape York. Mr Deeral had constructed a traditional dwelling on the banks of the Endeavour River as part of an initiative to bring mainstream tourism into connection with traditional practices. Tourism was a lifelong ambition of Mr Deeral's and, as in most things, he was way ahead of the game on this occasion. His belief that there was an economy in traditional based ecotourism has only come to the fore in Cape York in recent years.

My first meeting with Mr Deeral was over 10 years after he had served a term not only as the first conservative member for Cook in a lifetime but as the first Indigenous member of this House. Mr Deeral's dedication to his family and his community and the plight of Indigenous peoples had not waned in the years since he had served in this House but rather had developed into a passion. Mr Eric Deeral believed absolutely that self-determination for Indigenous people was inextricable from land rights, and he devoted the remainder of his life to this pursuit. This was as well as the many other duties, offices and undertakings that will be mentioned here in the House today and have been already.

I was privileged to work with Mr Deeral and others in the years leading up to his passing on the resolution of varying and competing rights and interests of the Guugu Yimithirr people. This was a very complicated and often anxious process that brought high emotion and a plethora of agendas and often brought people into conflict. Mr Deeral acquitted himself throughout all these years with great insight, calm and intelligence which set him apart as a true leader. I never saw Mr Deeral raise his voice or treat anybody in this whole process with anything other than respect and dignity. He subscribed to the theory that once you resort to offensive language or behaviour you forfeit your right to an opinion in the debate. It was a pleasure and honour to be able to work closely with this great man, and I am humbled to be able to call him my friend.

Mr Deeral has left a legacy of self-determination, courage and community spirit to his family, his friends, the people of Hope Vale and the Indigenous community in particular in Cape York. To me as the member following him, I have the legacy of hard work, integrity and open communication, and this is a task I will pursue with vigour. I offer my condolences to Mr Deeral's family who are here today. He will be sadly missed in the Hope Vale community in Cape York.

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, just over five months ago we the Queensland parliament acknowledged Mr Eric Deeral in a special ceremony on his land and before the community of Hope Vale. Soon after we hosted him in this very chamber at the Indigenous youth parliament which was named in his honour. It was at this youth parliament that many Indigenous young people first heard of Mr Eric Deeral and also had the opportunity to meet him. The meeting between a new generation of young Indigenous leaders and a man who had blazed a trail creating opportunity out of hardship was very moving and emotional and will not be soon forgotten by those who were present.

Youth participants described the impact of meeting Mr Deeral. They talked about the inspiration they felt knowing that there had been someone who had pioneered before them with grace, strength and truth. They affirmed that Mr Deeral had turned negative experiences when he was growing up into positive outcomes and it helped them feel that pathways had been established for them to follow. The honour with which a new generation of Indigenous young people spoke of Mr Deeral and the encouragement they felt after meeting him gives us confidence for the future.

Members would be aware that I have spoken several times in this House about the late Mr Eric Deeral, who was the member for Cook from 1974 to 1977. I have spoken about the life and leadership of a man of great character and the importance of telling his story to a new generation; otherwise our history will be bereft of some fine examples of public service unless we intentionally highlight the legacy of great men and women.

My father, Gordon Simpson, also was elected as a member of the Queensland parliament at the same time as Mr Deeral, and he speaks of Eric Deeral with great respect, admiring what he achieved and the calibre of the man. I also admire the calibre of a man who stood for election a mere nine years after Indigenous people received the right to vote in Queensland and won a seat.

Eric Deeral's legacy was not limited to his time in parliament. His legacy is in the power of his story and the leadership he has demonstrated and inspired in others. Great leaders unlock the potential of people who they serve, helping them achieve their dreams to be their best and to claim their destiny for good. Today we honour the memory of the late Mr Eric Deeral and commend his example to the House and to the people of Queensland. Honourable members, will you indicate your agreement with the motion by standing in silence for one minute.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

Western Downs Regional Council, Deamalgamation

Mr Hopper, from 1,309 petitioners, requesting the House to enable the Western Downs Regional Council and rural areas of the former Dalby Town Council and the Shires of Wambo, Tara, Chinchilla, Murilla and Taroom to de-amalgamate from the Western Downs Regional Council and create two areas based on the townships of Dalby and Chinchilla [1473].

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

Toowoomba Biosecurity Laboratory

644 petitioners, requesting the House to retain the Toowoomba Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Animal Disease Surveillance Laboratory and continue these services at the existing premises with facilities suitable to the requirements of this vital work [1474].

The Clerk presented the following e-petition, sponsored by the honourable member indicated—

West End, Riverside South Precinct

Ms Trad, from 220 petitioners, requesting the House to rescind the ministerial directive and request the council not approve any development applications for the Riverside South Precinct of West End until a full and thorough community consultation on the proposed changes to height restrictions in the precinct [1475].

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

Water, Fluoridation

973 petitioners, requesting the House to immediately repeal the 2008 Queensland Fluoridation Act and direct the subsequent savings to improve school dental services and oral health education [1476].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPERS TABLED BY THE CLERK

The Clerk to table the following ministerial papers—

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie)—

[1477](#) Report to the Legislative Assembly from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Bleijie) pursuant to section 56A of the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, regarding the Associations Incorporation Regulation 1999, Casino Control Regulation 1999, Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Regulation 1999, Criminal Code (Animal Valuers) Regulation 1999, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection Regulation) 1998, Interactive Gambling (Player Protection—Disqualified Persons) Regulation 1999, Land Sales Regulation 2000, Property Agents and Motor Dealers Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Auctioneering Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Commercial Agency Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Motor Dealing Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Property Developer Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Real Estate Agency Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Property Agents and Motor Dealers (Restricted Letting Agency Practice Code of Conduct) Regulation 2001, Trust Accounts Regulation 1999 and the Wagering Regulation 1999

[1478](#) Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 7—Oversight of the Office of the Information Commissioner: Government response

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Royal Visit

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (10.02 am): I welcome the announcement by Clarence House of the program for the visit to Longreach by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall. I note that the Attorney-General is somewhat enthusiastic about the announcement as well. I look forward to joining Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland, and Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor-General of Australia, to welcome Their Royal Highnesses to Longreach and Australia.

The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall are visiting Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand on their current visit, marking the Queen's diamond jubilee. Longreach was included in the itinerary by the Prince of Wales, as he is the patron of both the Stockman's Hall of Fame and a fundraising charity in the United Kingdom called RFDS Friends in the UK. This charity supports the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Australia to raise funds to purchase aircraft and has raised over \$4 million for the RFDS since its inception in 2003, with the Prince of Wales as patron.

The visit to Longreach on Monday, 5 November will commence with the naming of a new flying doctor aircraft to be called 'RFDS Friends in the UK'. This will be followed by a walk through the Qantas Founders Museum and will also include a tour of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback

Heritage Centre, where the Prince of Wales has been a patron since the centre's opening in 1988 by Her Majesty the Queen. To date, the Hall of Fame has hosted over 1.2 million interstate and international visitors.

Their Royal Highnesses will take a public walk at the Stockman's Hall of Fame. This is an opportunity for the public to provide a warm outback welcome to our visiting guests, and of course I invite the community to attend. I know that the member for Gregory will also be delighted to be there to host Their Royal Highnesses. The program will conclude with the Diamond Jubilee Community Barbecue, where a function will be held for a selection of locals who have made a significant contribution to Queensland's central west region.

The outback spirit of service continues to thrive today and Their Royal Highnesses will meet local people with fascinating stories of commitment, vision, skills and mateship. I look forward to providing the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall with a warm regional Queensland welcome in Longreach.

Royalties for the Regions

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (10.04 am): Next week our government will announce the first successful applicants for funding under our new Royalties for the Regions program. I can inform members that local governments in our resource regions have wholeheartedly embraced this initiative of the Newman government. Thirteen of the 14 councils eligible to apply for funding did so in this pilot round. The one council that did not apply—Mackay—made its support for the program clear by taking a regional view and supporting applications from its neighbours, the Isaac Regional Council and the Whitsunday Regional Council.

We asked councils to prioritise projects in their regions, as this first pilot round of funding is limited to \$60 million. We asked councils for clear priorities and rigour in their selection of projects—to focus on critical or urgent needs in their communities that were 'shovel ready'. We anticipated that the program would be oversubscribed. Unsurprisingly, demand for funding far outstripped what we could make available given the terrible position Labor left the state's finances in.

Over the last few weeks we have assessed expressions of interest for funding for 71 projects seeking a total of almost \$260 million. Those projects address a broad range of regional community, road and flood mitigation projects—from levees and flood gauges to upgrades for water and waste treatment facilities. What is particularly pleasing about the applications is that the councils have leveraged contributions from industry to support many of their applications. Of the nearly \$260 million sought, expressions of interest have identified contributions of \$53.3 million from industry and \$51 million from local government. The application documentation also indicates that councils have been working closely with their communities, resource companies and peak bodies to prioritise projects that closely match their community's needs.

Royalties for the Regions is delivering another one of our election promises. It is about reinvesting a share of royalties gained from the resource extraction industries across the state back into the communities that host those resource projects. As we promised during the election campaign and as we outlined in the budget documents in September, the funding for this four-year program will be ramped up in coming years. We know that many regional communities have been short-changed throughout the years of South-East Queensland centric Labor administrations. Our Royalties for the Regions program will seek to redress this wrong and rebalance expenditures so that Queenslanders in regional resource communities get a fair share of the wealth that their region generates.

Trade and Investment Queensland

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (10.07 am): In July this year I travelled to China, Japan and the US to let potential investors know that Queensland is once again open for business. I outlined the Newman government's plan to make Queensland a more stable and attractive place to do business. The opening of a third Trade and Investment Queensland office in China signalled our ongoing commitment to the Asia-Pacific region.

Two-way trade is vital to the Queensland economy. It creates jobs and strengthens our business and diplomatic ties with our trading partners. Not only do Queensland businesses export their products; more and more businesses are exporting their skills and expertise, demonstrating Queensland's capabilities to the world.

Award-winning Queensland architectural firm Populous accompanied me on my trade mission to meet the mayor of Suzhou in China to discuss its tender for the city's new sporting complex. It gives me great pleasure to stand here today and congratulate Populous on signing another major international deal to undertake the architectural design and 30-year master plan for Delhi's new convention and exhibition centre.

I am also pleased to note that off the back of the Queensland government-Beef Australia joint global networking program, Handshakes, Queensland based agricultural company Blue Ribbon Seed has signed a deal to supply a major Argentinian beef producer with pasture seeds to grow feed for cattle. As the government works to restore Queensland's finances and grow the four pillars of the economy, it remains dedicated to helping companies like Populous and Blue Ribbon Seed achieve success on a global scale. The best way to do this is to make sure that Trade and Investment Queensland is running efficiently and firing on all cylinders.

As part of the machinery-of-government changes announced in April 2012, the Newman government moved TIQ into Treasury to create the Department of Treasury and Trade. The previous Labor government failed to develop a clear strategy or focus for Trade and Investment Queensland. Labor's indecision about the best location for TIQ representation will continue to cost Queenslanders until December 2016, because in November 2009 Labor renewed TIQ's lease on the Los Angeles office and then, fewer than seven months later, on 16 June, Labor announced it was moving its LA operation to Santiago in South America. The five-year lease came into effect in September this year and will cost Queenslanders about \$455,000, even after it is sublet. Let us be clear about this: Queenslanders are paying almost half a million dollars for a property that we no longer use simply because Labor could not make a decision. It is just another example of Labor waste and mismanagement.

The Newman government is intent on developing a clear plan and focus for this vital agency. That is why today I am pleased to announce that former Speaker and trade minister, John Mickel, and former Special Commissioner to North America, Geoffrey Thomas, will undertake a comprehensive review of Trade and Investment Queensland. The highly respected and experienced pair will analyse the alignment of resources in current and emerging markets, consider the effectiveness of current service models, identify key priorities and examine opportunities to utilise expertise from other jurisdictions. They will consult business about how TIQ could better assist them in their endeavours to secure export deals. Can I say that both have agreed to do it at no cost to the Queensland government. I look forward to receiving their recommendations by Christmas and reporting back to parliament in the new year.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (10.11 am): Yesterday, under this government, the basics of accountability in this parliament went back up a level. When Queenslanders vote for a paradigm change—as they did on 24 March this year—immediate parliamentary acknowledgement is expected. Yesterday, the Labor Party capitulated after an incredible delay of 31 weeks and four days. Isn't it a remarkable day in politics when the government has to fight to hold the opposition accountable? That is what happened yesterday.

This opposition leader was a member of the former cabinet, as public trust in its stewardship of Health evaporated on 24 March. Anger at Queensland Labor was confirmed on election day, but until 2 pm yesterday the seven remaining Labor MPs were locked in denial. Only when the Labor leader was finally cornered did she surrender the cabinet record of the failed payroll contract. For all those months, Labor was mired in a pathetic defence of a shameful past. That payroll fiasco could not be tolerated by Queenslanders, but for all those months it was a treasured Labor secret that remains a lasting stain on Labor's character.

Yesterday, the one key word missing from the speech given by the Leader of the Opposition was 'sorry'. This is not the end of the battle for public access to this information. It is the start of the public campaign to properly understand what happened, and the fight—however late—for redress will continue. Labor delayed the start of that campaign, against the public interest, for more than 31 weeks. Yesterday I began by contacting the Crown Solicitor.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: This is the most action we have seen from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in 15 years. Now we know what makes him excited—cover-ups obviously, particularly when he is involved in them.

Yesterday I began by contacting the Crown Solicitor. Under his advice, I will not speculate on the contents of the 850-odd pages which were finally released yesterday. We can certainly see in hindsight what a cynical proposal it was from the Labor leader for me to view these documents, commit them all to memory and tell no-one as part of a Labor inspired peep show. That was a throwback to the accountability that we experienced under the Bligh and Beattie governments.

From today the Solicitor-General will spend whatever time is necessary to properly assess this material and advise the government on its options. If an inquiry is required, then obviously that would happen. Our goal is to recover any worthwhile part of those lost funds from any source. The \$1.2 billion cost of that fiasco impacts today on up to 1,500 front-line jobs—every one attributable to Labor mismanagement. If we can save front-line jobs, we will do so.

Today, the opposition leader should make her apology. I have instructed my department to link its Health intranet with the reams of paper released yesterday. More than 80,000 Health workers use this network every day. Now workers can view the secret Labor pages which their unions and the Labor Party fought so hard to cover up. For months, I asked union leaders to help force the release of these secret Labor papers. No-one spoke up. How foolish do they look now that this LNP government has done their work for them. What an amazing insight this incident has provided—the contract, the cover-up and the shame. Thank heavens that at long last we see some real possibility of progress.

CSG Industry, Water Management

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (10.15 am): I am pleased to inform the House that this government has released a draft revised coal seam gas water management policy for the purpose of public consultation. We have within this calendar year acted decisively to better address issues surrounding coal seam gas water. A copy of the draft policy can be found on the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection website. We have committed to revising this policy by December this year to ensure that industry and communities have certainty and clarity about how CSG water should be managed. This government will assist industry in better managing water and will provide greater clarity for the broader community on CSG water related issues.

Appropriate management of CSG water is important to ensure that impacts on the environment are managed and to ensure the water is used in a way that reflects its value as a resource. The draft policy provides an outcome based approach by specifying three priority outcomes for the management of CSG water. As promised, the new environmental regulator is outcome focused and I aim to ensure that this will characterise my portfolio and its approach while I have the honour of being the responsible minister.

The first priority outcome for the management of CSG water is to ensure that appropriate plans are in place for mitigating short- and long-term impacts of CSG extraction on other water users and on the environment. It is important that impacts on private bores as a result of CSG operations are properly mitigated or compensated. The second priority outcome is to use CSG water for a purpose that is beneficial to existing water users and existing or new water dependent industries. After all other management options have been considered for using and managing the total volume of water to be produced, the third priority outcome is to treat and dispose of the CSG water in a way that protects the environment.

Given the importance of this policy, the government wants to ensure that industry and the broader community are given the opportunity to understand and comment on the draft revised policy. Public feedback is currently being sought on the draft revised policy and all feedback on the policy is welcomed. Following consultation, the draft revised policy will be reviewed and, if approved, it will then be finalised by December in line with the government's six-month action plan.

Vegetation Management

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (10.18 am): The prudent and sustainable management of Queensland's native vegetation is an important issue. However, I and many other Queenslanders have been concerned about the way the provisions of the Vegetation Management Act have been enforced. In particular, these concerns relate to an escalation in the penalties handed down by the courts following successful prosecutions.

In April this year I announced a review of how penalty provisions have been applied under the VMA. The legal advice provided as part of this review indicates that the application of the section 60B penalty guide of the VMA can result in inequitable penalties being imposed. Under this section, a person who unlawfully clears a small area of vegetation could be financially penalised significantly more—on a per hectare basis—than another person who unlawfully clears vast tracts of protected vegetation. The penalty guide does not specifically consider issues such as the capacity of a defendant to pay, the impact on the property and the level of knowledge the individual had. The legal advice has also highlighted that the section 60B penalty guide is difficult to apply consistently when the type of vegetation cleared is mixed and the specific area of vegetation cleared cannot be established.

The subsequent effect of applying a penalty potentially in excess of \$100,000 can devastate an individual's personal financial circumstances and can be a perverse consequence for a landowner who may have been simply trying to maintain the productive capacity of their land. While the penalty guide does not make provision for these considerations, they can be considered under the Penalties and Sentences Act. As a result, I will give consideration to removing and/or amending section 60B from the VMA to ensure there is a more consistent and equitable penalty regime in place for breaches of the VMA. My department will work with landowners to pursue alternative compliance solutions such as education, rehabilitation agreements, penalty infringement notices and warnings, but will proceed to prosecution where it is in the public interest to do so. Importantly, I want to stress that the review and its findings are not an invitation to landowners to ignore the law. The law will continue to be enforced and

serious cases will continue to be brought before the courts when appropriate and in the public interest. The department has not stopped monitoring for illegal clearing, and this monitoring will continue into the future.

I am determined to restore balance and fairness to the way in which the Queensland government administers the VMA. I look forward to developing vegetation management policies that recognise and encourage sustainable agricultural production rather than being fixated on vilifying landowners, as was previously the case.

Hooning

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (10.21 am): The problem of hooning is one that the people of Queensland desperately want us to fix. Quite frankly, they have had enough of people treating our roads like racetracks and shattering the peace in our suburbs. Hooning is antisocial, disrespectful and downright dangerous. That is why when we came to government we highlighted the importance of addressing this problem by introducing the appropriate legislation into the House. Until then, hoons had been getting away with a slap on the wrist. Of course, they were emboldened by this and simply got back in their cars and carried on. The former Labor government admitted that antihooning laws were too weak, and what did they do about it? Nothing, as usual. Over the past 10 years, 92 per cent of the 320,000 vehicles previously impounded ended up back on Queensland roads. Those days are well and truly over.

Queensland is set to have the toughest antihooning legislation in Australia. The new laws will see an offender's car impounded for three months for their first serious hooning offence. A second serious hooning offence within the next five years will see the offender's car forfeited to be sold or crushed. This ensures that these drivers are immediately taken off Queensland roads. The message is very clear: if you want to hoon, prepare to lose your vehicle. It is as simple as that, and we make no apologies for it. The car will be impounded, crushed or even shredded. I hold here a number of examples of vehicles that have been crushed. If hoons want to have their vehicles crushed and shredded, that is their choice.

Electricity Industry

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (10.23 am): It is going to be hard to follow the example of my colleague. There has been much speculation in the media of late regarding the privatisation of the Queensland government's energy network businesses, in large measure pushed by the ETU. In fact, if honourable members read the estimates record they would think the member for Mulgrave had uncovered some sinister plot that this government was going to sell these assets. This government has made it very, very clear on many separate occasions, and again I make it quite clear to this House that this government will not be selling these assets until the people of Queensland give us the clear mandate to do so.

That is a clear statement as to what this government will do. Contrast that with what the former government did in 2009 prior to the election campaign. We can all recall that the then Premier, Anna Bligh, and the then Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, made it very clear—one hand on heart and the other on the Bible—'We will not be selling any Queensland government assets.' The election ticked over and the first thing they did was flog off the assets as quick as they could. The Australian Labor Party has absolutely no credibility when they try to run out the issue of honesty and asset sales. Yet again, at the estimates hearing that I attended the member for Mulgrave seemed to indicate some sort of massive conspiracy that he had uncovered.

I make the point that there is one level of the ALP in this nation that is saying that assets should be privatised, and that is federal Labor, led by Julia Gillard. In the executive summary of a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Electricity Prices compiled by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism in conjunction with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Treasury, the federal Labor government said that they saw the privatisation of energy market assets as the way forward. If there is any level of government that is considering the sale of energy assets, it is the federal level of government and the ALP. There is now an opportunity for the ALP in this state to stand up and say, 'We do not support the sale of these assets without a clear mandate from the people of this state,' to reverse the hypocrisy that they put the people through in 2009. Today I call upon the Leader of the Opposition to stand and make a clear statement that Julia Gillard has got it wrong and the ALP in this state will not sell any further assets unless they get a mandate from the people. That is their challenge here today.

Moreton Bay Rail Link

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.26 am): This government is committed to delivering better infrastructure for Queensland. That is why I am pleased to update the House on the procurement process for the Moreton Bay Rail Link. There has been a significant amount of interest from the private sector about this project. In August we saw around

300 people attend an industry briefing. That resulted in five consortiums responding to our requests for proposal, which closed on Friday, 21 September. It is not just the number but the quality of the proposals we received that is most exciting.

Two of the proponents were international companies. This international interest complements the strong local bids we have received. I can now advise that we have short-listed the bidders down to four consortiums. The letters of acceptance have been sent to the Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd; John Holland Queensland Pty Ltd and Leighton Contractors Pty Ltd; Salini, Bielby, Winslow Joint Venture; and Thiess Pty Ltd. The second stage of the competitive tendering process now begins. The consortiums have been told to think outside the box. We want the best solution for passengers but one that is also cost-effective.

As members of the House would be aware, this project is jointly funded by the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Moreton Bay Regional Council. However, under the deal signed by the previous Labor government, any cost overruns will have to be paid by the Queensland government alone. I can assure this House and Queensland taxpayers that the Department of Transport and Main Roads will be working hard to ensure that this project does not go one cent over budget.

The current stage of competitive tendering will close in December, with the two proponents who demonstrate the most innovative design and value for money progressing to the next stage. These two proponents will then finalise the key features and layout of the track, structures, stations and associated works. Each proponent's designs will then be evaluated to ensure the best value for money and best opportunity for design innovation on the project. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded in about August 2013.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—LNP) (10.28 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's report No. 13 titled *SL102—Justice Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012 and exempt subordinate legislation—Public Trustee (Fees and Charges Notice) (No. 1) 2012*.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 13—SL 102—Justice Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012 and Exempt Subordinate Legislation—Public Trustee (Fees & Charges Notice) (No. 1) 2012 [[1479](#)].

The report includes a number of recommendations for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, some of which may have broader application for all departments. Those recommendations relate to the indexation of fees and charges and the use of explanatory notes. I commend the report to the House.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (10.29 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 22 of the Finance and Administration Committee.

Tabled paper: Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 22—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 31 July 2012 and 11 September 2012 [[1480](#)].

This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 31 July 2012 and 11 September 2012 considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has disallowance dates of 28 November 2012 and 13 February 2013. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (10.29 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 11 of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Tabled paper: State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 11—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 August 2012 and 11 September 2012 [[1481](#)].

The report examines the subordinate legislation tabled between 21 August 2012 and 11 September 2012 considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has disallowance dates of 28 November 2012 and 13 February 2013 respectively. The committee did not identify any significant policy issues or technical concerns regarding the consistency of fundamental legislative principles. The committee therefore concludes that the subordinate legislation examined is lawful. I commend the report to the House.

TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (10.30 am): I table report No. 10 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee titled *Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 July 2012 and 11 September 2012*.

Tabled paper: Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee: Report No. 10—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 July 2012 and 11 September 2012 [[1482](#)].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Madam SPEAKER: Question time will finish at 11.31 am.

Premier, Right to Information Request

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.31 am): My question is to the Premier. As the Premier will be aware, the opposition has applied through the Right to Information Act 2009 for access to his diary. Does the Premier intend to agree with this request as many other ministers have already done, including the Deputy Premier?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question. I say upfront, as I have been saying this week, that this is an open and accountable government that is demonstrating a clear break with the secretive policies and practices of the former Labor government, including the Leader of the Opposition, who was a member of that government. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to see my diary, I am more than happy for her, if she has indeed put in an RTI request, to actually get that. But I make this point on RTI requests: one thing we have done is ensure that we are not the judges of that. We have placed the assessment of RTI requests in the hands of the officials of the respective departments—unlike those opposite, who used to allow their own political apparatchiks in their own ministerial offices to assess such requests. Was it any wonder that on occasions when in opposition we got perhaps less than fulsome responses to those RTI requests? So if the Leader of the Opposition has indeed put in such a request, I would be happy to fulfil it.

But I make this challenge today: if it is good enough for me and my ministers, it is good enough for the shadow ministers and the Leader of the Opposition! So today I make the challenge: please hand over your diaries from the start of this parliamentary term right up to today. If it is good enough for us it should be good enough for those opposite. We would love to know who they have been meeting, because it might give us an opportunity to reflect on the big new turn.

A government member interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: It might be interesting, then, to see their diaries for the last two or three days. It might be very interesting indeed. How did we see the road to Damascus turnaround? How did it happen? What were the influencing factors?

Mr Seeney: Schwarto came knocking!

Mr NEWMAN: I take the interjection from the Deputy Premier. Was it indeed the former member for Rockhampton? Was it he who pulled the levers, pulled the command cord all the way from Rocky, 650 kilometres or so north, because his influence is still here in this very place? We would love to see their diaries right now, today. How about that? How about by 5 pm today they let us see their diaries for the last three days?

Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Right to Information Request

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's answer just now in the chamber when he said that he is of course committed to leading an open and accountable government. I now table a copy of a letter received by my office yesterday which indicates that the transport minister, unlike other ministers, is refusing to release details of his diary and the people he has met with.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 October 2012, from de-identified officer in Department of Transport and Main Roads to Office of the Leader of the Opposition regarding RTI request [[1483](#)].

Will the Premier direct the transport minister to comply with the RTI application as other ministers have already done?

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I warn members on my left.

Mr NEWMAN: I take great pleasure in answering this question, because I go back to my earlier answer. Members of the previous government allowed political apparatchiks—their own Labor Party members in many cases—in their own offices to be the RTI assessment officers under the act. I just want to examine that for a moment. Is that appropriate? Is it best practice? I think not!

Ms Palaszczuk: What are you hiding?

Mr NEWMAN: I think that is Caesar judging Caesar.

Ms Palaszczuk: What are you hiding?

Mr NEWMAN: I think that is highly questionable, and that is why we do not do it.

Ms Palaszczuk: Didn't we ask a question about Santo on Tuesday?

Mr NEWMAN: That is why we have given the job of assessing these applications—

Ms Palaszczuk: Release it.

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, will you cease your interjections across the chamber. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: That is why we have given it to the officials of the departments to actually make the assessment based on their understanding of the act as independent officials of the Public Service.

In relation to this issue of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads's diary, I just simply say very clearly that an official has made that call and has written back in that way. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition ask the transport minister the question about his diary. I have said that I am quite happy—RTI request or no RTI request—to reveal my diary at any time dating back to when we were elected, but will the Leader of the Opposition release hers? If she wants to see the Minister for Transport and Main Roads's diary, then she should release hers as well. Maybe that will encourage him to be upfront. I think that would be a very good thing, because there has been a lot of innuendo in the last couple of days from the opposition, a lot of stories being peddled around in the media and a lot of tweets in the social media universe. This is the way those opposite operate. I hope that makes it perfectly clear that an independent official of the minister's department made that call. I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition today in the parliament ask the minister what he will do if the request is put directly to him. It might be a different response.

Open Data

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please update the House on the government's latest work to kick-start an open data revolution in Queensland?

Mr NEWMAN: All this week we have been announcing that new data is appearing almost on a daily basis on our data.qld.gov.au portal and over the weeks and months ahead we will continue to add to the information that is available to Queenslanders. I go back to the couple of questions that we have had this morning from the opposition. This is the difference between them and us: we will put it out there. We do not have secrets. We do not have secrets like they had. They had many, many, many secrets. Even the member for South Brisbane had secrets prior to being a parliamentarian as well, and there is stuff out there on the internet about that. It is a vexed question as you might say, but I will move on. We are opening up all of the data so that Queenslanders can scrutinise this government and so that the private sector can use this information for new applications and solutions to problems.

So far we have released information covering specialist waiting lists and crime statistics. I will stop there. How forthcoming was the previous government on crime statistics? You had to sort of jemmy them out of their vice-like grip. Flood maps—as Lord Mayor of Brisbane I was quite open about flooding. I remember that the Soorley Labor administration and many of its friends and colleagues would never release information on flooding in the city of Brisbane. We released it down at council. We are releasing it for the state as well. Social housing, traffic and vehicle registration—there is lots more to come.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Today, I am pleased to bring it to the attention of the House—even to those opposite who are interjecting—that we are releasing data on environmental authorities for coal seam gas. It is the view of this government that a lot of the uncertainty that there has been in the past year or two about CSG arises from a lack of information and a lack of openness and accountability by the previous government in telling the public, particularly those in rural and regional areas, what was going

on with the multibillion dollar coal seam gas industry that is being built right here in Queensland. They do not have to worry anymore, because we are putting it out there. On the data.qld.gov.au website people will see details about the environmental authorities that have been granted by the government for CSG activities. There are details of 231 environmental authorities, including the specific locations they apply to, the companies that hold the authorities and the specific—and this is important—conditions that apply to each of them.

There is nothing to hide here. There is lots to hide over there, as we have seen only this week. We want people to have access to information if they want it or if they think they can do something useful with it. As I said earlier, there is a lot more to come and we encourage the Queensland public to work with us to kick off this open data revolution in Queensland.

Mining Industry, Water

Mr MULHERIN: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier. In the interests of openness, does the government have any plans to release untreated water from mines into water basins in regional Queensland?

Mr SEENEY: I thank very sincerely the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the courage. He has sat there week after week and finally he has the courage to ask me a question. I really appreciate the fact that finally there is a question that refers to the portfolio. The question goes to the issue of excess floodwater in the coalmines in Central Queensland. It is an issue that the previous government could not deal with. It is an issue that has cost the Queensland economy dearly. It is an issue that was reflected in the budget figures that we saw introduced into the parliament by the Treasurer some weeks ago in that the state's income from coal royalties was down considerably to what otherwise could have been expected because the previous Labor government did not have the wit or the initiative to solve what had become a major problem for one of our major export industries—an industry that all Queenslanders receive benefits from, an industry that underwrites to a very great extent the state budget.

That industry, like so much of Queensland, was severely affected by the 2010 wet season and the flooding that occurred. In the case of the open-cut coalmines in Queensland, it was the accumulation of large volumes of floodwater in the mining pits that made their mining operations almost impossible. The previous government froze like a rabbit in the spotlight, if you like. They were entirely incapable of dealing with it. We understood very clearly from opposition that this was a major issue. We have been in negotiations with a whole range of stakeholders, not just since the election but since the flooding in 2010. We have talked to a whole range of people about how this particular issue needs to be addressed.

One of the great initiatives among a whole range of great initiatives that the Treasurer announced in his budget speech was the formation of the Resources Cabinet Committee. The Resources Cabinet Committee has been tasked with looking at a whole range of issues that are affecting the resources industry in Queensland, recognising the importance of that industry to the state economy and recognising the great contribution that that industry makes to the budget bottom line.

One of the issues that the Resources Cabinet Committee has been spending a lot of time on is this issue of addressing the water in mines problem—addressing the problem that the previous government simply could not bring itself to even deal with. We have had the issue of water in mines on the agenda for the Resources Cabinet Committee every time we have met, and we meet on a weekly basis. So every week we have had a range of stakeholders discussing this issue and we are working through the issue to find a solution. I am confident that we will find a solution. We need to find a solution. We must find a solution for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr JOHNSON: My question is directed to the honourable the Premier. Is the Premier aware of any recent comments by former Labor ministers in relation to the Health payroll system reported in the media today? Does he agree with those comments?

Mr NEWMAN: I believe the honourable member is referring to comments by former Labor minister Rob Swarten reported in the *Courier-Mail*. I do not agree with those comments. Again, they speak volumes for what the Labor Party is all about. We have the former Labor minister branding the proposed inquiry into the Queensland Health payroll debacle as nothing more than a 'political witch-hunt'. So much for openness and accountability.

Yesterday, we heard from the Leader of the Opposition that the release of these documents was in some way all about openness and accountability after 111 days, or whatever it was—what was the figure? Many, many days, anyway—that the Leader of the Opposition had to release this material but never would release it. So again, we see that the culture of Labor is about secrecy, about cover-up. Rob Swarten has made other offensive comments in this article, saying that it was a 'concocted distraction'.

Mr Mulherin interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the deputy opposition leader to cease interjecting.

Mr NEWMAN: This is a \$1.2 billion scandal and good old Schwarto says that it is a—
... concocted distraction aimed at drawing attention away from the myriad of woes ...

What a load of rubbish! But this is what these people are about. Why do they not want this government, but more importantly the people of Queensland, to see what has happened so that the problems can be fixed, so that if possible we can seek damages from guilty parties? That is what we are about. I agree with the health minister's comments yesterday that we will examine these documents. There might still need to be some sort of inquiry into the issue, because it is not all apparent what has gone on.

But is there a link somehow? I wondered, 'Why is Schwarten involved and what caused the Leader of the Opposition to then make this statement yesterday?' I just felt I saw a hand go up the back, or was it a big shadow on the wall over there? It was someone from the past leaning across from over 600 kilometres away exerting influence. The Leader of the Opposition said yesterday that she had had no contact from anybody. 'Aha!', I thought. But who? Here is my question: will the Leader of the Opposition, in the spirit of openness and accountability, tell the House today—or rule out totally—that herself, her colleagues or her staffers have had no contact with any former ministers in relation to this U-turn?

Before I sit down, I have one hint for honourable members. I have a 1998 phone directory here. Who was the senior media adviser for the honourable Robert Schwarten? It was a guy called Lindsay Marshall. Who does he work for now? Those folk opposite. Lindsay Marshall is the link. Lindsay Marshall, Rob Schwarten—the go-between on this tawdry affair.

Mining Industry, Water

Mr PITT: My question is to the Premier, after that performance—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Will the member ask the question and refer to people appropriately.

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, thank you. My question without notice is to the Premier. Has the government made any commitments to mining companies to proceed with the release of untreated water in Queensland mines into regional waterways, particularly the Fitzroy River basin?

Mr NEWMAN: I am certainly not aware of any conversations with mining companies because I have not been involved in any discussions with mining companies at any time.

Mr Mulherin: The government was the question.

Mr NEWMAN: They ask the questions; they do not want to hear the answers. For those people opposite it is about politics and game playing; it is not about outcomes for Queenslanders. It is not about openness, accountability and transparency, as we have seen today. I might just reflect very quickly, before I go back to my answer, that they did say something earlier on where I thought they alleged that the RTI officer would not release material from the transport department in relation to the minister's diary. We are going to check *Hansard*. That is what I thought they said. I am advised, and I have not seen the document myself, that they were told that they could have it and it would cost them some money. It seems to be that they were actually balking at the cost of that. I wonder if this is a bit of an effort to mislead the House again. Spin, innuendo. If that is the case, how deceitful are those opposite? Back to my answer.

Ms Trad interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The member for South Brisbane will cease her interjections.

Mr NEWMAN: The member for South Brisbane should be careful with her interjections. Remember her strident defence of the former member for South Brisbane two days ago? Anna was never, ever in favour of nuclear power. It is there in black and white in a very lengthy article in the *Australian* newspaper in I think it was December 2010.

Back to this issue again. I am not aware of any such commitments to mining companies. That is matter that is probably best put to—

Mrs Miller: Ask Santo.

Mr NEWMAN: I hear some sort of interjection again. Smear and innuendo is the order of the day with those opposite. They did it all through the election campaign. They have been doing it this week again. We see their operators out there, their apparatchiks on Twitter, having a go, feeding certain people in the media various issues.

The answer is that I have not had any meetings with any mining companies where we have ever discussed the discharge of water in the way described. If they are wondering about these matters, I suggest, seeing as I have no knowledge of it, they might want to ask one of the other ministers who might have an interest in the matter: the minister for environment, perhaps the minister for natural resources and mines, perhaps the minister for state development and infrastructure.

Mrs Miller: Oh!

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the member for Bundamba under 253A.

Mr NEWMAN: Those opposite were caught out yesterday and they have been really caught out on a couple of fronts already today. You cannot trust anything they say.

Queensland Economy

Mr DOWLING: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House about any independent views as to Queensland's economic position and continued growth prospects?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for his question. It is, in fact, nice to get a question from someone interested in what is going on in Queensland. I saw the member for Mulgrave rise from his seat, probably not for the first time today from a damp seat with wet paper in his hand, but nevertheless he rose and I thought we were at last going to get a question about the state of the economy, perhaps a question about the budget. I thought perhaps I could advise them of something that is going on in the great state of Queensland. But, no—no such luck. I do thank the member for Redlands, who has the economy and the interests of the state at heart, for that question.

I would like to let the House know that, as I have said on many occasions, the fundamentals of Queensland are sound. It may be that the state government's finances were run into the ground by those opposite and we are left with the task of fixing them up and we are doing it, but the economy in terms of Queensland's fundamentals is sound. It is continuing to grow under the LNP government—a government that is concentrating on building the four pillars of the Queensland economy, a government that is keen to get the state's finances back on track and back in the black, and a government that is keen, as I indicated in my statement this morning, to see trade and investment grow.

The budget papers forecast economic growth of four per cent for this financial year. That will be second only to Western Australia. That economic growth will be built on the back of investment in our resources sector particularly. Not only is it the government that is forecasting that growth of four per cent, but Deloitte Access Economics' September Business Outlook also predicted growth of four per cent in 2012-13. It also details other encouraging signs for exports up 16.5 per cent, inputs up 13.7 per cent, retail—that long stagnant area under Labor is now growing—up by four per cent and housing investment, the property and construction sector, also to grow by four per cent. The CommSec *State of the states* report also detailed some encouraging figures for Queensland, with economic growth 20.1 per cent higher than the decade average and retail trade 15.4 per cent higher. It is the retail area where we have suffered.

These independent reviews confirm our view that Queensland's economy is sound and will continue to grow. But the work is in no way done and that is why it is important to acknowledge the investments that have been made by Chinese company CNOOC in Queensland's resources industry overnight. Further funds are going in. But there is more work to be done, particularly around dwellings. Unlike the member for Mulgrave, who yesterday talked down the Queensland economy, I can give some accurate figures on housing. Dwelling approvals are, in fact, 11.2 per cent higher over the year, member for Mulgrave, and in September dwelling approvals rose by 2.6 per cent. It is not flatlining. Get your figures right.

Mining Industry, Water

Ms TRAD: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. I note that the government's subregional water quality guidelines for protecting freshwater aquatic ecosystems lists the low flow (upper value) as 445 EC, or electrical conductivity, and the high flow (upper value) as 250 EC. Will the minister detail the EC levels of the mine water being considered for release into the Fitzroy River basin?

Mr POWELL: I am pleased that the members opposite have finally worked out who is responsible for issuing approvals for the release of mine water into the environment. Seriously, how many questions have those opposite asked now? They have asked the Deputy Premier, they have asked the Premier, they asked the minister for mines during estimates and they have finally worked out that it is actually the Minister for Environment who is responsible for it. I was hoping those opposite would ask me how many times I have met with mining companies.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Minister, resume your seat. I am having difficulty hearing the minister due to the interjections on my left. I will start naming people under the standing orders. Minister?

Mr POWELL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was hoping that those opposite would ask me how many times that I, my staff or my department have met with mining companies throughout the six months that I have been the minister. I would happily share that we meet very regularly with mining companies specifically around the issue of water in mines and their ability to discharge it. In the environment of openness and transparency I would like to know how many times the former ministers for environment met with mining companies to discuss this issue, say, post 2008, post the election or in 2010, 2011 post the floods. I suspect the former ministers for environment met very regularly with mining companies around this very issue and did nothing with it. What deals did the former ministers for environment do in regard to the release of water? I will tell members the deals they did. They did deals with the extreme greens.

Mr PITT: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance on relevance. The question was very specific regarding a particular river and particular EC levels.

Madam SPEAKER: The minister still has two minutes on the clock to address the issue, and earlier there were a lot of interjections which were making it difficult to hear. I call the minister to answer the question.

Mr POWELL: We were discussing the deals that the previous Labor government did when it came to water and mines. Who were their deals with? With the extreme greens. Why? For political preferences. What were their decisions based around? Politics. What will our decisions be based around? Science.

I am pleased to report that, as a consequence of the discussions that I have on a regular basis with mining companies, and discussions that I am having with my cabinet colleagues, including the Minister for Science, who has the relevant expertise in her department to deliver what we require in terms of the water quality and environmental health objectives for a basin such as the Fitzroy River basin, we will make decisions based on science—not on extreme green preference deals, but on science.

Ms Trad: What are the EC levels, Minister?

Mr POWELL: I am happy to provide the detail that the shadow minister is seeking as we continue to have those discussions and make those decisions.

Ms Trad: What are the EC levels of the water release?

Madam SPEAKER: I now warn the member for South Brisbane under 253A. You will cease your interjections.

Mr POWELL: The shadow minister knows very well that there are a range of EC limits to do with environmental health and there are a range of EC limits to do with public health. The facts that she is portraying today are misleading and extreme.

Domestic Violence

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. Will the Attorney-General please advise the House what the Newman government has been doing recently to combat domestic violence in Queensland?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for the question and for her particular interest in this most important and serious subject of domestic violence in Queensland. As Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, it is great that this Newman government is taking a new approach to domestic violence in Queensland not only through the portfolio of the honourable Minister for Communities but through other portfolios as well, because we believe that this is a serious matter right across Queensland and we need a whole-of-government approach to dealing with the issues of domestic violence in Queensland.

On 24 October 2012, I was pleased to attend the launch of DVASS, the Domestic Violence Assistance Support Services. Incidentally, it was held at the Holland Park courthouse. If you believe those opposite, under the budget the Holland Park courthouse was going to be closed. I was very pleased to attend—

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It was there. It was not closed; it was open for business. I met the volunteer court liaison officers and everyone associated with the Holland Park courthouse. Members will remember that this is the courthouse that, a couple of months ago, Cameron Dick was protesting in front of, doing the

bidding of those opposite because they do not know what is going on around Queensland. We saw Cameron Dick protesting that we were going to close the courthouse. Suffice it to say, we did not close the courthouse and it was great to attend the courthouse and meet up with Magistrate Strofield and Registrar Turra in relation to the DVASS program.

The DVASS program, which Magistrate Strofield has taken the lead in developing, has been developed between government and community organisations to support families dealing with domestic violence in Queensland. Services such as DVconnect, Women's DV Line, Mensline, RA Solicitors, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service and the Women's Legal Service make valuable contributions in the community. They will continue to do so with the DVASS program.

The DVASS program, which is being established at the Holland Park courthouse, will strengthen the service framework for domestic violence clients in the courts, enhancing support and advocacy for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. The notable point of difference between the Holland Park DVASS program and other court based domestic violence assistance models is that all parties, whether male or female, will have access to legal advice and support. With the Holland Park court program, there are greater referral options and advocacy is available for men, notwithstanding the strength and support available to women. DVASS addresses the imbalance that may not be conducive to the early resolutions of these matters.

As members know, we have already committed \$750,000 to the Women's Legal Service. This is a new approach from Legal Aid. I table documentation developed after the new Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act was introduced. I table them for the benefit of all members. It is an important issue in Queensland.

Tabled paper: Various Legal Aid Queensland documents relating to applications for domestic violence protection orders [\[1484\]](#).

Mining Industry, Water

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier rule out for the people of Central Queensland the possibility of untreated mine water being released, beyond the present permissive arrangements, into the Fitzroy catchment, which he knows is a water supply for Rockhampton?

Mr NEWMAN: I will try to add a bit more to what I said before. As I indicated before, I have not been involved in discussions on this matter. I have yet to receive a briefing, if there have indeed been detailed discussions with mining companies, as the opposition is asserting. I will say this to the honourable member, because I know that it is an important issue for people in Rockhampton in terms of the water supply: the government will not do anything to in any way degrade the feed water coming down the Fitzroy for their water supply. We will not do that. Certainly, we will not allow an outcome that takes Rockhampton's water supply needs backwards. That is the bottom line. We will put in place measures that protect the environment and also protect the requirement of urban water supply. I hope that reassures the honourable member.

There is an important issue here that needs to be dealt with. For a long time there has been water in pits, and it is affecting jobs. Surely, I could expect that the member for Rockhampton is a supporter of the coal industry in Central Queensland, that he believes in jobs and investment and that he also understands that the floods of almost two years ago really have hampered production, because the large open-cut pits have filled with water. It is no use ignoring that. We have to find solutions. At the end of the day, we need to work with the mining industry and stakeholders to actually find those solutions. I conclude by saying again: we will not be doing anything and we would not contemplate anything that would impact on the quality of water in Rockhampton.

Independent Public Schools

Mr HOLSWICH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Will the minister update the House on how the Independent Public Schools initiative is empowering local principals to tackle bullying in schools?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that, as many members do, the honourable member certainly has an understanding of teaching and understands that the best environment in which to learn is one where behaviour is good behaviour. To improve outcomes and to allow our teachers to teach, we must do what we can to improve classroom behaviour. Each and every student has a right to an education in a fair and friendly school, free of the threat of persecution and threats. I want every principal and every teacher in this state to know that they have my full, unflinching support, they have the Premier's full and unflinching support, they have the cabinet's support and they have the support of every parliamentary member of the LNP to get tough on bullying in schools.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr LANGBROEK: As an example, I endorse the recent stance taken by Principal Steve McLuckie of Southport State High School, in the electorate of Southport, and his team with regard to the suspension of students found defaming publicly the school and its teachers by social media, as reported this week and extensively today. The subject has had widespread media coverage. Principals, teachers, parents and the community at large are all custodians of the cultures of their school, and a positive school culture leads to positive behaviour and positive outcomes.

As Principal McLuckie said to me this morning, education is a partnership. State schools abide by the Code of School Behaviour and are required to have an approved responsible behaviour plan for students, outlining behaviour expectations, supports in place to create a safe, supportive and disciplined environment and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. The code outlines a consistent standard of behaviour for all state school communities, inclusive of staff and parents. The code enshrines the notion that there are consequences for unacceptable behaviour. In short, principals have the tools at their disposal, but for whatever reason they sometimes do not wish to use them. Too often they fear a lack of bureaucratic backup or fear that confrontational parents are not willing to share responsibility.

I note that Southport State High School is an independent public school, and I encourage the honourable member to have schools in his electorate of Pine Rivers apply for that subsequently. Consistent with this government's dual commitment on empowering principals and engaging parents, we will ensure that principals are empowered to create the positive culture they want in their schools. That is what Independent Public Schools is about: empowerment and backing principals to make the decisions that are right for their students and their communities. Principals know their schools. As educational community leaders they have the right to set high standards for students and expect them to adhere to them. Social media is a powerful force, and it is up to us to make sure that all users, young and old, understand the consequences of misusing it.

Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Given the totally underresourced state of the Gladstone Base Hospital, we regrettably rely heavily on medical evacuations. Can the minister advise of the current status of the funding deed between Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service and Queensland Health?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I hope that I heard the honourable member's question correctly because there was a little bit of background noise. As I understand it, the question was with regard to the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service and its impact on the provision of services at Gladstone Hospital.

I thank the honourable member for the question. Certainly, the role our helicopter rescue services play around Queensland is extremely important. Obviously, they conduct an enormous number of operations not only in the honourable member's area but in the extreme south and north of the state and in the western parts of the state. There are different funding arrangements that apply across Queensland. Some in more remote areas do not receive any funding.

With regard to the specific issues in the honourable member's area and with the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service, I can point out that there has been an ongoing process of review into helicopter rescue services in Queensland. That has now been going on for a number of years. It is very close to conclusion. It has exposed some of the difficulties that exist for some of the helicopter rescue services, the community helicopter rescue services, in Queensland and having an appropriate funding model that suits them into the future.

Some of these helicopter rescue services rely far more on community funding than they do on the government component and vice versa. It is certainly a matter of drawing a line somewhere and ensuring that the right amount of contribution actually goes to helicopter rescue services in Queensland to assist them to be able to evacuate people to better medical treatment.

I understand that, at this stage, the amount of contribution that goes to these helicopter rescue services from Queensland Health is in vicinity of \$3½ thousand per engine flight hour—that is, when they undertake rescues for Queensland Health. Obviously, they do things for other rescue agencies as well. I will be attempting to resolve this issue and give some certainty to the service in the member's area. I understand that the honourable members for Mirani, Rockhampton and Keppel also have similar issues with regard to these services. I will be having a meeting on this in the next couple of days.

I can assure the honourable member that we will make sure that this service continues to be viable and is able to continue to provide that mantle of safety to the people of Central Queensland. I also understand their anxiousness given the length of this particular review.

Madam SPEAKER: Before I call the next member, I would ask members in the chamber to take their conversations outside. I call the member for Barron River.

Hendra Virus, Vaccine

Mr TROUT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. Can the minister please update the House on the progress of the Hendra vaccine?

Mr McVEIGH: I thank the member for Barron River for the question. I know, and the House should know, that he is one of few people who have practical experience in responding to a Hendra virus outbreak. The fight against Hendra has reached another milestone today with the commercial vaccine manufacturer Pfizer Animal Health announcing the release of a horse vaccine. The vaccine has been developed through collaboration between Pfizer Animal Health, the CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory, the Uniformed Service University of the Health Services and the Henry M Jackson Foundation. The Queensland government committed some \$300,000 to support the development work.

It is important to stress that this vaccine has been released under special conditions. Only veterinarians who have completed an online training module managed by Pfizer Animal Health will be accredited to administer the vaccine. Queensland horse owners should discuss with their veterinarian whether vaccinating their horses is appropriate. People in contact with horses also need to continue to practise good biosecurity and personal hygiene measures, even if the horse is vaccinated. It is also important to stress that the government has not made the Hendra virus vaccine compulsory for horses in Queensland.

The release of this vaccine has provided another option for the horse industry in the fight against Hendra virus. Earlier this year the government also implemented a personal protective equipment, PPE, rebate program to support veterinarians when dealing with a suspected Hendra virus case. The program allows Queensland veterinarians to apply for a rebate on eligible PPE used in taking samples in the investigation of horses suspected of being infected with Hendra virus. The government has committed to providing over \$1 million over four years to the PPE program. With seven Hendra virus incidents in Queensland so far this year and an unprecedented 10 incidents in 2011, vets are strongly encouraged to take up the support available to them.

Public Hospitals, Pathology Services

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Minister for Health. I note that doctors at regional hospitals, including Maryborough Hospital, will be shouldered with extra work as they are forced to do without pathology services from the first week in December as part of this government's cut to front-line services. I table this document.

Tabled paper: Article from Fraser Coast Chronicle, dated 1 November 2012, titled 'Pathology lab closure puts pressure on docs' [1485].

Will the minister detail when he will be dismissing pathologists from South-East Queensland hospitals, including the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital, forcing doctors to do the work of those units and causing significant delays in the diagnosis of serious illness?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Can I indicate at the outset that there will be no reductions in front-line services available to the people of Queensland. There will certainly be some significant changes that will revitalise front-line services in this state and the way those services are delivered.

I want to understand which job losses we are actually talking about. Are we talking about the job losses that are actually happening as a consequence of the actions of the honourable member for Bundamba or the honourable Leader of the Opposition with regard to the Health payroll, which is 1,537 jobs, or are we talking about 1,217 jobs which are going to be lost as a consequence of the corporate office restructure which is supported not only by me but also by Anna Bligh previously? She said that no longer could we trust corporate office in Queensland to deliver health services and basically what we needed was to tear it asunder. At one stage in Queensland we had a situation where Anna Bligh said that Queensland Health corporate office was not big enough anymore with one bureaucracy so she had to establish two.

The problem with the Labor Party in this state over a long period is that they actually equated expenditure with health services in this state. If we are going to equate expenditure with health services in this state then one should have a infinitely greater Health payroll system than when we started because it has exponentially cost more than what they started out with. The Queensland Children's Hospital started life as a \$690 million project. It has now grown to an over \$1.5 billion project. So under the proposition put forward by the honourable shadow minister for health, we should have a hospital which is twice as big and twice as good and delivering twice as many services. The reality is that it is the same size as the one they actually started off with.

There is absolutely no secret to the fact that there are going to be changes within Pathology Queensland. I actually said on day one when I announced the structural changes—that was a couple of months ago—that we are going to be making some of the intricate agencies within Queensland Health, whether that be IT or pathology, more contestable. Our hospital boards understand the reality of delivering those particular services. We need to be able to compete out there in the broader community as well.

With regard to the particular services which have been raised by the honourable member opposite, the member for Maryborough has been doing a good job in bringing those issues to my attention. They are going to be more than adequately catered for in Hervey Bay with the latest and greatest and more up-to-date facilities. There will absolutely be no impact on the services or the mantle of safety for the people of Maryborough.

Tourism Industry

Dr ROBINSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Can the minister please advise the House of the benefits to Cairns from the newly arrived China Eastern flights direct from Shanghai and how local tourism operators are preparing for the influx of tourists?

Mrs STUCKEY: It is indeed a pleasure to stand up here today, and I thank the honourable member for the question and for his genuine interest in what this government is doing to attract new aviation to our great state. Yesterday the welcome barriers were out in force in Cairns, as were greetings of 'Ni hao, ni hao ma?' as we watched the very first China Eastern direct flight from Shanghai land in Cairns. It surprised everyone by being early and touched down just before 8 am, so we have determined that that is a very good omen indeed for future flights.

I was very pleased to be standing on the tarmac with the Deputy Premier for this historic arrival of over 250 passengers on this inaugural flight. The Deputy Premier and I were joined by a number of dignitaries. These included Mr Ma, the Vice Chairman and CEO of China Eastern Airlines; Dr Sun, the Chinese Consul General in Queensland; Gavin King MP, the Assistant Minister for Tourism and member for Cairns; Michael Trout MP, the member for Barron River; Councillor Bob Manning OAM, Mayor of Cairns; and Stephen Gregg, the Chairman of Tourism Queensland.

This China Eastern flight service is the result of many, many hours of hard work and signifies a fantastic partnership that has been achieved between our government, this airline, Tourism Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and, of course, Cairns Airport. It does follow on from a visit to China with the honourable Treasurer in July where I signed a cooperative letter of intent with Mr Dong, the Chief Marketing Officer of China Eastern Airlines. I am really thrilled to be able to say that this is the very first announcement under our Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, proof of the pudding that this government not only recognises tourism as one of our four pillars but also recognises the need to invest in attracting aviation.

In addition, we have a lot of local operators on the ground in Cairns working very hard to make sure that these visitors will come and come again. Advance Cairns is leading the charge here. Our hotels are now offering Chinese meal options and a number of operators are offering Chinese language options. The *Cairns Post* have got right behind all of this with a two-page spread in their paper with sayings and comments on how we can attract this airline to our fair shores more frequently. So I congratulate China Eastern and we will be hearing a lot more of 'Huanying dao Kai'ensi'—welcome to Cairns!

(Time expired)

Government Buildings

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to Queensland Investment Corporation acquiring public assets in the form of CBD office blocks as part of efforts to fast-track a new executive building for the Premier and ministers. Will the Premier rule out the on-sale of these assets to private owners by QIC?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her question and I note that it is good to see them doing the topnotch research—getting up early and reading the *Australian*, perhaps the *Brisbane Times*, couriermail.com.au, the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—gee whiz! Before I go to the answer, I point out to the honourable member opposite who asked the question—as she was not, I note, a member of the previous cabinet so she may not recall—that some members opposite would recall, because they were in the previous cabinet, a certain transaction where the former Labor state government took an asset known as Queensland Motorways Ltd and what they did—before I talk about what they did, I will just explain that Queensland Motorways Ltd, QML, owned the Gateway Motorway and the Logan Motorway. They were toll businesses. What they did with QML is they sold it, transferred it—whatever words you want to use—to Queensland Investment Corporation. Who was the minister at the time? Who was the minister for transport at the time? Was the current Leader of the Opposition involved in that transaction?

Ms Palaszczuk: No.

Mr NEWMAN: It was not? Okay. I asked rhetorically. The interjections say that I am wrong.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Madam Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I was not the minister for roads. I ask the Premier to correct the record because he is misleading the House.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the Leader of the Opposition to resume her seat. I also note, Premier, that you are asking questions in this House of the other side which is a little difficult to control if we are going to have responses. I call the Premier to finish his answer to the question.

Mr NEWMAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. But I do ask the Leader of the Opposition to listen intently because they ask these questions, they do not listen to the answers and they miss important pieces of information. I am here to inform them. I am here to help them. I am here to be open and accountable. We have demonstrated that all week. All week we have demonstrated our preparedness to answer the questions honestly, in an upfront manner.

So what did they do? They transferred the assets of Queensland Motorways Ltd to Queensland Investment Corporation. They made all sorts of comments that were in the public domain at the time—that it was not a privatisation, that it was a good transaction and so on.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Madam Speaker, I have 42 seconds left and they keep interjecting. The answer is that the government is currently engaging with Queensland Investment Corporation in a potential transaction involving a number of the government's buildings in the CBD and the final nature and proceeds from the transaction are still to be determined. Ultimately we will only proceed with such a transaction, modelled on what the former Labor government did with QML I have to say, if it can be demonstrated to deliver great value to the people of Queensland—open, accountable, upfront, unlike those opposite. We never heard this from them.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Mr RUTHENBERG: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister update the House on work being undertaken to prepare Queensland for the eventual rollout of the NDIS?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for his question because I know that the member for Kallangur takes a very keen interest in what is happening with regard to the NDIS and works very closely with organisations in his electorate that deal with people with disabilities and their families and their carers.

This government has always supported the NDIS as recommended by the Productivity Commission. It has been a consistent position—unlike those opposite, who had one position when in government and have another position now in opposition. In fact, honourable members may recall that in July the opposition voted against a motion that supported the implementation of the NDIS and called on the federal government to fully fund the scheme, in line with the recommendations of the Productivity Commission report.

At least Queenslanders know where they stand on this very important issue with the LNP. But sadly, while we are unable at this time to participate in the trial because of the financial mess left to us by the former government, we are still currently working with the Commonwealth and other state and territory governments to develop and design the scheme. For example, Queensland in conjunction with Victoria has been leading two NDIS development projects—one that focuses on the NDIS assessment tools and one on the development of a gateway information and referral service. My department in fact has been leading the work being undertaken by KPMG to map existing access gateways across the country and has since provided a draft report to the NDIS working group, chaired by the Commonwealth government.

We are also working with other states on additional NDIS projects such as support for Indigenous Australians and how to assist the disability sector workforce as it transitions to an NDIS. In addition to all of that, a director from my department was seconded in September to the NDIS transition agency in Canberra to work alongside the federal team in developing the scheme. Clearly, we support an NDIS.

I think it is important to note that the upcoming trial—and it is only a trial, not the full scheme—only proposes to trial three elements of the full scheme and Queensland already has two of those elements, with the third on its way. The first element is a systematic equitable assessment tool, which we already have. The second element is that of local area coordinators, which we already have. The third element is self-direction, and that is what the Your Life Your Choice initiative is all about.

The Newman government has made a record investment in disability services this year of \$959 million. We care for people with a disability and their families and carers, and we will be closely watching the trial so as to help Queensland prepare for the national rollout of an NDIS.

(Time expired)

Nambour Hospital, Car Parking

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Health. Last week I met with numerous Nambour Hospital workers worried about the future of their employment, and I understand their union is in discussions with the government. Has the government reached a decision on the best solution to relieve Nambour Hospital's car-parking needs?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have responded to this issue in the parliament before, in direct response to a question from the honourable member for Nicklin. In the time I have been health minister I have attended the Nambour Hospital on a number of occasions and on one of those occasions it was with the honourable member for Nicklin. That was in August this year, I recollect, for the opening of the cardiac catheter lab. On those occasions concerns were raised with me, including by the honourable member, about the inadequacy of car parking. There is no doubt about it: car parking is very inadequate at the Nambour Hospital. At the moment there are 830-odd car-parking spaces and about 400 are taken up in a multistorey car park.

The option that exists to augment car parking is a park-and-ride at the showgrounds. There has been a special authority there, and I understand that expires at the end of this year. One of the other options is to look at a park-and-ride with Queensland Health land at Glenbrook Drive. I am not necessarily sure that is the best option given the difficulties with the current park-and-ride at the showgrounds. One of the challenges is the cost of acquiring land right next door to the hospital. It may be possible for us to dispose of land at Glenbrook Drive and acquire some land closer to address this issue.

The department is looking at these particular options at the moment. The question is: what is the best way to do it? Do we have a multistorey car park? If we do, the cost could be quite prohibitive. So we have to work through the options. I have asked the board to make contact with the honourable member to further discuss this issue. I will be guided by the board. We know that we have a challenge. At the moment we are going through a whole range of issues, including planning for the new Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Once we can get some clear air there will be further discussions with the honourable member, but it is an element of priority and we are currently working through it.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.32 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. A question by the Leader of the Opposition earlier stated that I was refusing to comply with her RTI application. The Leader of the Opposition also tabled a letter she had received claiming that it confirmed that assertion. The Newman government is open and accountable. We have put the decision of RTI applications in the hands of independent public servants. The letter of notice clearly states that the notice has been made by the Department of Transport and Main Roads assistant director for RTI and privacy, not by my office or me. Furthermore, the notice outlines that a decision will not be made until the Leader of the Opposition's office has been provided an opportunity to review the scope of their application. Madam Speaker, I believe that this demonstrates a serious and deliberate attempt to mislead parliament. I will be writing to you about this matter and asking you to consider referring it to the Ethics Committee.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: Today we will be visited by the following schools: Gympie West State School, in the electorate of Gympie; and Rivermount College, in the electorate of Albert.

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.34 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 7 of the Education and Innovation Committee tabled on 22 August 2012.

This report details the committee's review of the Auditor-General's report No. 1 of 2012 titled *Improving student attendance*. The Auditor-General's performance audit considered targets set by the former department of education and training, now the Department of Education, Training and

Employment, to (1) improve student attendance rates by one per cent state-wide and (2) close the gap in attendance rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and whether the strategies the department had implemented to achieve these targets were effective. Given that these targets had not been achieved, the conclusion was that they were not.

The Education and Innovation Committee noted that the Auditor-General and the department provided examples of initiatives that would appear to have been quite successful in improving attendance rates at the individual school and community levels. Members are no doubt aware of other successful initiatives in their own electorates. However, attendance rate targets have been set at the state-wide level, meaning that success stories in individual schools or communities are not always discernible.

We all know about the importance of education in closing the gap in life opportunities and outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. There was a newspaper article just last month about Cherbourg, where the local school's attendance rate has been increasing slowly over the past few years, so something is working there and it could potentially work elsewhere.

The following factors would appear to be contributing to the state-wide targets not being met: there is not a consistent approach to some of the basics—for example, triggers for action on poor attendance by individual students; initiatives are not systematically evaluated and replicated where appropriate; and data and systems do not support effective monitoring of attendance.

The committee notes that the department has developed an action plan to respond to the Auditor-General's recommendation and has already improved its data systems relating to student attendance. One of our recommendations is that the minister inform the House by 30 November 2012 of the government's acceptance or otherwise of, and any implementation plans relating to, all of the Auditor-General's recommendations.

Because attendance at school is one of the most important determinants of a person's life outcomes as well as broader economic outcomes, it is important that efforts to improve student attendance rates remain on the public agenda. It is a responsibility we all share; it is not just the responsibility of schools. To that end, the Education and Innovation Committee intends to review attendance rates for Queensland state schools in 2014. 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.

TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (11.37 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 8 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee tabled on 22 October 2012.

On 7 June 2012 the Legislative Assembly agreed to a motion that the committee review Queensland's current motorcycle licensing processes and its alignment with the best practice, evidence based approach adopted in other Australian and international jurisdictions. The committee was set a reporting date of 31 October 2012. The report was actually tabled early, on 22 October.

Our committee has taken its responsibility in conducting this inquiry very seriously. Motorcycle riders are inherently more vulnerable than car drivers due to the lack of protection offered by the vehicle and additional demands on riders to deal with road hazards. Unfortunately, this means riders involved in a crash are often seriously injured or lose their lives. The committee is mindful of the immense personal, social, economic and health cost this road trauma imposes on the Queensland community.

The committee has undertaken a detailed examination of the current licensing system and is focused on making recommendations that are likely to provide increased safety benefits while at the same time minimise regulatory burdens and costs. The committee has consulted widely and gathered evidence from key industry and training groups, motorcycle rider associations and road safety experts throughout the inquiry. I would like to acknowledge those who briefed the committee, those who provided written submissions and those who informed the deliberations through their participation in the inquiry process.

Members of the committee would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Department of Transport and Main Roads on motorcycle safety. Over the past decade, the department has incrementally improved the motorcycle licensing system based on ongoing consultation, research and review. The department provided the committee with invaluable support throughout the inquiry process.

I want to thank members of the committee. A special thanks goes to Mr Trevor Ruthenberg, the member for Kallangur, who enrolled and completed a Q-Ride training course so that he could have a personal experience of the program and pass his understanding on to the committee. Mr Ruthenberg is now the proud owner of a good road bike, so I wish him many happy years riding his bike. I also thank the committee secretariat for their support and assistance throughout the inquiry process.

The committee made 12 recommendations altogether. I will not go through them all but I want to mention a couple. Recommendation 3 states—

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads introduce compulsory pre-learner off road training and assessment as part of the Q-Ride training and assessment process in Queensland.

Recommendation 4 states—

The committee recommends that the pre-learner training and assessment (proposed in recommendation 3) incorporate specific risk taking and hazard perception training and assessment as a required component.

Another recommendation states—

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads introduce an additional requirement for riders to undergo a further assessment of their basic motorcycle skills by a Q-Ride registered service provider at least 6 months after receiving their RE licence.

We believe that those and the other recommendations will make a big difference. Recommendation 9 states—

The committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads introduce the following additional pre-requisites for being granted a learner licence under the Q-SAFE system:

- a) pass the improved written road rules test;
- b) be tested on comprehension of the *Ride On* DVD; and
- c) pass a motorcycle specific Hazard Perception Test.

We believe that will bring very significant benefits to most bike riders in Queensland.

There is a mix of statistics about motorcycles, so we did a full analysis and we came up with some very interesting points. Generally speaking, bike riders are not always at fault and the statistics really show this. For instance, many bike riders are hit by cars and many fatalities involve unlicensed riders. Other factors include riders with excess alcohol or the road conditions, and the motorcycle rider and the licensing regime do not have a lot of control over many of those factors. With that in mind, we looked to try to get the best mix that we possibly could. When you look at the statistics and the fatalities, you see that the road toll actually decreased for motorcycle riders between 2005 and 2011 but overall there was an increase in the number of registrations and licences. We believe that these changes are practical. They will upskill our bike riders and they will make Queensland a safer place to ride.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.43 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BILL 2012

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, PENELOPE ANNE WENSLEY AC, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intitled—

A Bill for an Act about economic development and development for community purposes, to repeal the Industrial Development Act 1963 and the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007, to make consequential amendments to this Act and the Acts mentioned in schedule 1, and to amend the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011, the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 2 for particular purposes.

(Sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 30 OCT 2012

Tabled paper: Message, dated 30 October 2012, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Economic Development Bill 2012 [\[1486\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.44 am): I present a bill for an act about economic development and development for community purposes, to repeal the Industrial Development Act 1963 and the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007, to make consequential amendments to this act and the acts mentioned in schedule 1, and to amend the Disaster Management Act 2003, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011, the South Bank Corporation Act 1989, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 and the acts mentioned in schedule 2 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Economic Development Bill 2012 [[1487](#)].

Tabled paper: Economic Development Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1488](#)].

The bill I present today is primarily a process bill. It is a bill for an act to facilitate economic development and development for community purposes in Queensland. The bill repeals the Industrial Development Act 1963 and the Urban Land Development Authority Act 2007, and integrates the powers and functions of the existing Minister for Industrial Development Queensland and the Urban Land Development Authority into one single act. The bill establishes the Minister for Economic Development Queensland, MEDQ, a corporation sole, to replace the Minister for Industrial Development Queensland, a corporation sole which has existed since 1963. It provides the MEDQ with the ability to deal commercially in land, property and infrastructure to encourage economic development and development for community purposes. This reform recognises the synergies between the two entities that existed under the former model and will allow for improved operational efficiencies.

Operationally, the new entity—Economic Development Queensland, EDQ—will assume responsibility for bringing developments to market under the guidance and direction of a board and the MEDQ. The EDQ, a commercialised business unit of the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, will exercise functions of the MEDQ by delegation. Economic Development Queensland will continue the same commercial arrangements and operation as the existing Property Services Group in the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. It will continue the same activities currently undertaken by the Urban Land Development Authority. Transitioning the planning and development powers and activities of the Urban Land Development Authority to the MEDQ will help deliver on the government's policy of winding back the current operations of the authority.

The bill provides for the declaration of development areas for the purpose of planning and development in discrete sites—just as the former ULDA legislation did. The MEDQ will have the ability to establish local representative committees on a case-by-case basis, providing a mechanism for local government engagement in planning and development assessment activities of the MEDQ in a way that the former government never did with the former ULDA.

The governance arrangements established in the bill incorporate a board of up to six members called the Economic Development Board. It also establishes the Commonwealth Games Infrastructure Authority, a board that will work with the MEDQ through the Economic Development Board. Through the governance arrangements in the bill, the powers and functions of the MEDQ will be utilised for the planning and development of the 2018 Commonwealth Games Village and other venues so that our state may meet its obligations in regard to the Commonwealth Games.

The bill amends the South Bank Corporation Act 1989 to transition the statutory planning powers of the South Bank Corporation to the Brisbane City Council in accordance with the government's election commitment. The bill also amends the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 to clarify and streamline the powers of the Coordinator-General. Important amendments will deliver more robust criteria for deciding which projects should be Coordinator-General projects and streamline environmental impact statement processes, to name just two examples. The bill will also make changes to the titles of such things as 'projects of state significance' and 'infrastructure facilities of significance' to prevent proponents from using these declarations to wrongly indicate that they have some level of state support when those declarations do not afford that state support.

The bill recognises that the work of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority in rebuilding vital community infrastructure needs to continue. The bill will ensure that the tenure of the authority is extended by extending the expiry date of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011 to 30 June 2014. The authority will then cease, in line with the government's previous commitment.

The bill also amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and the Disaster Management Act 2003 to implement specific recommendations from the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry report. These amendments provide for the issue of temporary emissions licences to allow for temporary discharges as part of the response to an emergency event, including after an emergency has ended. These amendments will also define the term 'emergency' and permit an emergency direction to be given orally to address other recommendations of the report. Furthermore, the amendments will enable the chief executive of the department of community safety to appoint an officer of Emergency Management Queensland to direct State Emergency Service operations in extraordinary circumstances.

The essential reforms to existing planning and development legislation contained in this bill will put the government in a position to facilitate economic development and development for community purposes and to deliver our election commitments, particularly where there are identified and persistent market gaps. Our government has committed to building a four-pillar economy for Queensland. Enacting the Economic Development Bill will equip us with the legislative tools necessary to identify and drive development projects that contribute to a strong and sustainable state economy by combining the powers of the former ULDA and the former Minister for Industrial Development. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.52 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 State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (11.52 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee report to the House on the Economic Development Bill by 22 November 2012.

I want to make a few comments about the motion that I have moved, which will ensure this bill is reported upon by the committee and is available for this House to consider before Christmas. It is important that this bill be considered before Christmas. I want to make some broader comments about the committee structure and some of the nonsense commentary that I have heard in this chamber in the last six or seven months since the government changed.

I was part of a committee that put in place the committee structure that we currently have in the parliament. For the benefit of the members who were not here during previous parliaments, I say that the committee structure we have now is a very new concept. The previous committees never considered legislation. They never considered legislation at all. They never had a chance to consider legislation and, therefore, were seen by many long-serving members in this House as having very little real role in the parliamentary process.

A bipartisan committee made up of eight senior members of this House put together a new committee structure that was completely different from the old one and enabled committees to consider legislation and, more than that, enabled interest groups and the general public to have input into that legislation. The committee consisted of long-serving members of the opposition—people such as Mike Horan, the former member for Toowoomba South; my colleague Lawrence Springborg; and me. It also consisted of long-serving members of the then Labor government—people such as the former member for Rockhampton, Robert Schwarten, and the former leader of the House, Judy Spence. These were people who understood the parliamentary process and had a lot of respect for this parliament. We designed a committee system that allowed for considerable input from members, stakeholders and general members of the community into the legislative process.

However, it was never intended that every piece of legislation would go through the same process before the committee. It was always recognised that that committee process had more relevance to some particular pieces of legislation than others. It was always recognised that there would be urgent legislation that would not go to the committees at all, that would go the same way as legislation in this House has gone for the last 20, 30, 40, 50 years in that it is introduced and then it is debated. There is that classification of legislation which is part of the government's agenda which is considered urgent enough to be debated in the House. It was also always recognised that there was another layer of legislation that would go to the committee for a relatively short period to undergo the types of checks that the former subordinate legislation committee used to do—to run those sorts of checks over the legislation. In this motion that I am moving I am suggesting that this bill falls into that category.

The committee structure was really set up for the next layer of consideration of, if you like, the sort of legislation that had a broad public interest. We wanted to provide an opportunity for the public generally and interest groups in particular to have an input into that type of legislation. That is the sort of legislation that it was always envisaged would spend a considerable amount of time with the committee. The committee could then, at its own discretion, create an opportunity for submissions from the public; create an opportunity for public hearings if they felt they were necessary; and go through the processes that I know committees are undertaking at the moment in particular instances in which they are travelling widely across the state and examining issues that are part of the legislation.

The bill before the House that I have introduced is not one of those; it is a process bill. It is not introducing new concepts or new powers; it is combining two pieces of pre-existing legislation. It is also introducing things that are urgent—things like our ability to deal with our commitments to the Commonwealth Games, our ability to respond to the flood inquiry and our need to extend the term of the Reconstruction Authority. It is very appropriate that this bill not spend a long time before the committee. It is not a bill that requires those types of examinations. It is not a bill that requires the detailed public submissions and detailed opportunities for public input that some of the other bills that are currently before the House do.

I am certain that we will see the same nonsense comment from the opposition and from some members of the media who do not understand the committee system that the bipartisan committee made up of senior members of this parliament put in place. As I move this motion today I want to ensure that this bill does proceed through this House before Christmas in order to meet those responsibilities that the government has. I want to make the point that that is the way the system was designed to work.

If members of the opposition in this place today had the same political maturity as the members from both sides of the House who designed this committee system, they would understand and support the motion that I have moved and they would understand and support the concept of bills requiring different levels of scrutiny by the committee depending on their urgency, depending on the degree of new concepts that are introduced in those bills and depending on the opportunity that should exist for public input. I know that hoping for that political maturity from the opposition members who sit in here at the moment may well be a hope in vain, but I refer them to some of the comments that were made by their political colleagues who were on the committee that reviewed the committee system during the term of the last parliament. I would refer them to some of the contributions that were made in this House when we passed the legislation to set up this committee structure.

It was never designed for oppositions to play politics with. It was a bipartisan attempt to ensure that this chamber produced better legislation and that the people of Queensland had an opportunity to have input into that legislation when it was legislation that it was appropriate to consult widely upon. There are a number of pieces of legislation before this House at the moment where it is appropriate to consult widely. It is appropriate, as my colleague the member for Mirani is doing in one particular instance, to travel widely across the state talking to people about the issues that a bill encompasses. I will be introducing legislation into this House in the very near future that sets up the GasFields Commission. That is a bill which specifically requires a lot of public consultation. In contrast to what I am doing today, in that instance I will be suggesting to the committee that it takes a long time to consult, that it takes a long time to give everybody an opportunity to have input, that it seeks submissions and that it talks to all stakeholders, because that is what the committee system was designed to do.

But the committee system was never designed to curtail the government's agenda, to prevent the government from meeting its obligations with regard to urgent issues or from meeting its obligations with regard to particular responsibilities such as the Commonwealth Games, such as the flood inquiry and such as the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. So I have moved the motion to ensure the committee reports to this House by 22 November 2012 to ensure this bill does pass through the House before the end of the parliamentary year so that the government does meet its commitments with regard to each of those things. I say to the opposition that it should try to attain the levels of political maturity that were demonstrated in the committee that designed this committee structure and understand that the proper processes of this House will be fulfilled by the motion that I have moved today.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

YOUTH JUSTICE (BOOT CAMP ORDERS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.02 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Youth Justice Act 1992, the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012, for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [[1489](#)].

Tabled paper: Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1490](#)].

I am pleased to introduce the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill fulfils the government's pre-election commitment and pledge to introduce youth boot camps to stop the cycle of youth crime and give young offenders a real chance at rehabilitation and the opportunity to make positive life decisions. The program is part of the Safer Streets Crime Action Plan and will take a whole-of-government approach to working with 80 young people over two years. The bill also contains amendments to cease court referred youth justice conferencing to fulfil the decision made in the context of the 2012-13 budget.

The government is trialling two youth boot camp programs. The first of these is an early intervention youth boot camp program which will be trialled on the Gold Coast. This program will target those young people who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system and continuing on a trajectory of offending behaviour. The second youth boot camp program will introduce a new supervised youth justice order as an option before detention. It will be called a boot camp order. The commencement of this bill will provide courts with this new sentencing option. The boot camp order is targeted at those young people who are facing detention. It will provide young offenders with a further opportunity to avoid entering the revolving door of crime and detention. The boot camp order will allow courts upon making an order for detention to consider releasing a young person to a boot camp order. The boot camp order creates a hierarchy between supervised orders which are options before detention.

The conditional release order, which is currently an option before detention, is a maximum three-month order served entirely in the community. The boot camp order is a three- to six-month order which includes one month to be spent in a residential boot camp centre. This makes the boot camp order a more intensive and longer sentencing option than the conditional release order. To be eligible for a boot camp order, the young offender must be at least 13 years old at the time of sentencing, must usually reside in a prescribed area and must have consented to participate in the program. The prescribed area in which a child must usually reside will be provided for by amendment to the regulations. For the trial the area will include Cairns, Yarrabah, Innisfail, Mareeba and Atherton. A young person who usually lives in Cairns but is before a Brisbane court, for example, will be eligible to participate in the boot camp program.

Not all young offenders will be eligible to participate in a boot camp program. Where a young offender has a previous finding of guilt, a pending charge or the offence for which the child is currently being sentenced is a disqualifying offence, the young offender will not be eligible. The bill inserts a schedule of disqualifying offences which comprise serious violent and sexual offences. This is to ensure the safety of other young offenders participating in the residential phase of the boot camp program as well as the employees of the boot camp centre and the broader community. The young offender will also not be eligible if the court forms the view that the young offender poses an unacceptable risk of physical harm to other young offenders or employees at the boot camp centre.

Before making a boot camp order, the court must request a pre-sentence report. This report will include mental and physical health assessments, a statement of the child's consent, a statement detailing whether the consent of a parent has been obtained for that parent to participate, availability of an appropriate boot camp centre and the suitability of the child to be released from detention on to a boot camp order. The boot camp order will require that the young offender participate in a boot camp program which will be designed to meet the particular needs of each individual young offender. It comprises one month of residing in a boot camp centre followed by the remaining period of the order in the community supported by intensive supervision. Young offenders will also receive mentoring throughout the program and will be encouraged to voluntarily continue with mentoring following completion of the order.

While the young offender is in the boot camp centre, they will participate in a program that involves a high degree of structure and supervision. It will involve physical training, participation in health and substance abuse programs, and educational and offence focused programs to address the cause of offending behaviours. The program during the residential phase will instil the discipline and values necessary to assist and support young people in turning their lives around. After completing the

first month of the program in the boot camp centre, the young person will spend the remainder of their boot camp order—between two and five months—under strict supervision in the community. The program will require that the young person is engaged in daily activities that include, where possible, the involvement of the young person's family.

During the course of the entire program, the involvement of a young person's family will be paramount. This will ensure that difficulties within a family which may be contributing to a young person's offending behaviour are assessed and the young person will continue to have the necessary support from their family to refrain from further offending behaviours once the boot camp order is complete.

Where a young person breaches the boot camp order, there are a number of options which will be available to the court. These options include ordering the child to serve the sentence of detention for which the boot camp order was made, making a new boot camp order or making a conditional release order. The court is also provided with the option of permitting the young offender a further opportunity to complete the boot camp order. In making such an order, the court can vary the requirements of the order but not the program details. This prevents a court from ordering a child to participate again in the residential phase of the program where this has already been completed. To ensure the safety of children participating in the program and to maximise therapeutic outcomes, the bill provides clear responsibilities and obligations for the young offenders participating in the residential phase of the boot camp program and staff of the boot camp centre, as well as the chief executive.

These provisions place an emphasis on centre security and management; provision of information to the young offender upon entry to the centre, a child's access to legal services; complaint procedures; departmental inspections of the centre; provisions for authorising medical treatment as well as obligations on the boot camp centre to report incidents of significant harm to a young person. The boot camp order will become available to the court upon the date of commencement of this bill regardless of the time at which the child was charged or proceedings commenced. The bill meets our intention to ensure that young people are accountable and responsible for their offending behaviour while also addressing the causes of youth offending. Ultimately, this will lead to a safer community for Queenslanders.

The bill also delivers on the 2012 budget decision to cease court referred youth justice conferencing by removing the court's ability to refer a young person to a youth justice conference either as an indefinite referral or as a referral prior to sentencing. The bill provides for transitional amendments to ensure that any conferences referred by a court prior to the amendments taking effect may continue to be progressed and finalised. In addition to the removal of court referred conferencing, the bill removes references to the redundant role of youth justice conferencing coordinator and places responsibility for these functions with the chief executive.

The bill also makes amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. Recently, a motel operator was found to have contravened the Anti-Discrimination Act by refusing to provide accommodation to be used for prostitution purposes. The bill inserts a new exemption in the act to protect businesses from this sort of complaint and give them control over the use that is made of their premises. The exemption allows a person to lawfully discriminate against another person in relation to accommodation if they reasonably believe that the other person is using or intends to use it in connection with that person's work or another person's work as a sex worker. The exemption would justify a refusal of accommodation on the grounds that the person is a sex worker, a sex worker's procurer or a sex worker's customer if they are using or intend to use the accommodation to carry on prostitution. However, it will not allow a person to refuse to provide accommodation to someone merely because the other person is a sex worker.

There are also amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act to exempt requirements of citizenship or visa status in government eligibility policies. The exemption will only apply to government policies for the provision of financial or other assistance, services or support and will only extend to citizenship or visa status criteria. It is not a blanket exemption for government policies in relation to other grounds covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act. Public resources are finite. Limits must often be placed on who is eligible for government funded assistance. The exemption will ensure that government entities can adopt and implement assistance policies based on citizenship or residency without being exposed to litigation which would further deplete scarce public resources.

Amendments in the Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012 combined the roles and decision making of the Queensland Liquor and Gaming Commission and the chief executive under the Gaming Machine Act and Liquor Act and transferred them to a new Liquor and Gaming Commissioner. The amendments were to commence on 1 July 2013. However, given the benefits to industry and the government in streamlining the decision-making process, it would be preferable for the amendments to commence on 1 January 2013 to maximise their effect. Therefore, to achieve this a minor amendment is made to the Fiscal Repair Amendment Act 2012. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.12 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.13 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report to the House on the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

RACING AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12.13 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998, the Racing Act 2002 and the Wagering Act 1998 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 [[1491](#)].

Tabled paper: Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1492](#)].

Today I introduce the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill delivers on the government's election commitment to rejuvenate the Queensland racing industry by: removing Racing Queensland Ltd as the control body for racing in Queensland and establishing the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board in this role; establishing a code-specific board for each code of racing; establishing and transferring appropriate racing integrity functions to the government; and providing a competitive environment for Queensland bookmakers.

The Newman government was elected on a platform of rejuvenating Queensland's racing sector after it was brought to its knees by the former Labor government. In 2010, under the former Labor government, amendments to the Racing Act 2002 amalgamated the then three control bodies into a single control body, Racing Queensland Ltd. The spectacular carelessness and arrogance of those who were put in charge of RQL is still being felt in the industry today. Whilst Labor turned a blind eye, those who were charged with running the racing industry in this state were instead running the racing industry into the ground. Much like their political masters, RQL's dodgy deals, sweetheart pay-offs and questionable business practices will be their legacy.

Currently, Racing Queensland is a company limited by guarantee with no requirement to consult or consider the basic needs and views of those who actually derive an income from or participate in the racing industry. Our bill proposes to remove Racing Queensland Ltd as the control body for the thoroughbred, harness and greyhounds codes of racing and establish the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board in this role.

Vitally, to address long held industry concerns that the principal racing authority has no direct interaction with code participants and licensees in each specific racing code have no code-specific board with which to interact, the bill also proposes to establish three separate code-specific boards: the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board; the Queensland Harness Racing Board; and the Queensland Greyhound Racing Board. The 30,000 people who rely on the racing sector for their employment will once again have a voice.

The functions of the code-specific boards will include but not be limited to: reviewing and making recommendations regarding allocation of race dates and prize money; making recommendations in relation to amendments or enhancements to their code's rules of racing; undertaking ongoing consultation with code stakeholders; and developing a five-year rolling strategic infrastructure plan. As

previously mentioned, our amendments also provide for the removal of Racing Queensland Ltd as the control body and the establishment of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board to fulfil that function. Important to note is the fact that the three chairs of the code-specific boards plus an additional two members will make up this entity.

This board's composition and structure ensures that the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board will derive and retain its legitimacy and authority by virtue of the fact that it is truly representative of the sector. The functions, roles and purposes of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board are to: act as the principal racing authority—control body—for the purposes of satisfying national and international racing authority's governance and regulatory requirements; identifying, assessing and developing responses to strategic issues relevant to the racing industry as a whole, including wagering negotiations and television rights deals; developing and implementing responses to strategic challenges faced by the relevant individual codes of racing or the industry as a whole; leading and facilitating negotiations between two or more code-specific boards about strategic issues and agreements that affect the relevant individual codes of racing or the industry as a whole; and provide administrative and corporate support to code-specific boards to enable them to deliver their functions and meet their objectives.

In terms of giving the industry a genuine say in who represents it, a board recruitment process will be instituted which fulfils both the spirit and the practical application of the LNP's commitments. The code-specific boards will consist of three non-executive independent members selected by an independent selection panel. The chairs of these code-specific boards and two other members identified by the independent selection panel will be appointed to the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board by the Governor in Council upon the recommendation of the minister.

Prospective members of the code-specific boards and the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board will be identified through a recruitment process conducted by an executive recruitment company engaged by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. The recruitment company will provide details of the short-listed candidates to a selection panel appointed by the minister. In establishing a selection panel, the minister must consult with the persons involved in the racing industry. The minister will consider the recommendations of the selection panel with the Governor in Council to appoint board members.

Once Racing Queensland Ltd is abolished, the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board becomes the control body for racing and all assets, employees, instruments, authorisations and liabilities of Racing Queensland Ltd will be transferred to it. The bill proposes that the employees of Racing Queensland Ltd be transferred to the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board and continue to be employed under the applicable industrial relations system, whether federal or state, that they were employed under prior to the transfer. Amendments propose that a person who is an employee of Racing Queensland Ltd becomes an employee of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board on the same terms and conditions of employment as applied to the person immediately before the commencement of the amendments. The Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board will assume liability for outstanding leave entitlements and recognise the employees' length of service at the date of transfer.

Our government has promised to restore accountability to racing, and one of the most important ways we will do so is by taking on responsibility for racing integrity functions. The bill proposes to transfer appropriate racing integrity functions to government through the establishment of the Racing Disciplinary Board to replace the existing appeals committees established by Racing Queensland Ltd. The Racing Disciplinary Board will be responsible for the initial hearing of all appeals from administrative and disciplinary decisions of the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board and stewards' inquiries. A person appointed as a member of the Racing Disciplinary Board must either be legally qualified or have knowledge of the rules of racing for one or more codes of racing. The bill requires that any hearing conducted by the Racing Disciplinary Board must be conducted by a legally qualified member and a member with specific knowledge of the relevant code of racing.

The Newman government is responding to overwhelming feedback from the industry that they deserve a fair and transparent appeals system. Appeal hearings will be presided over by persons who have legal qualifications or a thorough knowledge of the rules that govern the operation of the racing industry. A key provision of the bill requires that at any hearing conducted by the Racing Disciplinary Board the control body cannot be legally represented unless the licensee is also legally represented. This provision addresses concerns voiced by licensees that they have previously been forced to incur significant legal expenses to level the playing field in appeals against decisions of the control body.

It is also proposed to establish a Racing Integrity Commissioner to provide independent oversight of integrity issues across the three codes of racing and conduct audits and integrity related investigations. The Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board will be required to meet the costs associated with the operations of the Racing Disciplinary Board and the Racing Integrity Commissioner.

Proposed amendments to the Racing Act and the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998 will allow bookmakers to use internet based technology to conduct their business, both at the racecourse and at other off-course premises approved by the minister. This will allow Queensland bookmakers to be more competitive with their interstate counterparts, especially the corporate bookmakers who have had a free ride on the Queensland racing industry for too long. To ensure these changes also provide the benefit of strengthening the local bookmakers' rings, bookmakers will need to conduct on-course, face-to-face bookmaking for a minimum number of meetings to gain an off-course approval.

The Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board will be responsible for approving any telecommunications system used by a bookmaker and monitoring it, as currently occurs with telephone-only bookmaking under the Racing Act. However, any system for bookmaking approved by the control body will be required to demonstrate appropriate integrity standards and safeguards to protect both the bookmaker and customers. Accordingly, the bill requires any online systems used for bookmaking to be independently certified to protect the public interest.

Wagering conducted under the Racing Act has always been exempted from being classified as an interactive game under the Interactive Gambling (Player Protection) Act 1998. Accordingly, the bill proposes amendments to maintain this exemption for bookmakers conducting business via internet based technology. Amendments to the Wagering Act are required to extend the funding for the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme from 2014 to 2015. The scheme provides funding for priority infrastructure upgrades at racing venues across the state of Queensland. The amendments to the Wagering Act 1998 allow the provision of funding of \$110 million for the industry from the scheme, which fulfils the government's election commitment.

In closing, the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 will continue the LNP's delivery of our Rejuvenating Queensland Racing election policy. By introducing amendments which truly give industry participants a greater and meaningful say in how their specific code, as well as the industry more broadly, is run—a freedom denied to grassroots participants by the former government—we will be in a position to deliver on our core commitment to rejuvenate racing in this state.

First Reading

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12.25 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Health and Community Services Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12.25 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Health and Community Services Committee report to the House on the Racing and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (12.26 pm): I present a bill for an act to provide for the establishment of Tourism and Events Queensland and for the establishment of the Tourism and Events Queensland Employing Office for purposes related to tourism and events for Queensland. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Tourism and Events Queensland Bill 2012 [[1493](#)].

Tabled paper: Tourism and Events Queensland Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1494](#)].

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Tourism and Events Queensland Bill 2012, which will cause the Tourism Queensland Act 1979 to be repealed. Tourism is one of the largest contributors to the state's economy, employing more than 120,000 Queenslanders, directly and indirectly. That is almost 10 per cent of Queensland's jobs. The Newman government recognises tourism as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. As a government we have worked quickly to honour our election commitments, including the establishment of a stand-alone department and the fostering of a genuine whole-of-government approach to tourism.

Queensland is blessed with a suite of highly desirable attractions and an enviable climate. Variety abounds, from our Great Barrier Reef and our exquisite rainforests to our golden beaches. The government is determined to return Queensland to its rightful place as Australia's No. 1 tourist destination. Our plan to rebuild tourism is to have a more coordinated and strategic approach to attracting visitors, whether they come for holidays, events, business events, conventions, or visiting family and friends. Tourism and events are intrinsically linked. In order to maximise their efforts and reinvigorate our beloved tourism industry, so neglected under Labor, the Newman government will merge these two entities. We propose to bring together Events Queensland and Tourism Queensland into a single entity to be called Tourism and Events Queensland. The Tourism and Events Queensland Bill will deliver this.

The bill continues Tourism Queensland in existence as Tourism and Events Queensland and transfers the assets and liabilities of Events Queensland to the entity. It includes provisions around governance and structure for the entity. The bill specifies the functions for Tourism and Events Queensland, which remains a statutory body and covers its dual tourism and events role. Functions include: the promotion and marketing of Queensland; tourism experience and destination development; and identifying, attracting, developing and promoting major events. The functions also reflect the need to work in partnership with the tourism industry, a process that is off to a positive start with the signing of an agreement with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council in June this year.

A board will oversee Tourism and Events Queensland and ensure it performs in an effective and efficient way. The board will comprise at least eight members and the director-general of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Current members of the Corporation of Tourism Queensland will transition to the board. We have recently appointed some highly qualified new members to the corporation who will bring a strong, strategic focus and a wealth of experience to the new entity. The bill also establishes a chief executive officer role with responsibility for managing the entity's operations in accordance with the board's priorities.

Tourism and Events Queensland will operate according to the highest standards of governance, accountability and transparency. Those standards are outlined in the Financial Accountability Act 2009, the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2009 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982. The minister will be able to give the entity a statement of expectations to ensure it operates in the broader context of the government's priorities. The entity will be required to respond with a statement of intent about how it proposes to comply with the expectations. This approach is based on that adopted by the Australian government for Tourism Australia. It will also require the entity to submit its strategic plan to the minister for approval.

Finally, the bill continues the Tourism Queensland Employing Office in existence as the Tourism and Events Queensland Employing Office. It also provides for the recognition of length of service and accrued leave entitlements of Events Queensland employees who transfer to the new entity. Once the bill is passed, we will wind up Events Queensland.

Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland have been successful separately. Together they will be able to better leverage all their activities to grow visitor expenditure. Bringing them together will also ensure all efforts to attract visitors and events are focused on achieving the best results and the greatest value for money for Queensland taxpayers. I have no doubt that one entity is the best way to maximise our share of the domestic and international visitor markets and help us achieve our goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure to \$30 billion a year by 2020.

Our plans to get the tourism industry back on track have already resulted in significant progress being made, especially since the landmark DestinationQ forum held in Cairns in June. We listened to the industry and the people on the ground right across Queensland and we will continue to do so.

While I am delighted with the progress to date, there is still a lot of hard work to do before we can reach our 2020 target. Tourism and events are key drivers of our economy and bringing them together into one entity is one more step to help us achieve this target. This bill will provide a streamlined approach and foster a close working relationship with government, agencies and industry and send a message that Queensland tourism is back on track. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (12.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (12.33 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136, the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee report to the House on the Tourism and Events Queensland Bill by 22 November 2012.

I move that motion for the following reasons, which were so eloquently outlined by the Deputy Premier when introducing the Economic Development Bill. As he stated, each bill requires a different level of scrutiny. Some do not require detailed public submissions or input. The Tourism and Events Queensland Bill is one such bill. It is a process bill that addresses the operating mechanisms of Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland.

The bill will give the 130 staff in Tourism Queensland and 18 staff in Events Queensland certainty over their future. The current legislation limits the number of members on the TQ board, which means that a full board cannot legally meet and make decisions to proceed regarding policy. The current legislation has hamstrung the performance of both of those organisations due to this lack of certainty. Therefore, the planning for position descriptions, salary parity and the like cannot be determined until the certainty of the structure is delivered.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates; Referral to Portfolio Committee

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (12.34 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That, in accordance with standing order 136(1), the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report back to the House on the Weapons and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 22 November 2012;
2. That, in accordance with standing order 136(1), the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report back to the House on the Classification of Computer Games and Images and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 7 February 2013;
3. That the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be discharged from the responsibility of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee; and
4. That the Finance and Administration Committee take responsibility for the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and report back to the House on the Bill by 22 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (12.35 pm): I move—

That government business order of the day No. 1 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 12 September (see p. 1843).

Second Reading

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (12.36 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I begin by thanking the members of the Health and Community Services Committee for their prompt and valuable work in relation to the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012, better known as the FRC bill. The committee has recommended that the bill be passed without amendment. The amendments will allow the Family Responsibilities Commission, an essential part of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, to operate until the end of December 2013. The bill also seeks to introduce a quorum for meetings of the commission board to overcome a practical issue arising from the requirement for all three board members to be present at a meeting.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which is a partnership between the Queensland and Australian governments and the Cape York institute, operates in four Cape York communities: Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge. The trial aims to restore social norms and local authority in those communities, and change behaviours in response to chronic levels of welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion. The three trial partners recognise that when dysfunction is engrained in a community, encouraging community members away from welfare dependency and towards responsible behaviours will improve outcomes.

When the trial commenced in 2008, the establishment of the Family Responsibilities Commission was supported by both sides of the Queensland parliament. The trial was originally intended to end in 2011 with the expiry of the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 but was extended for 12 months pending the finalisation of an independent evaluation of the trial. The results of this evaluation, which is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments, were originally anticipated in late 2011 but now are not expected to be released by the Australian government until later this year. The Family Responsibilities Commission is a central feature of the trial and operates to restore local Indigenous authority and build stronger and more resilient communities by attaching behavioural obligations to the receipt of welfare payments.

The FRC is chaired by the commissioner, Mr David Glasgow, and also includes a deputy commissioner and local commissioners from each of the four trial communities. Under the FRC Act, the commissioners hold conferences with local people who are notified to the FRC for not enrolling or sending their children to school, not meeting tenancy obligations, child safety concerns or being convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court. If people do not work with the FRC to satisfactorily address problems, the FRC is able to refer clients for income management through Centrelink or to services provided by wellbeing centres, parenting services or ending family violence programs. Tenancy support services and school attendance officers are also available.

Local commissioners sit in each of the trial communities. They play an important role in the FRC—hearing conferences, developing case plans and sitting with the commissioner in deciding on income management. I have had a number of conversations with Commissioner David Glasgow and would like to publicly commend the good work he and his team are doing.

The Queensland government has committed \$5.65 million, which includes \$1.6 million towards the costs of the FRC, to extend the trial to the end of December 2013. In June 2012 my department, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, undertook stakeholder and community consultations in Cairns, Brisbane and the four trial communities. We spoke to community members, school principals, wellbeing centre staff and local police. We also consulted the Cape York institute and other government agencies and service providers.

These consultations demonstrated there is widespread support for the continuation of the FRC for 12 months and for the continuation of key programs associated with the trial. There is a commonly held view that the trial is having a positive effect on the behaviour of community members, with more children going to school and communities being quieter than before the trial commenced. This was especially the case in Mossman Gorge.

The trial has been regarded by many as a key driver for improved school attendance and school readiness in the communities. The value of those trial elements, which are aimed at schooling and education, including student education trusts and student case managers, have become widely known and generally accepted and supported by the communities.

Most stakeholders who were consulted commented that people knew how the FRC could assist in addressing their problems and some were actively seeking support outside the formal FRC process. It was perceived by stakeholders that the trial had created new avenues for people to seek assistance, including from the FRC, local program offices, wellbeing centres and village opportunity hubs.

Extensive consultations were conducted during the establishment of the trial, and also in 2011 when the trial was initially extended to December 2012. This level of comprehensive consultation is necessary in order to satisfy the special-measure provisions under the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act 1975. This special-measure status ensures the trial is able to operate without infringing the Racial Discrimination Act. A special-measure status is temporary and cannot continue once the objectives of the trial have been met.

The FRC, through the authoritative roles of the local commissioners, is assisting people to make positive changes to care for their children, families and homes using a case management approach. The outcomes of programs supported by this government must focus on developing community capacity so community members have greater control in determining their own future, thereby reducing their reliance on government. This requires that the community accept this challenge and assume responsibility for outcomes. Sometimes communities need assistance to successfully rise to this challenge.

Extending the trial for a further 12 months will provide the opportunity to consolidate the gains already made in terms of the safety, wellbeing and welfare of the people in the trial communities, particularly women and children. An important part of the extension will be an expansion of the membership of the project board to include a representative from each of the trial communities. The function of the board will also change so that it provides advice to me on how to expend \$4 million in state funding for trial specific projects.

I discussed these proposed changes with Noel Pearson and we agreed it would be the best way to take the trial forward for the additional 12 months. I asked him to provide me with the names of two members from each of the trial communities and I will choose one from each to be members of the project board. I would like to acknowledge the work done by Noel as one of the principal driving forces behind the trial. He has been a tireless community leader over the past two decades in seeking better life outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders.

Noel has already raised with me the prospect of introducing additional trial programs during 2013 focused on nutrition and family reunification. No-one understands better than he the need to identify programs and services which achieve results so that the significant financial investment from state and federal governments can be directed where it works to greatest effect. If we are serious about improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote communities, it is important that we allow time for these changes to become embedded.

The proposed release of the trial evaluation later this year will help inform future policy decisions in relation to the provision of more appropriate and effective services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Queensland. The evaluation, when we finally get it from the federal government, will hopefully provide the necessary analysis and detailed assessment of the various measures implemented as part of the trial. Only when we have that evaluation can we comprehensively assess the success of the trial and see what elements might be replicated for the benefit of all Indigenous communities.

Even without the evaluation, I feel safe in saying this trial has been important in the way it has expanded the normal range of services to see what better results can be achieved. The trial has been expensive, but I hope that significant investment can result in better targeted and more effective services for Indigenous communities. I will be looking very closely at the various evaluations and assessments of what has been achieved since 2008 to identify the benefits.

We will also need to discuss the evaluation with the federal government to agree on how we can move forward from the trial in just these four communities to develop better services which benefit all Indigenous communities. The last thing I want to see is that the trial ends in a year and we lose the legacy of what has been achieved. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.46 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. The bill was introduced into this House by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier on 12 September 2012 and was referred to the Health and Community Services Committee for scrutiny. The committee has returned its findings and has recommended that the bill be passed in this Assembly. This is a recommendation that the opposition agrees with. We will be supporting this important bill.

As many know, the Family Responsibilities Commission commenced operating on 1 July 2008 in four remote Aboriginal communities—namely, the Cape York communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. I would like at this stage to mention briefly the new centre at Mossman Gorge. If people have not had the opportunity to visit that centre I can tell them that it is one of the most amazing

pieces of local cooperation, with some government support. It shows that given the right opportunities and the funding and tools at the right time a community can do amazing things. It is certainly an amazing thing for that local area. I hope to see that continue to grow over the coming years.

The commission was born out of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which stemmed from a tripartite agreement between the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The main purpose of the trial, as I outlined in a speech to this House for a similar piece of legislation that I was responsible for when I was minister last year, is—

... to build stronger and more resilient communities, re-establish local Indigenous authority, enable children to achieve their full potential, support engagement in the real economy, and encourage individuals and families from social housing to homeownership.

I believe the commission has done just that in achieving positive results in the four remote communities. We only have to look at the independent studies which have been undertaken to see the positive trends being set. For example, the report entitled *Annual highlights report for Queensland's discrete Indigenous communities for the period July 2010—June 2011* revealed that there was a positive trend showing in the four remote communities where the commission operated within, with factors such as school attendance improving or being maintained at a higher level. But the reports cannot capture a holistic understanding of what is occurring in these areas. Data that cannot be measured—*anecdotal stuff*—is where we hear the real success stories.

As the previous minister responsible for this area, I had the privilege of travelling the state, traversing the countryside, visiting many remote communities including some where the FRC is operating. What I saw were communities that were changing and changing for the better. Sure, there was not 100 per cent conformity to the law and social norms, but show me one community anywhere in Queensland where that happens completely. These communities have been given a real chance through properly structured programs, guidance, monitoring and support, and we are seeing that real change is occurring.

The bill, as outlined by the minister, will allow for the operations of the commission to be extended by one year, changing the cessation date of the commission from 1 January 2013 to 1 January 2014. This will allow the commission to continue its strong, positive work assisting the community for at least another 12 months. The bill also makes two consequential administrative amendments which extend the tenure of the commission by one year and the ability for orders to be made for another year also, to bring it into line with the new cessation date of 1 January 2014.

The second non-administrative change is the amendments to the quorum of the board. Currently a quorum of three commissioners is required to allow a valid meeting to occur. However, as the parliamentary committee heard when undertaking hearings for this bill, it is sometimes practically impossible for a commissioner to attend a meeting and in that case a meeting will not be able to proceed. This bill seeks to amend the situation by allowing two members only to form a quorum and thus constitute a valid meeting. Whilst the opposition is agreeable to this proposal, we would ask the minister how he proposes that accountability and transparency remain at the fore when the board meets with only two members. Whilst we on this side of the chamber are not suggesting that any dishonesty would occur, it is of course, as we would all agree, important that appropriate safeguards are put in place in this regard. It is always important to ensure that a high level of transparency and open government is achieved.

Just briefly, the fact that local commissioners are playing a greater role in the FRC is so commendable because it is about the calibre of the individuals who are participating, and the more people I meet who have shown an interest in becoming local commissioners the more buoyed I am by the fact that this trial, even without the funding, has put in place structures that are really changing the communities in terms of leadership and approach. That gives me great hope for what we are going to see in the communities in the future.

I certainly welcome the minister's comments that he will be expanding the membership of the project board to include a representative from each of the four participating communities. This is a little bit of *deja vu* for me because this is something that I had talked about when I was minister, and I am very, very happy that this is the way forward. I will tell you why. There have been tensions with the board in the past in terms of the way things operated, and that is not unusual to see from the fact that you have four communities very much having their own local leadership and having their own ideas as to how they would like to see the welfare reform trial and the commission operating. But I can certainly say that the whole approach of expanding that board is commendable because it will see a greater input from each of those communities. It is going to allow not only elected persons but other people the opportunity to have a say in terms of how this goes forward. That is pleasing because sometimes, as we know, elected persons are not the font of all knowledge and are certainly not always necessarily the representatives of the community. So, in terms of the selection process of those nominees going forward, I know the minister will be very careful in that regard, but it is a great opportunity to provide some very good grassroots knowledge and input into what is a very important role.

I wanted to say just briefly that the idea of the extension of the board also came about from looking at the community consultation that was undertaken the last time there was an extension of the Cape York Welfare Reform through the FRC. That was important because, particularly in Hope Vale, there was a lot of concern about the way the FRC operated and whether there was going to be support. I was pleased to have sat down with the mayor, Greg McLean, and the council and talked to them about what was lacking and what was important going forward. Really what they said was that it was about communication. It is very important to have that communication right and to ensure that we have those things on the table.

I think if you asked individual people within a community like Hope Vale they would say that each of the outcomes happening in the community is a good outcome. If you asked them sometimes about the FRC, straightaway the barriers would go up. But the more people talked about the fact that the FRC was achieving good outcomes, the more we saw that this was actually the case. I think there has been a shift in that regard and I am very pleased to see that.

Earlier today in this House we paid tribute to the late Eric Deeral, who, as we know, was the first Aboriginal person to serve in the Queensland parliament—a strong leader and a pioneer. And I just attended an unveiling of a plaque in his honour here at Parliament House. The minister also referred to Noel Pearson as someone who has made a significant contribution and has a leadership role in this particular area of the FRC as well as the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial.

I think it is fitting that I pay tribute at this time to Neville Pootchemunka. Neville was the former mayor of Aurukun who passed away while standing for re-election earlier this year. Mr Pootchemunka was a passionate advocate for the Family Responsibilities Commission and for the broader Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, as well as for the alcohol management plans in place in Aurukun. He was very clearly of the view that things were changing in Aurukun as a result of all of these initiatives and he wanted to keep going. He wanted to press ahead, and it was a very important thing to him. I wanted to make sure that I paid my respects to Neville. I do not think I have had an opportunity to do that until now. I think it is fitting given that this is something that he was a key driver of and he played a very important leadership role in the community.

Last year the ABC *Four Corners* program ran an episode called 'Return to Aurukun' which focused on AMPs and the Family Responsibilities Commission. With regard to income management, Aurukun resident Kayleen Chevathun said—

They put me on a basic card and income management and it helped me a lot. That's why the kids they're going to school every day now.

This groundbreaking program has helped turn the community around. School attendance is up and levels of violence are down. Aurukun was held up as a beacon of hope in this program, an example of what can be achieved when people embrace reform with courage and conviction. I want to encourage the minister, as I said earlier, to appoint strong community leaders who, as we know, do not always need to be elected persons to the position. I certainly wish him very well in his deliberations.

As members would know and as the minister has stated, the commission is headed by Commissioner David Glasgow. Commissioner Glasgow was a strong advocate for social justice, with most of his years on the bench served travelling to remote and regional Queensland, on circuit court in Queensland's Indigenous communities, where he was able to better learn and understand the culture and language of traditional owners and our first Australians. One of his finest moments before becoming a commissioner was his influence in lobbying the government to create a Murri Court, a court where justice could be dispensed to individuals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent in a fair and impartial manner. It is a shame that Commissioner Glasgow's hard work and vision for justice in this state has been lost on the Attorney-General with the defunding and axing of the Murri Court services in Queensland.

Commissioner Glasgow does not undertake this work on his own. We know that in the FRC he is supported by Deputy Commissioner Rod Curtin and myriad different local community commissioners. As I said earlier, those local commissioners are the key to the success or failure of this particular program. Commissioner Glasgow plays a terrific leadership role but I think in his absence he has some great people who are very able to perform that work. The real day-to-day personal work occurs through local commissioners, and I really do want to put my thanks to those people on the record.

I acknowledge the minister's comments that additional funding has been provided through the budget process, with an extra \$5.65 million allocated and with \$1.6 million allocated towards the extension of the commission. This commitment, though, is in contrast with the comments made by the member for Moggill when he was the shadow minister during estimates last year. He said—

The commission has been a reasonably expensive trial.

...

I think that people should be aware that this program applies only in four communities. I think that people sometimes get the idea falsely that this is a more extensive program than it actually is. I think it is a very valid function of the opposition to question both value for money and the effectiveness of actually making the lives of people in the subject communities better. That is our role. I will never resile from that. I think it is right and proper for us to ask questions.

I congratulate the minister for continuing down this line and in some respects distancing himself from these comments because I know that, now he is in government, he has seen the full value of this program. Of course, you can always look at how money can be better spent. I acknowledge that. This trial is expensive, but every cent of it is worth it—every cent of it is worth it. Going forward, I commend the minister for having that new board approach to the way that money will be spent. I think that will be a terrific way forward. You have to compare the budget papers from last year to this year to note that an increase in the overall budget for the Family Responsibilities Commission, from \$4.2 million to \$4.4 million, has occurred. In this regard I think the comments of the member for Moggill have been relegated to the past.

I want to take this opportunity to put on the record the opposition's thanks to Commissioner Glasgow and all of the commissioners and staff who, day in and day out, are providing an important service to the four remote communities involved in this trial and involved with the Family Responsibilities Commission. I am also very pleased to say that I have formed a strong working relationship with Minister Elmes, and I hope that continues into the future. It is important because, as we all know, one of the keys to making a difference and moving towards that end goal that we all have of closing the gap is about consistency and continuity and not having short, sharp programs that go nowhere and continually trying to reinvent the wheel. These programs are working because we have stayed the course. The communities are embracing them. Communities are seeing the benefit and I think all Queenslanders are seeing the benefit. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Pitt, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

MINERAL RESOURCES (MARY RIVER DAM SITE) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Mineral Resources Act 1989 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Mineral Resources (Mary River Dam Site) Amendment Bill 2012 [[1495](#)].

Tabled paper: Mineral Resources (Mary River Dam Site) Amendment Bill 2012, explanatory notes [[1496](#)].

My bill will provide for the removal from the Mineral Resources Act the designation of two sites in the Mary Valley identified as potential dam sites. These sites are referred to as area 118—Mary River dam site (Traveston Crossing)—and area 119—Mary River dam site (Kenilworth). My bill will assist in reassuring current and potential Mary Valley residents that the government has no intention of allowing these two significant sites in the Mary Valley to continue to be identified as future dam sites.

Recently the state government released its economic development plan for the Mary Valley and has commenced the sale of land purchased by the previous government for the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. I believe for the state government to be able to sell this land for the best price possible it needs to remove any unnecessary impediments to the sale. The continuation of the existence of the designation of these two significant sites as restricted areas by this government will have a detrimental effect on the potential sale of the land in the Mary Valley. Only today I again checked the state government restricted area schedule, and guess what? Both sites, 118—Mary River dam site (Traveston Crossing)—and 119—Mary River dam site (Kenilworth)—are still listed as restricted areas.

First Reading

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (2.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Glass House Electorate

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.33 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to raise a number of matters that have recently occurred in the electorate of Glass House. Firstly, I want to thank all members in the chamber for participating on Tuesday in the Day for Daniel, albeit several days belatedly, by wearing red. It is a great acknowledgement by all members of this parliament of our support for Bruce and Denise Morcombe and for the work they continue to do on child safety awareness.

I also acknowledge that the Attorney-General, the Premier, the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing and the Speaker joined me last Friday in the walk for Daniel in my home town of Palmwoods. A total of 1,100 people turned up. It was great to see that sea of red again and the ongoing community support for the fantastic work the Morcombes do. I never ceased to be amazed by the resilience of that couple. As a father, I cannot begin to imagine what they have gone through. To see them turn it into such a positive for not only our community of Palmwoods—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. It is great to see this government getting on board with the message the Morcombes are trying to send.

On the weekend I participated in another great event, this time to raise money for the lung cancer foundation. We have a wonderful constituent, Dr Peter Oliver, who has probably well and truly exceeded everyone's expectations in his battle with this terminal illness. As is now an annual tradition, my Celebrity 11 get-together against the Maleny Maulers in an over-30s game of cricket. I am very glad to say that with the assistance of Daniel Merrett from the Brisbane Lions, Nugget from Zinc FM, Toddy from Hot FM, the Minister for Sport as well as the LNP candidate for the federal seat of Longman, Mal Brough, we finally managed to clench the all-important Golden Thong Trophy. We lost it the first year. We tied last year. This year we won convincingly and we now have our hands on it. More importantly, we raised several thousand dollars for the lung cancer foundation. I would like to thank Gail Denver, in particular, from the Maleny District Sport and Recreation Club Inc., for the work done in bringing together the day. It was a great day had by all.

I was able to participate in and, indeed, open the WOEIE Festival. WOEIE stands for 'Where on Earth is Eudlo?' For those of you who do not know, I strongly encourage you to come up the highway towards—

Mr Emerson: Ilkley Road.

Mr POWELL: Ilkley Road, thank you very much, Minister for Transport. It was a great day. It is a great small school and a great initiative. To Principal Ian Webb and his team, particularly the P&C: it was another fantastic day.

Finally, it was great to be a sponsor again of the Elimbah Community Fun Day. I could not win the three-legged race, which I sponsored, so I had to come second. But I thank Chappy Janet for pairing with me and putting in a sterling effort to come second. To Leanne and her team for that fantastic community day: it was a job well done.

Nutrition; Water Fluoridation

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (2.36 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise today on a favourite subject of mine, that is, health. I rise today to deliver to all MPs a message of health and to put on record my view on a particular issue which I will come to. First, my fellow government members have already received their gift of health—better information on what real nutrition is. I now want to extend this gift to the members of the opposition and the crossbenches. For all of those members I have two DVDs. The first one is from FoodMatters, the original FoodMatters DVD documentary.

A government member: For Bill?

Mr WOODFORTH: For Bill, yes. The second one is *Hungry for Change*. I thank the team from FoodMatters for these.

A government member interjected.

Mr WOODFORTH: No, I will not be tabling them. I refer to pages 6 and 7 of this Tuesday's *Courier-Mail*. It is yet another two-page spread about the chronic diseases that are hitting our state. This is one of the many reasons to push so hard the message of good nutrition from real food. Real food gives us real nutrition, and real nutrition can prevent up to 90 per cent of all chronic disease.

Mr Grimwade: Hear, hear!

Mr WOODFORTH: Indeed, thank you. When I read in the paper the increase in mental health, autism, obesity, diabetes, cancer—and the list goes on and on—I can only sit back and think, 'If only many of these people had real nutrition they could completely prevent their conditions.' I say again, 'completely prevent'. This is what these two DVDs are about. They are about real nutrition and how we have lost our way.

I want to put on the record my complete disagreement with adding fluoride to our water. This, along with climate change, is one of the biggest cons of this century. What many people do not know is where our so-called fluoride comes from and the real damage it is doing to our health. As time is short, let me point out a few facts of just a hundred that I could give. May I say, freedom of choice is not a point of debate as that misses the vital health point. Eleven countries have taken fluoride out of their water. Fluoride depletes iodine in the body, causing hyperthyroidism and immune deficiency. This is a scientific fact. It is a toxic waste—yet another fact. It is transported as a hazardous chemical. It is not natural at all. It comes from the toxic smoke stacks of industry. It is a neurotoxin—proven fact.

Hippocrates said in 400BC, 'Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.' He did not say, 'Put your head over a toxic smoke stack and suck in fluoride.' There is science and there is opinion. Science is knowledge; opinion is ignorance. The science on fluoride has been disregarded for opinion. I will not rest until this toxic chemical is taken out of our water. I stand for the health of Queenslanders. It is my background. It is what I do. It is what I love. Yes, I am passionate about it. I am passionate about delivering good health to all Queenslanders.

Canossa Palliative Care Unit

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (2.38 pm): This afternoon I wish to tell a story that a gentleman in my electorate of Mount Ommaney shared with me recently. Similar stories have been told to me in the last few months. This gentleman told me of the love that he shared with his wife of 34 years. There was anticipation as retirement grew closer that travel and just being together with his lovely wife would be enjoyed.

Then tragedy struck. His wife was diagnosed with cancer. It was a fairly aggressive cancer and the prognosis was not promising. He embarked on a mission of caring for her full time—cooking special meals for her and taking her to doctors appointments and treatments. He just wanted his wife to get better. This went on for 12 months until she became too weak and it looked like she was losing the fight. He admitted her to the Canossa palliative care unit, and the gentleman told me that for the next 10 days he sat with her, held her hand, talked to her and brushed her hair. With the fear, distress and devastation placed on this man and his family, the staff and the facilities at Canossa made the unbearable bearable. Sadly, she lost the fight.

Canossa Hospital is situated in the Mount Ommaney electorate and has provided exceptional care for a long time, especially in palliative care. The standard of care and the training program have been recognised nationally, and the service was a mixture of public and private beds. On 6 March this year the Mount Ommaney electorate, too, lost its fight to keep the palliative care public beds at the Canossa Hospital open. They were closed. The previous government made the wrong decision. I understand our current budget position, but I feel a human face needed to be put on this service and I will continue to highlight this important service. Both the public and the private beds at the Canossa Hospital palliative care unit need to be there because they are so valuable to our community.

100% Local Christmas Challenge

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (2.41 pm): Last week I had the pleasure, along with the member for Kallangur, of welcoming the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games to the Pine Rivers electorate to launch the 100% Local Christmas Challenge for 2012. The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is a shop-local campaign that challenges residents in the Pine Rivers and Kallangur electorates to buy 100 per cent of their Christmas needs from local businesses. It is a campaign that the member for Kallangur and I initiated last year and it has been overwhelmingly embraced by local businesses this year. We have already had in excess of 50 local businesses embrace some very cheap and/or free advertising opportunities to get their business brand out to our local community in the lead-up to Christmas, and more businesses have been coming on board every day since last week's launch. At the launch event last week we had dozens of local business owners, community leaders and shoppers who were excited about the opportunities that this campaign is giving local businesses and residents.

Many businesses in the Pine Rivers and Kallangur electorates have had a tougher time than most in the past two years. Whilst there has been a general downturn in retail sales across the country at various times in recent years, the destruction of the AJ Wyllie Bridge in the January 2011 floods dealt a cruel additional blow to businesses in our area. Overnight, a quarter of the traffic travelling down Gympie Road and Anzac Avenue—one of the main road corridors in our region—went elsewhere and with it went many sales. We saw businesses whose sales dropped in excess of 30 per cent almost instantly, and in some cases those businesses still have not recovered. These businesses were not

helped by the previous government's failure to fix the AJ Wyllie Bridge in a timely manner, but I am pleased to say that under this government the new AJ Wyllie Bridge remains on schedule to be open to traffic before the end of this year. The member for Kallangur and I both look forward to working with businesses once that bridge is reopened to make sure that everybody knows that businesses in Pine Rivers and Kallangur are well and truly open for business.

The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is one of the practical ways that members of this government are showing their commitment to local businesses. It is not just in Pine Rivers and Kallangur that we are supporting businesses in this way. I want to acknowledge my colleagues from the Redlands area who have taken the concept and are running a highly successful 100% Redlands Christmas Challenge.

This government understands the importance of small business. This government understands the importance of a vibrant, thriving business sector in any local community. This government understands that it is not the job of government to regulate businesses to within an inch of their lives; it is the job of government to empower and equip businesses so that they can be successful. I am committed to working closely with the Pine Rivers business community to bring more jobs into our region, to make local businesses more successful and to encourage entrepreneurs who want to commence new businesses in Pine Rivers. The 100% Local Christmas Challenge is just one of the ways I am delivering on that commitment for the businesses of Pine Rivers.

Newman Government, Performance

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.44 pm): I am sure that all members will be aware that during this week's sitting of parliament there has been a noticeable absence. I am referring to the television cameras that focus on whichever member or minister may be speaking at any given time. While this side of the House will always support the democratic right of the television networks to have a presence in this chamber, we also absolutely respect the decision of the Speaker to remove the cameras for a period of time this week.

At the same time, you can bet your bottom dollar that those opposite could not be more delighted by the entirely coincidental absence of cameras from proceedings this week. That way, they have not had to suffer the indignity of seeing their crumbling, embarrassed, mortified and shocked facades broadcast on our television screens from Coolangatta to Cairns. I am willing to gamble that there has been one big sigh of relief from the government and its ministers, who have had to cope with disaster upon disaster this week as their cruel, secretive and sneaky government has been exposed for what it is. I bet they were thinking, 'At least the people of Queensland won't be watching us squirm on the six o'clock news.'

Let us review the week and we will get the gist of what I am talking about. First, we have the spectacle of a Premier who behaves as if every comment he makes is designed to win a Logie nomination. The theatrics of his melodramatic response to each and every question and the wild gesticulations are probably best spared from Queensland lounge rooms while normal Queenslanders are trying to eat dinner.

You can also bet that the Deputy Premier was ecstatic that the cameras were not here today so that the people of Central Queensland and Rockhampton did not have a televised record of the Deputy Premier's assault on the environment and their health. The Deputy Premier this morning—despite just minutes earlier denying it in question time—introduced new legislation that appears to give the government the right to release untested water from mines with the flick of a pen or a phone call.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is clearly anticipating debate with his comments in relation to that bill that has been introduced.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): I am advised that reference to a matter in a bill can be made but the bill cannot be discussed. Please be careful in your comments.

Mr BYRNE: The people of Rockhampton will be hearing about it, though they were not able to see the Deputy Premier's face as he unleashed this disastrous plan to degrade the Fitzroy Basin and further contaminate the area's water supply.

Then we had the transport minister who, coming into this place, was rightfully frightened of the questions he was bound to face over the debacle he has made of his department in just seven months. That discussion is for another time, but I am sure the transport minister was thrilled and overjoyed when there were no cameras around to record his uncomfortable approach to the questions about his department, his behaviour and his office's refusal to stick to this government's woefully dishonest pledge to be open and accountable. While many of his ministerial colleagues have done the right thing and handed over copies of their diaries, the transport minister's office has closed inquiries down.

National Disability Insurance Scheme

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (2.48 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the findings of the Productivity Commission. The Newman government supports the NDIS as it represents lasting reform in the disability sector, but the Newman government also acknowledges and recommends the findings of the Productivity Commission. The Productivity Commission in its report on disability support states—

Current disability support arrangements are inequitable, underfunded, fragmented, and inefficient and give people with a disability little choice.

It is a reflection on an outdated but enduring centuries-old alms for the deserving poor charity system. 'Charity maintains poverty,' said Muhammad Yunis. The poverty lies in the inequality that charity creates: we are all equal but some are more equal than others. This inequality frequently leads to discrimination, social stigma, intimidation, bullying, neglect and abuse—the misuse of power.

Getting support is a competitive process due to scarcity of resources. The person with a disability needs to demonstrate that he is a more deserving poor than others. When we love a person, disabled or not, we naturally want to show him in the best possible light. When applying for support, however, we are forced to show as desperate a case as we are capable of creating. It is abhorrent, humiliating and demeaning—a judas act of betrayal of a person we love and support with loyalty, respect and commitment. It is not surprising that, against this background, people with disabilities and their supporting families dread the process of having their support needs assessed. Even when successful, success is only relative as choices are limited and the gatekeepers are firmly in charge. Worse still, many services offered are of a maintenance—'filling in between meals'—nature.

There has been a growing awareness that care and support of people with disabilities is way out of step with community expectations. Government listened and appointed the Productivity Commission to conduct an investigation and make recommendations. The Productivity Commission report recommends a system that is radically different from the current one because its focus is where it should be: people with disabilities and their families and carers. Three critical elements define and drive the changes. The scheme will be a universal and national one using a single agency, the National Disability Insurance Agency, that would oversee a coherent system for all Australians regardless of their jurisdictions. Assessing resources will no longer be a competitive process. Funding will come from an entitlement like Medicare, education and unemployment benefits. It will remove the role of the gatekeepers. The NDIS—the funder—will delegate power to people with disabilities, giving them control over funding.

Gold Coast, Health and Wellbeing

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—LNP) (2.51 pm): Recently I attended the launch of the Gold Coast Health and Wellbeing Plan in the form of a breakfast at Burleigh Heads, organised by the Gold Coast Medicare Local region. As a result, today I reflect on the health status of those people who call the Gold Coast home, and I thank the organisers for providing this interesting insight into the health of Gold Coasters. I will give honourable members a snapshot of our area but they can apply it to their own area, and I think it does apply throughout the state.

The demographic profile of the region is one of high population growth, high tourist numbers, an ageing population, lower incomes, high housing prices and higher unemployment compared to Australia and possibly Queensland as a whole. In 2009, 67.4 per cent of the region reported to be in excellent to very good health, a slightly higher rate than the rest of Queensland at 66.7 per cent. The region has lower rates of immunisation, at 88.8 per cent, than Australia as a whole, 91.3 per cent, and that is concerning as vaccine preventable illnesses such as whooping cough, chicken pox and measles are on the increase. Other notable issues are the higher rates of smoking and exposure to sunburn in the area.

On the plus side, residents report higher rates of physical activity and lower rates of obesity, which are good points for the future. Fewer residents participate in screening for breast, colorectal and cervical cancer. This is a significant issue as breast and bowel cancer are amongst the top six causes of death in the region. The main causes of death in 2007 were coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, chronic obstructive airways disease, breast cancer and prostate cancer. Many of these causes of death are avoidable through early intervention, detection or prevention through behaviour modification. Of those born overseas, death rates from lung cancer were higher among those from the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland; diabetes was more prevalent for those born in Greece, Germany, India, Italy, Lebanon and Poland; and coronary heart disease among those born in Poland was exceptionally high. Dementia is rising exponentially, particularly in the Moncrieff federal electorate. The Gold Coast has the sixth largest number of dementia sufferers in Australia. By 2050 this will have increased to fourth and Queensland will have the highest prevalence through Australia.

I want to concentrate today on the importance of social connection as a key contributing factor to health and wellbeing. There is no doubt it is an added challenge in communities like ours, which are developing at a fast pace. By 2031 the population of the Gold Coast is projected to increase by 48 per cent to a total of 814,000 people. Most people moving into the city are under 55 and the peak of immigration is between the ages of 20 and 40. The highest numbers are coming from New Zealand but people also come from the UK, South Africa, Japan, Germany, Philippines, Netherlands, China, South Korea and Italy, in that order. Living alone is becoming increasingly common. More than 21 per cent of residents live alone. In 2010, 20 per cent of people aged 18 years and over lived alone. I strongly recommend this is where we need to look for the future.

LNP Government, Achievements

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (2.54 pm): I rise today to talk about starting and finishing things. We are a government that will finish what we start efficiently and with responsible economic management based on our promise of a four-pillar economy. Time and time again in this House, when our ministers speak about what this government has already achieved for Queensland, the small group in the opposition starts cackling, 'We started it.' That is great; they started a lot over their 20 years of poor economic management of our wonderful state! What did they start? What did they do efficiently and effectively? Let us look at what the inept former Labor government of the bad old days started over the last 20 years.

With a lack of fiscal discipline, they started a debt crisis which will cost Queensland taxpayers. If our debt were to reach \$100 billion it would mean an interest repayment of approximately \$685,000 an hour. \$100 billion is enough to build 56 hospitals with 750 beds, or 636 schools. This is why the Newman government is acting now to restore Queensland's finances. We will not allow the state's financial position to deteriorate further, and we are taking action to regain the AAA credit rating.

The former Labor government started many issues in health, with waiting lists for waiting lists, the abysmal management of the Health payroll system and a lack of due diligence in checking overseas health workers' references, such as for our fake Tahitian prince and, of course, 'Dr Death'. The LNP government will invest \$816 million in Health this year, with the vast majority of extra funding going straight to the newly created hospital and health boards, which have been established to give greater local control and input into health services. We are committed to reducing the former bad, old Labor government's notorious 'waiting list for a waiting list'.

The former government prompted the increased concern of the community about crime by failing to recognise the need to provide proper funding and resources for police. This government is adding 1,100 new police to the ranks on top of moving 200 police officers out from behind desks and putting them on the beat. We have also added an additional 15 school based police officers, including one to a school in my electorate of Logan—Flagstone State Community College.

The former government also started the desperate need for better roads, infrastructure and public transport, with cost overruns and a black hole into which money is poured but has nothing to show for it. They started a dictator style of government with less and less consultation, including forced amalgamations of councils and fluoridation of water. This Newman led government with the honourable Minister for Local Government is forging long-lasting service partnerships with local councils. We are working with councils and giving them the authority they deserve to help their local communities.

So, yes, congratulations; they started a lot! I am so thankful the bad, old Labor government was incapable of finishing these things. I am pleased to be a part of the LNP can-do team of responsible economic managers to get Queensland back on track and to finish what we have promised. We are finishers.

Community Shadow Cabinet

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (2.57 pm): Our Labor opposition is dedicated to reconnecting with communities right across Queensland and we have maintained our commitment to having shadow cabinet meetings out in the community on a regular basis. Last week I was pleased to host my colleagues at Logan for a community shadow cabinet. I was delighted to welcome them to my electorate and the surrounding areas which make up the greater Logan region. We are a proud city with a strong, vibrant and diverse community with myriad hardworking and caring local organisations that strive to make our community even better.

We held our meeting at the Logan campus of Griffith University, and I thank Professor Lesley Chenoweth for welcoming us to the campus. As members may be aware, I have been privileged to chair the Griffith University Logan Campus Development Advisory Group since its inception, and I continue to take a keen interest in all levels of education and training in my community to give the next generation the best possible start in life.

I was also pleased to host a gathering at the Logan Metro Indoor Sports Centre at Crestmead. It is a fantastic facility for the region. We hosted representatives from a wide range of local community and service organisations. I say thank you to those who attended and contributed to the discussion. I would like to mention the elders of the Indigenous community who attended, building on our long cooperation and shared commitment in Logan. I also thank representatives of the local Logan police, leaders of multicultural organisations and educational leaders in the region.

In particular, it was important to talk to the workers and volunteers from our training and service organisations who do so much for our community but who have been cruelly hurt by the cuts of the Newman government. These are people who dedicate their lives to supporting the most vulnerable in our society—supporting them during the toughest times, helping them get ahead in life and giving them the chance to build their careers, care for their families and strengthen our community. Many of these groups are still in shock at the callous cuts that the LNP government has made to decent, compassionate community organisations.

The LNP government simply does not care about the jobs that are being lost in these organisations, the services that are having to be cut and the impact this will have on the people who will pay the ultimate price—those who need help but simply will not get it. The LNP government is trying to silence their voice but, as we made it clear to them at our shadow cabinet function, the voices of those community organisations and the vulnerable people they serve will always be heard while I and my colleagues stand in this place.

World Teachers Day

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (3.00 pm): Today I rise in the House to pay tribute to our schoolteachers, particularly the schoolteachers in my electorate of Everton. Last Friday, 26 October, was World Teachers Day and a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the hardworking teachers in this great state of Queensland and in particular, as I said, my electorate of Everton.

Our teachers do a wonderful job. It is a profession that has an incredible opportunity to have an impact on young people. They help influence them, shape them and of course educate them. Our teachers are incredibly hardworking, with many of them—in fact, most of them—working long hours outside of the classroom to make sure that they are providing a quality education for our children and providing those extracurricular activities which are so important. Teachers act as sports coaches, teachers are involved with music programs and drama programs, teachers attend P&C meetings and teachers organise fetes. Last night I attended an awards night at one of the schools in my electorate. Again, teachers are at the forefront of organising those evenings as well. The other week in my electorate I attended a trivia night with over 400 people from the community to raise money for local school chaplains.

Mr Dowling: Did you win?

Mr MANDER: I came fifth; we were very unlucky. What a great night that was organised by teachers, again going beyond what would normally be expected of these hardworking people.

Our teachers are more than educators: they act as mentors, they act as coaches, they act as friends and of course they are significant adults in the lives of our young people, many of whom do not get that at home. My appreciation and respect for teachers increased markedly this year due to the fact that one of my daughters has become a state school teacher. She works incredibly long hours in that she leaves early in the morning and comes home late at night. As I said, I have a heightened respect for teachers after witnessing the hard work that my daughter has put in.

The year is coming to an end and I am sure teachers are looking forward to a well-deserved break. I wish them all of the best for that and hope that the end of the year is a good time for them. At the same time, it is appropriate to wish our year 12 students, who are leaving school in two weeks time, all of the best in their final exams and tell them to stay safe during schoolies week. We want them to not only have a good time but also return to us safely.

World Teachers Day

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (3.03 pm): Last week I participated in World Teachers Day. It was a great honour to have the opportunity to take on the role of a grade 3 teacher at Morayfield State School. I thank Mr Eadie, who is a grade 3 teacher at the school, for allowing me into the class and to work alongside him throughout the day and I thank Principal Mrs Vicky Gahan for welcoming me to that school. This was an extremely valuable opportunity to experience firsthand the role of our hardworking teachers, review the teaching resources available to our teachers and work with our most precious state resource—our children.

My day began the night before as I reviewed C2C lesson plans and began to think about how I would deliver my teaching methods for poetry and multiplication by five. In the morning I was able to welcome the kids into the classroom. I was very impressed as I witnessed the kids lining up in two lines with their pencil and rubber ready for the day's lessons ahead. One of the important tasks I had to undertake was to introduce a new piece of assessment to the class. The assessment piece was writing a poem about the beach. We had fun examining the words that would best describe a beach setting and brainstorming ideas within groups. I gave the students a commitment that I will be returning to the school to listen to the final versions of these poems, and I look forward to that.

As part of my role, I also undertook the responsibility of conducting playground duty. It was great to see all of the students out playing and wearing hats as part of the SunSmart policy. I took the opportunity with Mr Eadie to chat with students, who took a very keen interest in the role of a parliamentarian. After returning from the lunch break, we began our lesson to learn about multiplication by five. We were able to use the programs on the smart board that included a very catchy tune that the kids enjoyed as I danced along to the song. I was truly amazed at just how advanced the students were in multiplication and division as they completed work sheets, with most students attaining 100 per cent. I was able to reward students with stickers that they applied to their reward charts. Students can redeem rewards once a certain number of stickers are obtained, with a very popular prize being the ability for the student to take Mr Eadie's teacher's seat for a day.

At the end of the day the students provided me with a card with personal messages and thanks for my visit. I want to take this opportunity to personally thank the kids who took the time to write messages in this card. It is something that will take pride of place in my office. This opportunity to be teacher for a day provided a significant positive impact on my life. What I was able to take out of this experience will stay with me forever.

I want to sum up today by again thanking Mr Eadie for allowing me into the classroom. The students in that class are very lucky to have such a dedicated, hardworking teacher as him. I value the contribution our hardworking teachers make in educating our children and up-and-coming world leaders. I want to place on the record my sincere thanks for all of the teachers in my electorate. I say to them: happy World Teachers Day!

Pimlico State High School Symphony Orchestra; Headspace



Mr HATHAWAY (Townsville—LNP) (3.06 pm): I take this opportunity to highlight the tremendous and ongoing community efforts of the Pimlico State High School Symphony Orchestra with its recent benefit concert. The concert was held recently at James Cook University showcasing undoubtedly North Queensland's finest musical talents. Music included works by Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saens, Mozart, Mancini and The Beatles featuring pop classics like *Yesterday*, *When I'm 64*, film soundtracks like the *Peter Gunn Theme* and *The Mission* and classics obviously like the *Nutcracker Suite*. Townsville was also treated to a special appearance of the Australian Youth Orchestra String Quartet, which had spent the last few days working with our Pimlico musicians.

Pimlico State High School Symphony was one of 2012 Fanfare's finalists that performed recently at QPAC. I attended the Fanfare finale and witnessed just how amazing and talented the students in the Pimlico symphony orchestra really are. While the student musicians themselves are the stars, the efforts of their musical director, Mr Richard Newell, should likewise be acknowledged.

All of the musicians maintain a strong community focus and actively support a number of charities, with the highlight of the orchestra's musical year program being the benefit concert. Each year the students prepare for the concert program, promote the concert and sell the tickets. All of the proceeds from these concerts are given to specific local charities, and this year the supported charity was Townsville Headspace. I can report to the House that this year they raised \$7,000 for Headspace.

Honourable members will recall how passionately my colleague from Thuringowa has spoken on Townsville Headspace. Headspace was established in 2006 and provides much needed support to young people aged between 12 and 25, in particular those children who suffer from a mental health illness. One in four people endures a mental health issue at least once in their life, and for many of them their first mental health issue will occur between the ages of 12 and 25. There is also a known cumulative effect of subsequent mental health issues that are best dealt with through early intervention. Of mental health issues for youth and children, anxiety is the most common, and Headspace provides a much needed intervention to assist young people with their illnesses.

Since 2008 Townsville Headspace has delivered over 16,000 occasions of service, with 5,000 of those services being delivered last year. Headspace relies on volunteers who coordinate and run events to help raise much needed funds to support these programs. The Pimlico State High School benefit concert not only supports these programs but proceeds also go to buying necessary equipment like

fridges and water stations et cetera. I commend to the House the community engagement activities of the Pimlico State High School Symphony Orchestra and wish its members all of the best for their continued musical success.

South Sea Islanders, Sesquicentenary

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.09 pm): As many members would no doubt be aware, 2013 is a significant year for the South Sea Islander population of Queensland, being the sesquicentenary of the arrival in Queensland of the first South Sea Islanders who had been recruited against their will to work in Queensland, originally in the cotton industry but principally in the sugar industry. The first South Sea Islanders arrived in Queensland aboard the *Don Juan* to work on the cotton plantation that was owned by Captain Towns, which was located on the banks of the Logan River. There were 67 Islanders on board the *Don Juan*, one having died on the journey. This was reported in the *Courier* of 17 August 1863. However, as cotton proved to be not viable, around this time the sugar industry began to develop and most South Sea Islanders who were brought to Australia worked as manual labourers in the sugarcane fields. This forced migration continued until 1904. A 1992 census of South Sea Islanders found that there are around 10,000 descendants of these labourers living in Queensland. It is believed that this figure is an understatement and that the number of descendants is much higher.

I believe that it would be appropriate for the minister to appoint a state-wide coordinator to help organise the commemoration of the sesquicentenary of Australian South Sea Islanders. The minister has provided funding to local government and community groups in the south-east corner to coordinate this event. Because of the large number of Australian South Sea Islanders who live outside the south-east corner, I think it would be worthwhile for the minister to provide funding for areas such as Bundaberg and Rockhampton and also Mackay, which has the largest population of Australian South Sea Islanders in Queensland.

As I said, 2013 marks the 150th year of the arrival of Australian South Sea Islanders to Queensland. Many events will be held right across the regions to commemorate the importance of their struggle. Mayor of Mackay, Councillor Deirdre Comerford, Councillor Chris Bonanno, members of the Australian South Sea Islander community and I have met and mapped out a plan for the next 12 months. I believe that the government should set aside funds for this event. I know that some funds have been set aside for the commemoration, but we need to work with local government to leverage the best opportunities.

The sesquicentenary is also an opportunity to review the South Sea Islanders action plan, especially considering the number of employment programs that have been axed by this government. Last Sunday in Mackay I met with the minister at the multicultural festival where we discussed these issues. I urge the minister to consider appointing a state-wide coordinator, to set aside specific funds and to work with local government to commemorate this important event.

(Time expired)

Brighton Health Campus

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (3.12 pm): Brighton Health Campus—previously known as Eventide—is not closing its doors and it is not closing down, but it will be reborn as a hospital and transitional rehabilitation facility that will drive hospital care for all people of all ages, but still have a focus on the aged right across the Brisbane metropolitan area. Back in September 2011, the previous state Labor government had already signed off on the master plan for the Brighton Health Campus, which included shutting down the aged-care component of the facility. The LNP government has no intention of shutting down the facility or redeveloping the site. We want to optimise the use of the site for health care so that everyone benefits—both in the Sandgate electorate and right across the metropolitan region.

The reason some residents are being transferred is simply that the buildings in question, of which there are two, will no longer meet federal safety requirements after the middle of next year—2013—and it would be illegal for us to house aged-care residents in those buildings. May I state for the record that there is still one building on-site that is housing our elderly residents and they will not be moved, as this building meets the building regulations.

I say to critics of the changes, including federal Treasurer Wayne Swan, that Labor is responsible for the facilities sliding into disrepair. Labor has not really invested any substantial funding into this site. It is now littered with old, unusable buildings—and two more will be added to that list from mid next year. If anybody does not believe me, all they have to do is go for a walk around the perimeter of the whole facility to see the buildings—those that have fallen into disrepair.

To manage the transition, my top priority is to provide compassion and support and to make sure that the sensitive transition to the nearby facilities is as smooth as possible. There are many centres around Brisbane north and beyond that are ready to welcome residents from Brighton, and they are facilities that are of extremely good quality. So I call on the federal Treasurer, who has known about the master plan for quite some time, to not stand in the way of changes that would improve care not only for the elderly local residents but also for people of all ages and transform access to health care and therapies. This decision was made long before the state election, and I will be working very hard to make the best of these new opportunities—and so should Labor.

National Week of Deaf People

 **Mrs RICE** (Mount Coot-tha—LNP) (3.15 pm): As was noted by the Speaker earlier this week, last week was National Week of Deaf People. The purpose of the week was to provide an opportunity for national celebration of deafness and the Australian deaf community. Last week, many organisations hosted events and highlighted the theme 'Sign bilingualism is a human right'. It was great to attend the morning tea that the Speaker hosted on Tuesday of this week with members of the deaf community.

As the member for Mount Coot-tha I am fortunate to represent a diverse and active community. With the National Week of Deaf People in mind, I would like to highlight two communities that are dedicated to providing opportunity for and assistance to members of the deaf community and their families. Firstly, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to Toowong State School. Toowong State School is the only primary school in Queensland with a bilingual/bicultural co-enrolment program, incorporating Auslan and English. Bilingual education is about learning in two languages and cultures, with the two languages being English and Auslan.

At Toowong State School, the cultures of both the deaf and hearing communities are valued and form an important part of the school program. Deaf and hearing children receive the same educational experience together. This is important, because it means that deaf children are able to access a quality, mainstream education. Importantly, all students have the opportunity to participate in many school activities, immersing themselves in Auslan and deaf culture. For example, signing classes are taught by a deaf person for every class in the school, full school assemblies are interpreted and all children sign the national anthem. I have observed firsthand just how much all of the children and parents value this leading international educational experience. Together with the Minister for Education we are looking at options for the extension of this bilingual program in high school.

The second organisation in my electorate that I would like to highlight is the Hear and Say Centre. Hear and Say is a leading paediatric auditory-verbal and cochlear implant centre. The managing director and founder of Hear and Say, Dr Dimity Dornan AM, started an auditory-verbal therapy program in 1992 with just six children in a small office in Brisbane. Today, there are more than 500 children and families in the program across five centres in Queensland and an outreach program to support regional and remote families. Hear and Say aims to assist all children to achieve age-appropriate speech and language like their hearing peers by six years of age, giving them the opportunity to attend local schools, have wider employment choices and better social integration with the hearing world. In an exciting new opportunity for the team, on Saturday, 17 November Hear and Say will open the doors of its new Brisbane centre and head office at Nathan Road, Ashgrove.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the staff, members and students of Toowong State School and all of those involved with Hear and Say for the tremendous work they do with deaf children and their families. I encourage all my colleagues to support this outstanding not-for-profit organisation.

(Time expired)

Read2Remember

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.18 pm): Last year 68,000 schoolchildren across Queensland participated in Read2Remember on Remembrance Day. This was so successful that Read2Remember has now grown into a national event. This year it is hoped to reach half a million students. It is a free initiative designed to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in schools on the importance of Remembrance Day through meaningful literature. SunnyKids and the Encouragement Foundation are delivering Read2Remember programs to schools across Australia. Since 1999, SunnyKids has been at the forefront of supplying integrated community services in response to key issues facing at-risk children and families. The Encouragement Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that relies on corporate and philanthropic sponsorships to promote and raise awareness of the value of encouragement in our society.

The chosen literature for this year's Read2Remember is *The Quest for Courage* written by Angela Bueti and illustrated by Robert Crane. Solo world sailor Jessica Watson OAM is an ambassador for Read2Remember and is patron of SunnyKids. She believes that this book will impact on children's lives—this coming from someone who conquered her very own quest for courage. Through this book it is hoped that all children come to understand that the characteristics of courage and resilience in our brave service men and women are the same characteristics that they can also call upon to be the best they can be.

This is a wonderful book. I have read it and I really recommend it. Basically, the book tells the story of Sam. He is a terribly shy and extremely clumsy boy who desperately struggles to fit in at school. Through the wisdom of a new girl to school, Jess, Sam is able to discover just what courage looks like and how it can be found in the most unlikely place. While their school stops at 11 am for a minute's silence to remember the courageous service men and women, Sam realises that the courage we all have inside of us is there: courage to speak up, courage to be ourselves, courage to be a good friend, courage to lend a hand, courage to be kind, courage to never give up—courage to be the best that we can be.

This year Read2Remember is hoping for a world-record for the most schoolchildren participating in a reading event. Schools can register online to help to achieve this goal and will receive a special commemorative certificate. Not only that, they will most importantly receive a message to remember on Remembrance Day. I would encourage members to talk to their schools about this wonderful initiative and to go online for Read2Remember.

Tuberculosis

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.21 pm): When the Leader of the Opposition asked the Minister for Health in estimates, 'What is tuberculosis?', the question was a serious attempt to get the minister to explain the real thinking behind his decision on 1 August this year to close the TB centre at the PA hospital. TB is a very, very serious disease. It is not a disease of the past, as the less well informed may think. It is a highly infectious disease today, killing many thousands of people around the world including some in Queensland, as was reported on *Four Corners* on Monday night. The program reported on the many thousands of people around the world who have died from this disease. It also talked about Papua New Guinea and the many people in the population there who have TB.

Either the minister is not well informed or he is very badly advised. Cutting front-line state-wide services that are essential to protect Queenslanders from this deadly disease was a decision that rang alarm bells. It rang alarm bells not only here in Queensland but also around Australia and the world. The director of medicine at the Mater Hospital, Dr Simon Bowler, and the AMA president here in Queensland, Dr Alex Markwell, said that the proposed closure would backfire badly. Dr Maurice Heiner and his colleagues around Brisbane and throughout Australia were also very concerned. Dr Bowler described it as being an absolute disaster. Dr Markwell said publicly—in fact, I think I recall it being on radio and TV—that the TB clinic was an example of a health service that she believed should be centralised rather than shifted to the regions. Dr Alex Markwell is highly successful.

The Queensland Nurses Union held a rally at the PA where I joined in the chant 'Campbell Newman hear our cry. Without TB clinics Queenslanders will die.' Beth Mohle said that it is just not safe, appropriate or cost effective to devolve some services. I was very disappointed in relation to the minister's reply to my question on notice, but I am glad that he admitted he has made a mistake and that the TB clinic will remain open. We need Dr Tom Konstantinos back at the TB clinic. I can only hope that Dr Tom, who is a TB saint to many patients, will stay on at the TB clinic.

(Time expired)

Lytton Electorate, Memorial Service

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (3.24 pm): On 12 October, with hundreds of others, I attended the memorial service to remember the six lives tragically lost when *Dragon VHUXG* crashed in the Sunshine Coast hinterland. Des and Kate Porter and Les and Janice D'Evlin, from my electorate of Lytton, and their friends John and Carol Dawson, from my colleague Steve Minnikin's electorate of Chatsworth, were returning home from a great time they had enjoyed over a weekend.

Like so many present on that day, and I am sure many in the House today, I hoped for the best when the news first broke that the plane was missing. And like so many on that day I was truly sad to learn what had happened. It was reported that pilot Des Porter became blinded by conditions. He had three minutes to try to save his friends. We often hear the phrase that the person died doing what they loved—and that may have been the case for Mr Porter, but I do not believe for one second he did not do all he could to save the lives of his friends.

All six of these people will be sadly missed by family, friends and their community. The six friends, joined by school, work and marriage, will be missed. While their families grieve, the one consolation is that they will not mourn their close friends, as while they faced and enjoyed their life together, on this sad day they also faced death together.

To the families I offer my sincere condolences and hope for them that the thoughts and words uttered by many Queenslanders during this time help them through their hard times. I wish to recite a prayer that was said at the memorial service. It is called *A Flyer's Prayer*—

When this life I'm in is done,
and at the gates I stand,
my hope is that I answer all the questions on command.
I doubt I'll be asked of my fame,
or all the things I knew.
Instead, did I witness the rainbows
on rainy days I flew.
The hours logged, the status reached
the ratings will not matter.
Did I notice the sun's rays
on the lakes that scattered?
Or what about the droplets clear,
that spread across my screen?
And the twinkling eyes of student pilots keen?
How fast, how far, how much, how high?
I won't be asked these things.
But did I take the time to watch
the moonbeams wash my wings?
And did I see the patchwork fields,
the mirrored lakes below?
Or the mountains high and velvet hills?
Of these did I behold?
And when the goals are reached at last,
when all the flying's done,
I'll answer with no regret—indeed! I had some fun.

Broadwater Electorate, Transit Lanes

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.27 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to update my colleagues about the T2 transit lanes that run along the Gold Coast Highway through Labrador in my electorate of Broadwater. It gives me even greater pleasure to advise the House that about a fortnight ago the transport and main roads minister, the Hon. Scott Emerson, announced that those T2 lanes will be scrapped and removed by mid-2013.

I am pleased to be the member for Broadwater at a time when this government is responding to community concerns and is offering common-sense solutions. The former failed Labor government installed a four-kilometre stretch of T2 lanes on a major two-lane road through the heart of my electorate. It was potentially one of the most nonsensical decisions that had been made by that former government. I am pleased that I have been able to work with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and I have been able to offer a real solution to my community.

This is something that I campaigned on during the election campaign. I told my community that I would fight to have these transit lanes removed. I am pleased I have been able to honour that commitment. Statistics show that only about 30 per cent of road users are eligible to use those T2 lanes during peak-hour morning and afternoon times. As I am sure most of my colleagues can appreciate, it would make much more sense to return that four-kilometre stretch of road to general road use so that all road users are able to have the full benefit of that particular stretch of Frank Street.

I am so pleased that I was able to make this commitment, follow through and honour my pledge to my community. As I have said, it gives me great pleasure to be part of a government that is listening to the community's concerns. That is critical and it is a key element of the Newman government. We are listening to what the community wants and we are offering common-sense solutions.

I commend the transport minister. He had to deal with a fair bit of lobbying from me. Perhaps the constant taps on the shoulder and the requests were becoming a little frustrating, but I am glad to see that my lobbying was successful. It gives me great hope that any lobbying I might engage in in the future with the minister and his ministerial colleagues will be successful, because the Newman government is committed to not only offering real solutions but also listening to the community and giving them what they want.

Returned and Services League; Veterans

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (3.30 pm): I rise to speak on a matter raised with me by members of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch within the electorate of Yeerongpilly. I point out that the RSL is an apolitical organisation that provides vital services not only to veterans and their families but also to the increasing number of currently serving ADF personnel, both male and female. I praise the dedication of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch, including for the work it does to promote the interests and welfare of ADF members, former and serving. Its efforts extend to supporting ADF members' dependants living in the district. Very importantly, the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch does a great job in providing trained officers in advocacy and welfare to assist ADF members, past and present, including their relatives.

As this is the last sitting day before Remembrance Day, it is an appropriate time to reinforce the importance of politicians respecting the work of the RSL and supporting the interests and welfare of our ADF members, past and present. Relevant to Remembrance Day, I wish to express my respect for the work of the RSL's Queensland branch and particularly praise the Yeronga Dutton Park sub-branch members for their untiring efforts in my electorate. I genuinely respect their commitment to preserving the memory and the records of those who have suffered and died in the service of the Commonwealth of Australia. It is only right that, as politicians, we recognise and truly comprehend the sacrifices that all our troops and their families have made throughout the decades to protect and maintain the lifestyle that we enjoy in Australia.

It is equally important that, as elected representatives, we always work to ensure that governments accept and fulfil their responsibilities to our veterans and serving ADF members and their families, especially at a federal level. On this point, I highlight that the fundamental mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to support those who serve or have served in defence of our nation and commemorate their service and sacrifice. I also point out that it is not sufficient for politicians to take every opportunity to be photographed, for example on Remembrance Day, with our troops and not diligently offer them every financial and human services support as required. As politicians, we have an ongoing obligation to our ADF members and their families, especially in terms of providing them with much needed support. This applies, in particular, to federal politicians who are responsible for administering and funding the Department of Veterans Affairs.

During a recent event in my local area, a loyal member of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch informed me that it has been estimated that for every death up to four service personnel have been wounded. I comprehend the loss suffered by families and the mental and physical scars the wounded will carry for the rest of their lives. I will always support the local RSL.

Tourism Industry

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (3.33 pm): Yesterday, I joined Cairns dignitaries in welcoming the first China Eastern flight arriving in Cairns from Shanghai. The Newman government's Attracting Aviation policy has seen a perfect landing on the hot tarmac of a perfect morning in the Tropics. China Eastern's Airbus A330-200 emptied 259 eager tourists into the welcoming embrace of the Cairns tourism industry. Tourist bodies and retailers have been urged to learn basic Mandarin phrases, and the message in town this morning is 'smile'. We have a lot to smile about.

The initial trial of two to three flights a week has now been extended until September next year. By that time we will have perfected our Mandarin and, hopefully, will have utilised feedback constructively to enhance our Chinese visitors' experience of Cairns and the Far North. This inaugural flight is a major coup for the Newman government, bringing not only Chinese tourists but also a bucketful of confidence to the Far North tourism industry, which, as a result of poor industry management by the previous Labor government, exacerbated by the global financial crisis, had suffered a substantial deflation.

China Eastern Airlines Vice Chairman and Chief Executive, Mr Ma, enthused about the Far North's attraction to Chinese tourists, who in most cases were experiencing the reef and rainforest for the first time, saying that those two attractions themselves were the reason the airline was offering a direct service. A well-planned and diverse, though whirlwind, tour of the Far North's attractions, including the Great Barrier Reef, the rainforest and the award-winning Skyrail, left him in no doubt as to the wisdom of the airline's choice for route trials. I commend Kevin Brown, the chief executive of our airport, for his business expertise and public relations ability. He has played a major role in facilitating these flights and our communications with international airlines.

DestinationQ was the springboard for the revitalisation of the tourism industry in the Far North. The enthusiasm and support of the LNP government in achieving this major milestone in our first 100 days created the spark that has brought Far North tourism back to life. I sincerely thank our Minister for Tourism, Jann Stuckey, for her unswaying commitment and initiative in helping us get Far North Queensland back on track.

Council Deamalgamation

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (3.35 pm): Today, I rise to talk about the recent decision by the local government minister not to refer a submission to deamalgamate the former Cardwell shire to the local government boundaries commissioner. I have spoken to the local government minister and advised him that I am very disappointed with his decision. I strongly opposed the forced amalgamation of the Johnstone shire and the Cardwell shire which was imposed on our local community by the former Labor government. Being born and raised in Tully and the former Cardwell shire, I was appalled by Labor's treatment of our local community. This is why I am disappointed that the former Cardwell shire residents have not been given an opportunity to have their say.

The local government minister has explained to me that, while the submission put forward in support of the proposed deamalgamation of the former Cardwell shire was a quality document, it did not convince him that the proposed deamalgamation was viable in the long term. This was always going to be a difficult process more than four years after Labor's forced amalgamations. I recognise that there was strong community support for the deamalgamation of the former Cardwell shire. A large number of people supported the petition, and I want to ensure the local community's voice and concerns are heard. That is why today I am tabling the petition in the Queensland parliament and speaking on behalf of those who signed it.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition concerning the deamalgamation of the Cardwell Shire Council [[1497](#)].

Having said that, the minister has also made it clear that, in his opinion, the strong community interest in deamalgamation means the Cassowary Coast Regional Council needs to better support communities in the former Cardwell shire area. The minister and I will work with the council and the local community to do this. I have begun working towards identifying alternative solutions to address the principal concerns expressed in the Cardwell shire deamalgamation submission relating to the distribution of rates revenue, the provision of services and the need for new growth opportunities and infrastructure, both economic and social.

The decision not to refer the submission to the local government boundaries commissioner does not mean that those concerns cannot be addressed in other practical ways. I have developed a proposal to bring together a broad based committee that is developing a plan to address those concerns. No doubt there will continue to be strong views held amongst the residents of the former Cardwell shire about the issue of deamalgamation. I certainly respect and understand those views and, indeed, I happen to sympathise with them. However, our primary focus now must be to move forward for the benefit of the local community. I am getting on with the job of delivering for my constituents and the communities in my electorate of Hinchinbrook. I will be working constructively with the local advisory committee that I have put together and with the Minister for Local Government to make real and practical progress for the communities that I represent.

ESA Village; Keep Australia Beautiful; Bonner, Ms D

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (3.38 pm): Recently I was very pleased to be able to represent both the Premier and the Minister for Health at the opening of a Leukaemia Foundation hospice, the ESA Village, in the Boggo Road Urban Village. It was a wonderful event. It was officiated by Her Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Penelope Wensley AC. At the opening I was joined by both the member for Gaven and the member for Greenslopes. It was a fantastic thing to see.

A history lesson was given as part of the address. The hospice was started some 34 years ago by the Lions Club. I am pleased to report that three of the founding members of the hospice 34 years ago who are from the Lions Club of Holland Park are still active in Lions and were there for the opening of this new home. They brought some of their history from the original South Brisbane site. They brought part of the wall of that site and incorporated that into the new design. There are 30 two- and three-bedroom units in the hospice to look after people who are currently under treatment for leukaemia. I wish them well with that. I congratulate organisations like Lions, Rotary and other charitable organisations that help with fundraising.

I would also like to touch on another event which I attended—the Keep Australia Beautiful tidy towns awards. I recognise and congratulate the winners of the various categories. One appreciates the significance of organisations like this when one lives in a bayside community. One realises very quickly that any litter in the streets washes down the drains and ends up in our bays and waterways. I have always been a passionate advocate for anti-litter campaigns. I recognise and thank Keep Australia Beautiful for the work that they continue to do. Not only is litter unsightly, but it actually harms our wildlife. It washes out into the bay. It is about raising awareness and educating people and then following up with punishment for breaches.

In closing, I would like to pay my respects to one of my constituents Del Bonner. She served as a teacher in many communities around Queensland. She was principal in a number of schools. She led a life of service in community groups. She was involved in Neighbourhood Watch, progress associations and Meals on Wheels and was a justice of the peace. Del passed away recently and I attended her funeral. On behalf of the community of Redlands, I pass on my condolences to her family. Rest in peace, Del Bonner.

QuoCKa Reading Program; Kalbar Country Day; Beaudesert Electorate, Public Transport

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (3.41 pm): On 8 October I visited Kalbar State School to talk with Chris Muir, the principal, and some wonderful staff members and meet some of the students. It was refreshing to hear the insights of year 7 students. They were asking me questions about my role as their local member of parliament, including queries such as: 'What is the weirdest thing you have had to deal with?' and 'What are the differences between the various levels of government in Australia?'

I also had the privilege of officially opening the QuoCKa Reading Program. Students from the local Boonah State High School will visit Kalbar State School and read to year 2 students. This program is all about encouraging reading and increasing literacy skills. Hopefully, it might also encourage some high school students to consider a career in teaching. This wonderful program is being sponsored by the Quota Club of Boonah, which has contributed a significant number of books. Can I thank the club's president, Marea Teakle, for the club's support of this program, the Deputy Principal of Boonah State High School, Lachlan Thatcher, who has fostered QuoCKa and the high school students involved.

Kalbar is a wonderful community. On 13 October it held its Country Day. From hay sculptures to scarecrow competitions, pumpkin and hay bale rolling contests, German sausages, country music, fashion parades put on by Debbie from the George Street Boutique and a marvellous 73-prize raffle run by the Lions Club, it was a terrific day for the whole community. The skies were blue, and it was excellent to see so many locals enjoying their town and also many tourists from outside the district enjoying Kalbar. I congratulate all involved in the day for what was a wonderful Kalbar Country Day.

'Build it and they will come' goes the old saying. The communities of Jimboomba, Cedar Grove, Cedar Vale, Undullah, Bromelton and Beaudesert in my electorate are located short distances from the interstate standard gauge railway line. They are all experiencing rapid growth, and will continue to grow. I am advocating, along with my colleagues in Logan and Algester, for the standard gauge rail corridor to be utilised to provide public transport to these areas. Plans to provide this service in 2026 or 2031 are, in my view, wide of the mark. We will need to take pressure off the local road network, including the main roads, well before then.

The rail corridor is perfectly placed to do this. The government should think innovatively—perhaps even look to the private sector—in order to put in place these transport services. A service between these areas and the Citytrain network at Acacia Ridge or Salisbury would link them with Brisbane city and the broader South-East Queensland transport network.

In short, this investment will help encourage growth in the community—growth that is supported by transport infrastructure, avoiding traffic bottlenecks in the future. Development at the Bromelton state development area is set to hasten growth in the region. Along with my colleagues, I will advocate for the transport department's plans for this corridor to be brought forward, underpinning future growth in the Beaudesert electorate. It is exactly this type of infrastructure that the former government should have been investing in. The LNP government is doing the hard yards to get Queensland's finances back on track, on the way to getting trains on track to Beaudesert.

Motor Neurone Disease

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (3.44 pm): Did members know that almost 300 Queenslanders have been given a death sentence? These Queenslanders have been diagnosed with motor neurone disease, MND, and their life expectancy is between two and five years after diagnosis. That is right—no chemo, no radiotherapy, no stem cell transplant, no hope; just an expectation that their life will come to an end much earlier than they or their family anticipated. Prior to their passing they will lose control of the movement of voluntary muscles, including all the muscles of their arms, legs, back and neck and of speech, swallowing and breathing.

MND does not discriminate. It can affect anyone at any time, although the majority of cases involve adults over 50 years of age. MND may start its ravaging effects in any part of the body and progressively move to other functions at any given time. People cannot plan for its progress. It just has to be managed on a day-to-day basis as it progressively leaves people unable to perform basic muscular functions which we all take for granted. Dressing, walking, showering, toileting all become tasks which require intervention from carers and families.

Loss of the ability to swallow needs to be overcome by the insertion of a peg to facilitate bodily nourishment. For the loss of speech we have seen the introduction of computerised devices such as the iPad, but this may be useless as the use of their hands and fingers may have been lost. Loss of leg muscles of course leads to being wheelchair bound. In the majority of cases, MND does not affect the senses, intellect or memory so one can only imagine the frustration of not only knowing that they are living on borrowed time but also that until they do pass they will become an ever-increasing burden on those closest to them and those they love most, as they rely on them to maintain an acceptable quality of life.

Queenslander Scott Sullivan, aged 40 and himself an MND patient for 2½ years, has committed himself to raising awareness of this disease in anticipation of raising significant funds for MND research. One can only look on in wonderment at what Scott has achieved in this small amount of time. The *Courier-Mail* article of Saturday, 27 October is testament to this outstanding and inspirational individual. I have met with Scott on a couple of occasions and his courage and determination are an example for all. I sincerely congratulate Scott on his strength and determination in his quest to raise awareness of this disease.

The MND Association of Queensland, led by Hedley Lockyer, which celebrates its 30th anniversary next year, is likewise committed to raising MND awareness and raising funds to assist the national research effort through the MND Research Institute of Australia and also to assist with patient care through the provision of education, coordination of allied health professionals and the provision of expensive specialised equipment to facilitate all bodily functions. The MND associations want everyone in Queensland to know what motor neurone disease is. They want to establish a Queensland MND centre which will become the focal point for service delivery to MND patients. They want to make sure that every MND patient in Queensland gets the best possible care in a timely manner so as to improve their quality of life.

I am determined to assist Scott and his associated organisations to raise awareness within government and the community alike of those suffering this terrible disease that unfortunately is a death sentence. People can get involved by registering on the MND & Me website for the Million Metres for MND Swim on 2 December 2012 at the Langlands Park pool or the Yeronga pool to raise money for this worthwhile cause.

Clark, Mr C

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.47 pm): It is with sadness that I advise of the passing of Cecil Alexander Matthew Clark. He was born on 12 January 1925 and passed away on 25 August 2012. He was a good Labor man, no doubt. But more importantly, he was a great advocate for the community of Beenleigh and Eagleby. I have known Cec since around 1978. His time in the area precedes that. In 1973 Cec was elected to Albert shire council. He was a councillor for a period of 18 years, and six of those years he served as deputy shire chairman.

There were many things that Cec was involved in. He founded Beenleigh Red Cross and was involved with it for 23 years. He assisted me and the community of Eagleby to fund the building of the Eagleby scout den, which is now used as a church in the local area. He was an avid campaigner for the Beenleigh Show Society and showgrounds. He helped save the proposed railway line back when the railway line was extended. The Oliver Sports Complex was established by him. In fact, one of the fields at the Oliver Sports Complex now bears his name. So he is immortalised in Eagleby with the Cec Clark Oval. He was involved with Meals on Wheels. He was on the committee that serviced the Beenleigh area for many, many years. He delivered meals for 25 years for Meals on Wheels.

He was a member of the masons from 1962. In fact he was a member of the South Queensland Masonic Lodge for a period of 37 years. The *Albert and Logan News* saw much of his writing. He was an avid writer to the *Albert and Logan News*, and more often than not in recent years it was to do with his stoush with the Beenleigh Show Society and trying to stop the Beenleigh showgrounds being cut in half.

When all is said and done, the best thing that we can say about all of this—if there is any good that comes out of someone's passing—is, in the words of Cec's wife, Dulcie Clark: 'Don't cry because he has gone. Smile because he has been here.' I ask all members to join with me in celebrating the life of Cecil Alexander Matthew Clark.

Milosevic, Mr S

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.50 pm): The term 'hero' is used far too loosely in society. I rise in this House to pay tribute to a true hero, a wonderful man, father and soldier—Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic.

On 29 August 2012, Lance Corporal Milosevic's life was tragically cut short. He was serving his second tour of duty, as a member of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment Task Group, when he was killed during operations in the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan. But I do not rise to dwell on the tragic loss of life which has occurred here. I instead rise to talk about the life of a soldier whose steadfast dedication to make the world a better, safer place for our future generations will live on. It will live on in his two young daughters, in his partner and in our Chatsworth community.

Lance Corporal Milosevic joined the Army in 2008 at age 36. He had a young family and wanted to make them proud. In the years that followed he excelled in basic training, receiving the award for Most Outstanding Soldier while training at Kapooka. Once graduated, he rose quickly up the ranks to become a Lance Corporal. He received a number of awards and honours and had a bright military future.

He was also filled with the selfless desire to serve his country. Lance Corporal Milosevic was a typical Australian bloke. He had a dry sense of humour, a natural charm and a passion for rugby.

Mr Johnson: Another good Quilpie boy.

Mr Minnikin: A great Quilpie boy—I take the interjection. He believed in Australia, our freedoms and our way of life. To be considered a 'top bloke' by his mates is the ultimate Aussie accolade. We as Australians owe a debt of gratitude to our service men and women who work tirelessly to protect the liberties we hold dear and to those who make the ultimate sacrifice. We should never take this precious gift for granted.

In time, it is my hope that Lance Corporal Milosevic's daughters understand the incredible job their father did. I hope they will treasure his medals and feel proud of his role in protecting Australia and our way of life. His spirit will live on forever through his partner and children. Lance Corporal Milosevic was farewelled in a fitting ceremony at his alma mater, Marist College, in early September. I was truly humbled to attend as his partner, Kelly, is employed at Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School in my Chatsworth electorate.

I listened as the commanding officer of Lance Corporal Milosevic's 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Welburn, made a pledge during his eulogy. He pledged to the fallen soldier's young daughters to honour their father's memory. A guard of honour, made up of family, mates from his battalion and current students, lined the path to the chapel. We were united in grief for the loss of a dedicated soldier. But it is my hope that Lance Corporal Milosevic's spirit will live on in everyone who was there that day. His sacrifice will not be forgotten. I salute him and the other 38 Australians who have made the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. Lest we forget.

Cleveland Electorate, School Leavers and Education

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.53 pm): The first cohort of school leavers during the Newman LNP government are about to graduate. They have a bright future ahead of them under a government that cares about their education and future opportunities.

I want to congratulate all year 12 students in the Cleveland electorate on their graduation from high school in the next few weeks. To them I say, as I have written to them: this is a very special occasion to share with your family, friends, teachers and school community. You can be justifiably proud of reaching this significant milestone in your life. I am sure you have faced many challenges and changes over the past 12 years. Your graduation is the culmination of your achievements to date and the path that you take from today will have a major impact on your life.

Graduation day will be a time of mixed emotions as you say goodbye to familiar faces and friends and embark on your journey into further education, careers or perhaps avail yourself of the opportunity to work and travel around the world. This is an exciting chapter in your life and I wish you well as you strive to reach your future goals. I trust you will look back in the years to come and remember your schooldays with great fondness. I also hope that the friendships you have made over the years and the many special school time memories that you hold will remain with you forever. Can I also add my congratulations, with a little fatherly pride, to my daughter Melissa, who graduates from year 12 in the class of 2012, following her three older brothers and sisters.

As I have mentioned, education is going ahead in Cleveland. The construction of the year 7 classrooms at Cleveland District State High School is well underway. New chaplains have been approved for the Bayview and Dunwich state schools. The junior high school students from North Stradbroke Island have been successfully transitioned to Cleveland High, and I thank the relevant ministers for their assistance with that.

The new LNP government is getting on with the job of lifting education standards in Cleveland, evidenced by the improvement in NAPLAN test results. The principals, teachers, staff, volunteers and chappies are to be congratulated for their work in 2012 and for such good outcomes. The chaplaincy program has been a resounding success in Cleveland schools and continues to enjoy huge community support. I was most disturbed recently, however, to hear QTU Deputy General Secretary Greg Purches running down the work of chappies. The union is clearly out of touch when 95 per cent of principals want to keep them.

State Education Week celebrations earlier this year were significant in Cleveland, and for me a highlight was participating in a national book reading morning at Cleveland State School, despite being dressed up like a grumpy bear. This was followed by the launch of the S.P.E.A.K. Up Extravaganza—a three-way educational partnership between Cleveland State School, Redland Libraries (Cleveland) and the NAB that aims to encourage children to read and express themselves. Partnerships between schools, libraries and private companies can provide resources and unique learning opportunities for children that I feel should be encouraged—after all, it takes a community to educate a child.

Gladstone Area Group Apprentices Ltd

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.56 pm): I rise to speak again on the Gladstone Area Group Apprentices Ltd to put on the record the wonderful work that they do. We often talk about apprentices being integral to skills development and GAGAL, for decades now, have been well involved in the training of apprentices—their core business. They have also expanded because they have recognised some of the problems that young apprentices have in relation to being able to master the academic side of skills development—that is, poor literacy and numeracy work. So they have programs within the GAGAL precinct to be able to reinforce those skills in students.

The Queensland Gas Co., QGC, funded 200 apprenticeships but they did not use GAGAL; they contracted Busy At Work. So a lot of employers in the region are now being given an opportunity to have one of these 200 apprentices for free or to sign up with GAGAL, which was the only apprentice group training scheme in the region and, as I said, has been there for a long time. Obviously businesses that are finding it difficult financially will go for those apprentices that are cheaper, if you like, to employ. But I would love to see GAGAL continue having a strong role in the community.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is another program. While I acknowledge that the funding was cut in an effort to bring the budget back into line, it was only three days after funding was withdrawn that a report was released which acknowledged that the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program was effective and efficient. I certainly hope that the Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding is revisited.

Another program that GAGAL provides is GIVE (Get Into Vocational Education), which again concentrates on literacy and numeracy. But it does not address years 8, 9 and 10; it involves children in years 4, 5 and 6. It is believed, and I agree, that to fix the literacy and numeracy problems in the early formative years means that the later educational years are on a strong foundation. They have taken the GIVE program out to Woorabinda, an Aboriginal community west of Gladstone, and they have done it very successfully. They use woodwork and other activities to reinforce these literacy and numeracy skills.

In one of the reports it said that there was reasonable participation in learning the practical theory behind finding the centre of a circle. The wheel in which to drill the hole was from a tow truck. The centre square with its angles, the diameter and the circumference of the circle, the spelling of the words and how to find the centre of a square—all of these principles were put in place while constructing a wooden model tow truck. That is the approach they have to literacy and numeracy. It is engaging for young people in this four- to six-grade age group, but it also reinforces those basic skills. I wish GAGAL well. I hope they can continue from strength to strength in servicing apprenticeships in the Gladstone region.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES COMMISSION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 2392, on motion of Mr Elmes—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (4.00 pm): As a member of the present committee and also a member of the social development committee in the previous term, I have continued a high level of interest in the FRC—the Family Responsibilities Commission—and have great admiration for Commissioner David Glasgow and his fellow commissioners. May I firstly thank the committee staff, the minister and our opposition staff, in particular Ms Donna O'Donoghue, who have all put in long hours and a huge effort during this budget period.

The Family Responsibilities Commission began operation on 1 July 2008 as a key component of the Cape York Welfare Reform objective of restoring social norms of Indigenous communities. In 2006, then Premier Beattie agreed that the Queensland government would participate in the development phase of the Cape York Welfare Reform project that was being led by the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. A welfare reform trial was born out of the report of the institute entitled *From hand out to hand up*, which was handed down in May 2007. The rationale for the trial was the need to restore social norms and local authority and change behaviours in response to chronic levels of welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion in the four communities of Hope Vale, Aurukun, Mossman Gorge and Coen.

When it was established, it was intended that the FRC would cease operations on 1 January 2013. The four communities participating in the trial have seen some real positive changes take place, particularly in school attendance. As we all know, the key to opportunity is education. It is education that gives children the opportunity to improve their lives and school attendance is integral to this. As the chair of the Education and Innovation Committee, the member for Burdekin told the House this morning that school attendance is one of the most important determinants of future educational outcomes and economic outcomes for anyone. The *Annual highlights report for Queensland's discrete Indigenous communities July 2010-June 2011* shows really positive trends in this respect, and that fills me with great optimism for the future of children in these communities. I have often sat and listened to Commissioner David Glasgow tell some of the great stories of advancement in the cape communities.

The FRC was established by the Queensland government in conjunction with the federal government. The federal government's income management scheme under the Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Payment Reform) Act 2007 applies to these communities in Cape York but has also seen a trial in the Logan area as well as Rockhampton and I think three other cities. It goes across the Woodridge, Kingston, Logan Central and Eagleby areas, which includes my own electorate. The trial targets people in receipt of welfare payments whose children are at risk of neglect or who are not enrolled at school or who fail to attend school adequately. However, unlike the FRC the income management scheme is community-wide. While it caused some misgivings throughout my community initially, I think consultation eased the Indigenous community's fears. We heard stories from some of the elders that they feared we were going back to another stolen generation.

Under the Family Responsibilities Commission, the emphasis has been on early intervention to address individual and family issues before they escalate and require serious remedial action. The role of the commission has been to enhance and complement the services already being provided by state and federal agencies. I have always enjoyed listening to the stories from the commission and reporting on the work that they have done up there. Commissioner Glasgow's passion for the job and for those four communities is always evident, and it shows what a great appointment the former Premier made to head such an important body.

The great spirit of cooperation between the commissioner, the local commissioners and the local communities has meant that important information that can inform the work of the commission is flowing each way. Because of the success so far of the trial, this bill proposes that the work of the commission be extended for a further year, finishing instead on 1 January 2014. We support this proposition. Being the party that established the commission, we are very proud of this initiative and would love to see the benefits to the communities of a further year of the trial. The bill also extends the tenure of the commissioners and the time lines for orders being made to coincide with the new end date of the trial.

The FRC has jurisdiction in relation to residents of the four communities who are, or their partners are, beneficiaries of welfare payments or are CDEP participants and the commission receives notification that one of the following has occurred: a child of the person is either not enrolled or is not meeting designated school attendance requirements; there is an intake involving the person by the department of child safety in relation to alleged harm or risk of harm; the person is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court; or the person, as a tenant, is in breach of a social housing tenancy agreement.

Matters referred to the commission are then dealt with by a conference style scheme. The panel is currently made up of a legally qualified member and two local community members. This leads me to the other amendment contained in the bill. It is proposed that the quorum be reduced to two members. This change was proposed, we heard at the committee hearing on the bill, because some practical difficulties arise when a commissioner is unable to attend and meetings have to be cancelled. We on this side of the chamber are fully supportive of the work of the commission and what it has been able to achieve so far, but I would like to place on record some small consternation about reducing the quorum. I accept the word of the departmental officers that this is really a practical solution to a problem that sometimes arises, but on the other hand I am keen to see that the work of the commission remains accountable and transparent. So in that vein I ask the minister to please advise what steps will be taken to ensure that this amendment will not result in any reduction in the level of accountability.

Once again, I wish to congratulate Commissioner Glasgow and everyone who has been connected with the FRC over the past 4½ years since it commenced operations. I thank them on behalf of the people of Queensland who have a real vested interest in seeing improvement made in remote Indigenous communities but also on behalf of particularly the children who have seen and will continue to see improvements in their lives as a result of their work.

 **Mr DOWLING** (Redlands—LNP) (4.09 pm): Today I rise in support of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012, and I begin by commending the minister for initiating this extension. This is a relatively simple piece of legislation that seeks to amend the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 by extending the trial for a further period from 1 January 2013 through to 1 January 2014. It also allows for a change in the quorum, as was raised by the previous speaker, the member for Woodridge.

The trial has been running in four communities—Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge—and I had the privilege of visiting two of those communities, being Aurukun and Coen, and that opportunity came about because of our committee work. We went to those communities to see firsthand the objectives of the trial and what it is about. The trial is fundamentally about restoring social norms. It is about empowering local authority, local governance, local management and responsibility. It will change behaviours in relation to chronic welfare dependency. It is also about addressing social dysfunction and economic exclusion. Today we had a condolence motion in honour of Eric Deeral, and it is ironic that in his maiden speech all that time ago he said, and I am paraphrasing, that handouts do not work—that if you get into that handout mentality, you actually start the decline in people.

I had the opportunity to visit those two communities and meet with the commissioners, and it was wonderful to see the way they have built the capacity within that community. I was invited to meet with the commissioners and I was invited to a conferencing, as a number of people were conferenced at Aurukun when I was there. It was good to see the respect that members of the community have for their elders and the way that conferencing works, and it was very confrontational at times.

We all know that this is about breaking the cycle. It is about getting school attendance right, because the one way you can empower someone and change their life is to educate them, so attendance at school is critical. Budgeting and financial planning are things that many of us take for granted and they are ingrained in our psyche and our family life, but these are things that we really need to continue to work on in these communities. My observations from visiting those communities were actually very positive, and I enjoyed seeing the people because this is about the people and their passion as much as the program itself. It is about the community self-directing and self-managing. It is about the community actually reinventing itself and taking ownership.

As I said, the bill is relatively straightforward and I will not speak for too much longer, other than to pass on my compliments to the committee members who went through this legislation, our research director Sue Cawcutt, and the secretariat staff. Again, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to give my support to this simple amendment which extends the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial a further year through to December 2013. The townships of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge have had this trial in place since its commencement in July 2008. Its primary aim is to restore social norms, to increase local authority and to improve educational and economic outcomes. This planned extension will allow for consolidation of the great work of the commission to this point and allow for the development of a transitional plan for the affected communities following on from 1 January 2014.

A number of programs were provided to the communities either directly through the commission or through third-party providers such as: Ending Family Violence, which is a program aimed at increasing awareness of domestic violence and impacts upon the family unit and the wider community; MPower, which is a family income management program designed to increase financial literacy and to modify behaviour towards asset growth and more secure and sustainable futures; the parenting program, which is based upon the Triple P program and extends the thought that it takes a village to raise a child, and the elders of the communities are able to incorporate the traditional methodologies as well into this program; Student Case Management, which is a program designed to increase attendance at schools and it ensures that the child's attendance is productive and that cultural sensitivities are accounted for in the management of the student's overall objectives; the Transition Support Service, which is a program primarily tasked with assisting transition into secondary boarding schools, ensuring that both cultural and emotional sensitivities are accounted for during the extended absence of young adults from their families and their communities; the Wellbeing Centre, which is currently operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and is looking at the overall improvement of health and healthy outcomes throughout the communities, and this program aims to increase the awareness of diet and physical fitness on overall health outcomes and aims to empower individuals and communities to achieve greater health across all areas, thereby reducing their dependency on primary and secondary health care in these remote regions; and the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which is a partnership between the federal and state governments with the four communities mentioned aimed at addressing

the passive dependence on welfare and rebuild social norms. With the sunset period identified, I look forward to hearing from the commission about the plans to transition these communities away from this program towards self-governance and the brighter future which we all hope and wish for the Indigenous communities.

Another component of this bill is that it modifies the requirement of a quorum. Currently, there is an overly cumbersome requirement for the three members to be present. This amendment means that any two will be sufficient to form a quorum. This small change should ensure that the tight time frames for change and the rigorous program of development to effective transition out of this program are not impeded by a lack of availability of commission staff. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (4.16 pm): I wish to speak for a short time on the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. I put on the record my appreciation of the work of David Glasgow, the deputy chair, Rod Curtin, and in particular the commissioners at Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. I had a look at the commissioners' names and I decided to not risk pronouncing them. A couple were quite easy but then it went downhill from there! They are predominantly women in the various clans, with some men.

When David Glasgow used to come and address a former committee, I was always impressed by his empowerment of these people who live within the community. They want to see the young people in particular, as well as the older parents, form good parenting habits and form excellent school and work ethics. Whilst David has been the commissioner in charge, he has built their skills. The commissioners on each of those settlements have had their skill sets improved and each of them have demonstrated over time a passion for their own communities. I think that in part is the reason for the success of the program.

This bill will extend the Family Responsibilities Commission for a further 12 months. There may be a rationale for not continuing it on further than that, and I am certainly looking forward to reading the reviews of the program in their entirety. After all of my contact with David, the briefings we received and the feedback that has come in about the Family Responsibilities Commission, I can say that I believe the communities at Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge have benefited. The communities listen to these elders. At times, the elders do their work under some risk, and those risks have to be managed as well. I commend each and every commissioner for their compassion and their care for their communities. I commend David for his leadership. I wish everyone involved in this extended period of 12 months great success.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (4.18 pm): I rise to support the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. I commend the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs for his introduction of this bill. The communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge, which lie just beyond the borders of my electorate of Barron River, have benefited from the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial since its inception in 2008. The Family Responsibilities Commission provides valuable support and information to families in these four communities. I fully support any initiative, particularly those which enhance the welfare of children and acts in their best interests.

The mission of the Family Responsibilities Commission is to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and to assist community members to resume and maintain primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families within their community. The commission, whilst acting as a go-between, refers community members to support services and maintains strong, productive ties with appropriate support networks and government; communicates effectively with the communities in an attempt to maintain community responsibility, lawfulness, respect and acceptable behaviours; and carries out other collaborative activities to build healthy, safe and functional families and communities. It aims to maintain child safety, keep children in school, ensure lawful and responsible behaviour in the community and facilitate responsibility in housing tenancy.

The commission is notified by the department of communities when there is a breach in residential tenancy agreements. I cannot overemphasise the importance of its role, particularly as this government seeks to encourage young people to pursue an education, live as law-abiding and respectful citizens and remain, where practical, within their communities, that is, in a safe and productive community. The expiry of the commission would be a tragedy for these four communities. I fully support the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012 in its mission to continue this valuable service to our northern communities. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (4.21 pm): I rise today to support the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. I commend the minister for its introduction to the House. It is important that the bill is passed so that the operations of the Family Responsibilities Commission can be extended for another year as a significant component of the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial. The bill amends the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 that established the FRC to extend its operations until 31 December 2013.

I am a member of the Health and Community Services Committee, and we have considered the consultation undertaken by the department and the submissions received from the Family Responsibilities Commission and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial was introduced in 2008 as an initiative partnered by the Australian and Queensland governments and the Cape York institute. The trial aimed to restore social norms and to combat antisocial behaviour in the four communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge. It saw the introduction of conditional welfare, where receipt of welfare payments was dependent on behavioural obligations. These included ensuring children attended school; keeping children safe from harm and neglect; avoiding drug, alcohol and family violence offences; and abiding by tenancy agreements.

As a part of the trial, the Family Responsibilities Commission was established as a statutory body under the FRC Act. It consists of a commissioner, David Glasgow, two deputy commissioners and the local commissioners, who are respected Indigenous elders of the four communities. The FRC provides a forum for a person who was in breach of any of the obligations to have negative behaviour addressed and an appropriate course of action decided. The FRC as a last resort may issue a conditional income management order to prevent the abuse of welfare payments.

A positive aspect of the design of this trial is that the local commissioners are Indigenous leaders of these communities. I note that during the committee estimates the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs commented on the high regard in which Commissioner Glasgow and his commissioners were held in their communities. Fostering local Indigenous authority and leadership empowers these communities to strengthen themselves. It builds their capacity so that members of the community can have greater independence and reduces reliance on government support. To encourage individual responsibility and to allow the private sector to flourish, the latitude of federal, state and local governments must be normalised. Unfortunately, prior to 2008, the welfare system had created welfare passivity in remote Indigenous communities. As the unconditional transfer of money is sufficient to live on, it discourages work and has led to an unemployment trap. Long-term dependence on welfare payments takes away motivation and diminishes personal responsibility and individual capacity.

In order to break the welfare dependency cycle, people need to perceive the benefits of working and contributing to the real economy. To do this, there must be incentives and we must spark ambition to encourage proactive engagement in the wider community. Small steps such as regular school attendance are mandatory if we are to succeed in this long-term goal of 'closing the gap' between our Indigenous communities. Children are the future of these communities. So by ensuring they are receiving a proper education we can maximise their opportunities and fuel their dreams. This is one of the underlying principles of welfare reform: to mobilise passions, curiosity and interests and encourage intuition, imagination and dreams.

Consultations have occurred with all relevant stakeholders including trial parties, state and regional agencies, councils, service providers, unions and community groups to determine whether or not to extend the trial for a further year. It was a widely held opinion that the trial has had a positive effect on the behaviour of community members. It was also observed that the FRC was not perceived as a dominating authority but, instead, as a service that could assist in addressing any problems of community members.

In its submission to the Health and Community Services Committee, the Cape York institute expressed that it looks forward to working with the Queensland government over the coming months to ensure that the amendments it seeks are supported and enacted. After four years of the trial, there has been a noted improvement in school attendance, 'quieter' communities and overall social cohesion. For example, the Cape York institute website highlights the drastic improvement in primary school attendance. In the Aurukun community alone, attendance was at just 36 per cent in 2008 and has now increased to a current rate of 73 per cent. I believe it comes down to the old saying, 'If you give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime.'

This bill is part of a greater aim to create productivity in these communities and maximise life opportunities for their members. The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial operates on this principle to reduce dependency on government support, encourage community engagement and foster opportunity. It is about encouraging and facilitating progress without taking over. It is about promoting personal choice—allowing people to take their own risks, accept the consequences and responsibility, learn from their mistakes and try again. It is about maintaining high standards of social norms that affirm Indigenous culture.

To ensure that the progress made over the past four years is not reversed, the extension of the trial will allow further sustainable improvements. The FRC plays a major role in the trial and, at the request of the Australian government, its operations should be extended for an additional 12 months. The extension is necessary as we still await an evaluation report from the federal government on the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which was originally due at the end of 2011 and then in the middle of this year. The minister has been advised that we will now have the report sometime during November. It

is disappointing that the federal government has not been punctual with the provision of this report. Whilst this evaluation is yet to be finalised, it is obvious there have been a number of significant outcomes of the trial which, along with the considerable support of stakeholders, endorses the extension of the FRC operations. To build upon the achievements gained in these communities since 2008, I strongly support the amendments that this bill contains to continue the operation of the Family Responsibilities Commission until 31 December 2013. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (4.27 pm): I rise to speak on the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. The intent of the bill is to provide a 12-month extension to the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, which is facilitated by the Family Responsibilities Commission. It is my understanding that the primary purpose of welfare reform is not to take over responsibility for things that should normally be the responsibility of individuals or family but to encourage and empower individuals and families to assume the responsibility for these social norms. I think that is a pretty powerful statement that speaks well of that entity.

The commission is an initiative of the partnership between four Cape York communities, the Queensland and Australian governments and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership. The core objectives of the Family Responsibilities Commission focus on safeguarding and restoring child safety, school attendance, lawful behaviour and responsible tenancy. The communities involved are outside my electorate, but these issues are particularly relevant to the communities of Doomadgee and Mornington in the Mount Isa electorate. So I watch it with great interest to see its effects. It would seem that it has had some very positive effects on the most critical of things for the future of these communities—that is, empowerment, education and providing hope for the future.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Trial commenced in 2008 in the four communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge. There is evidence that these trials have been very successful, and I refer to statements made in the media about the trial which said that a review by the Gillard government last month committed \$11.8 million to extend the trial. The review found that school attendance jumped in all four communities, in contrast to nine other Aboriginal communities, which recorded the number of children going to school falling over the same period. The most significant result was in Aurukun, which has more than 200 school-age children. It posted a 24 per cent increase in school attendance, from 46.1 per cent in 2008 to 70.9 per cent at the end of the first term of this year. I think that is impressive by anyone's standards. Mossman Gorge recorded an eight per cent jump, from 68.9 per cent, with Coen and Hope Vale, which have traditionally high school attendance rates, posting minimal gains of 0.2 per cent to 91.5 per cent and four per cent to 84.6 per cent respectively.

The program's Family Responsibilities Commission, which can withhold welfare payments from parents, took action against 424 people in the four communities over the period, with school attendance accounting for more than half of the cases in Aurukun and Coen. In the same period, nine of the 17 Aboriginal communities saw attendance rates go down. The reviewers said that there is no general trend there. Importantly, the improvements in Aurukun have been sustained and appear to be related to the FRC's activities, so that is a strong endorsement of the activity of this program and certainly warrants the attention of the government, and I commend the government for continuing the commitment and prompting the further commitment in that respect.

I understand that an independent evaluation of the trial overseen by the Commonwealth government was due at the end of last year but is still expected later this month. Again, that would be of great relevance to what we are talking about here. It is a \$4 million commitment by the Queensland government for this trial extension. We should all acknowledge that that is a very strong commitment, but at the same time we have to acknowledge that the opportunity costs of not providing that can lead to long-term structural unemployment and welfare which can be a much larger cost for us in the future. So I think this is a smart move by this government. I acknowledge that there were two submissions received by the Cape York institute, which had no specific issues with the bill, and obviously the FRC was fully supportive of the bill in its entirety. In conclusion, I am happy to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise today as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak in support of the Family Responsibilities Commission Amendment Bill 2012. In speaking to this bill I also point out to members of the House that of the last four reports tabled by the Health and Community Services Committee three had statements of reservation or dissension appended by opposition committee members. I am pleased, however, to note that this report from the committee was unanimous in supporting the bill.

As has been noted by the House today during discussion on this bill, there is generous support for the FRC and things like the wellbeing centres and indeed the work of the commission. I also want to thank and note for the record the submissions by the Family Responsibilities Commission and the Cape York institute, the briefing provided by the department and, as always, the work of the secretariat in providing the very necessary research to enable the committee to so easily conduct its review.

In his introduction of the bill to the House, the minister outlined the amendments required to the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 to ensure the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial could continue and extend the operations of the Family Responsibilities Commission by a further 12 months. Minister Elmes stated—

The trial commenced in 2008 in the four communities of Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge. The objectives of the trial are to: restore social norms and local authority; and change behaviours in response to chronic levels of welfare dependency, social dysfunction and economic exclusion in the four trial communities.

These social norms are something that most of us take for granted in our own communities.

The purpose of this amendment bill is to extend by 12 months the term of the FRC which will enable continued support to the welfare reform trial. It will also allow further opportunity to consolidate the gains that the trial has made in terms of the safety, wellbeing and welfare of the people in the trial communities, particularly the most vulnerable—the women and the children. It will also enable the evaluation of the trial to be considered in determining the future of welfare reform initiatives across these communities or indeed elsewhere in our country.

The amendment also seeks to overcome some minor difficulties being experienced in meeting the legislative requirement that all three Family Responsibilities Board members attend board meetings by simply amending the provision of a quorum down to two members.

As part of the review and also in the explanatory notes, the committee noted that there was a commonly held view that the trial has had a positive effect on the behaviour of the target community members, with community members seeing more children going to school. This is indeed the outcome desired and the start of the change in order to rise out of welfare dependency. The trial has been regarded by many as the key driver for improved school attendance and school readiness in communities that focus on consistent school attendance—the important issue here is consistency—and that value that education needs to continue.

There was, however, some concern expressed that some of the people in the communities felt that the FRC model was problematic in that it did not involve community leaders as much as it should in the design and the delivery of the solutions and may in itself create some dependency amongst those who have come to rely on its services. Recent and subsequent interactions with the FRC by the committee would also clearly indicate the need to develop an exit strategy, if that is what is required, for the FRC post the trial. Any exit would obviously need to be well supported and guided by the independent evaluation of the trial that would determine the future initiatives that need to be cost-effective and sustainable, with strong ground-level community support and involvement. In closing, I thank the minister and the House for the opportunity to review the legislation and have no hesitation in recommending its continued passage through the House.

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (4.36 pm), in reply: At the outset I thank all honourable members who have taken part in this short debate this afternoon to extend the trial of the Family Responsibilities Commission. I believe—and I will come back to this later—that if there is one thing we can agree on in this parliament it should be the future and our unqualified support of the first Australians of this country, and I think today has been a pretty good start.

When one looks at the bill one sees that we are only really here to decide on three things. One is to change the expiry date of this new trial period until 1 January 2014. We are also extending the tenure of the existing commissioners. I note that both the members for Mulgrave and Woodridge also touched on the fact that the bill now stipulates that a quorum can now be met by two members. One of the things that we have done as part of this reform is set up the board as an advisory board. That necessitated some changes because of a new stand-alone department, so the director-general of my department, Debbie Best, will be the chair of the new board. I have already mentioned that four new board members will be appointed, one representing each of the communities involved—in addition to the existing people. So far as the quorum is concerned, they will discuss what is important and the projects that they have on board and they will as an advisory board come to me to put those things through. I also assure members that a full and complete record of all of the proceedings is kept so that there is transparency. My director-general will do a very good job in that regard.

It has been an unusual day in the Queensland parliament today, particularly from the point of view of Indigenous affairs. This morning we started with a condolence motion for Eric Deeral. A little bit later we unveiled a plaque to make sure that his contribution to the Queensland parliament will not be forgotten. It was great to see his family and relatives in the gallery today and that they were able to come down and take part in what was a very significant event. Also today I had David and Christine Hart as my guests. People would remember Pro Hart. David is his son, and he donated a mural called the *Australian Mural* to this parliament. It is worth somewhere in the vicinity of \$90,000. When honourable members go to the 6th floor they will see the *Australian Mural* on the wall outside committee room 3. David sat down and spoke with a number of Indigenous advisers to make sure that what he has come up with is in the true spirit of reconciliation. As part of that ceremony I was able to bring into Parliament

House some of the participants of this year's deadly stories. We had lunch for those people on the 7th floor. When that was over, I had a chance to meet Eric Deeral's relatives. So from the point of view of an Indigenous day in the Queensland parliament, I think today has been the day.

An honourable member: Well done, Brett Nutley.

Mr ELMES: Yes, indeed. If we are ever going to do it again, I would like to spread it out over a week so that we can do it all properly. It has been a very significant day.

One of the good things about this debate is the unqualified support coming from all honourable members who took part in it. I would like to thank them for that. I would particularly like to thank the member for Mulgrave for not only his support for this bill but also his support for Indigenous affairs generally. He has a very deep, caring cause in his soul for Indigenous affairs. We may not always agree about some bits and pieces in the future but I have no doubt about how earnest he is to make sure that the cause of Indigenous affairs is advanced in our state.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (4.42 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Long Title

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (4.43 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT OPERATIONS (PASSENGER TRANSPORT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 11 September (see p. 1807).

Second Reading

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (4.43 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for its consideration of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The committee considered the policy merits of the amendments contained in the bill and its consistency with fundamental legislative principles. Following detailed consideration of the bill, the committee recommended that the bill be passed without amendment. The government is very happy with the committee's recommendation, as it further supports its aim to reduce public spending and duplication.

The principal objective of this bill is to dissolve TransLink as a statutory authority by repealing the Transport Operations (TransLink Transit Authority) Act 2008. Reincorporating TransLink into the Department of Transport and Main Roads will enhance public accountability, optimise services and result in savings through the removal of unnecessary duplication.

This bill also includes a number of other minor amendments that will make improvements to the civil banning order regime, enhance the definition of public transport infrastructure, protect passengers and infrastructure, prohibit the use of taxi meters in vehicles other than taxis, extend the maximum term

for an emergency service contract without inviting offers and improve the processes for dealing with detained persons on public transport infrastructure. These amendments will help the government to ensure the safe, secure and efficient delivery of public passenger services across Queensland.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.45 pm): I am pleased to rise to make a contribution to the debate on this bill, but I would have to say that the Labor opposition is deeply concerned about the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the impact that it will have on the way public transport services and infrastructure are planned and delivered in Queensland. However, before I detail my concerns, I wish to mention that the bill makes minor amendments, as the minister just alluded to, to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 which are administrative in nature and include improving the administration of civil banning orders, enhancing the definition of public transport infrastructure, extending the maximum term for an emergency service contract without inviting offers, clarifying that a transit officer may either release a detained person on direction of a police officer or hold that person until a police officer arrives to deal with that person, and creating offences for equipping or acquiring or allowing the use of a taxi meter in a vehicle other than a taxi. The opposition does not have concerns in relation to those amendments.

The heart of our concern is the intention of this bill to put transport planning and investment into the political arena and to push the government's agenda to deliver to its LNP mates. When TransLink was established as an independent statutory authority in 2008, it had an independent board and a CEO who were charged with growing our public transport network in a responsible and considered manner. This bill strips TransLink of its independence in a politically motivated attempt by the Newman government to get square with TransLink.

It is no secret that when he was Lord Mayor the now Premier and his administration clashed regularly with the former Labor government and TransLink over various and wide-ranging public transport issues. There were regular clashes over funding for additional buses—which, for the record, were funded by the Labor government and not the council as the former Lord Mayor likes to claim. There were also disagreements over bus delivery, ferry funding and various other operational issues. As the state government body that contracts public transport services from Brisbane Transport, TransLink is in a position of some authority over the Brisbane City Council and Brisbane Transport. We all know how the Premier likes to get his own way and does not like anybody telling him what to do. There is a clear motivation for the abolition of TransLink as a statutory authority. The Newman government is settling an old score and helping its mates at City Hall by getting rid of TransLink.

TransLink is not and was not perfect. There are always things that could be done better, and in a modern, mature public transport network that is obvious. However, the abolition of TransLink will not improve public transport service or result in better planning or delivery. We know from the announced job cuts that TransLink will lose approximately 70 staff, or almost 25 per cent—a quarter—of its workforce. I am calling on the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to release a list of positions that have been cut in TransLink. At this stage we do not know if network planners, customer service staff, helping hands or contract managers have lost their jobs. These people are all important and play a big role in terms of the delivery of public transport along the network.

In recent days the prospect of returning the functions of TransLink to the Department of Transport and Main Roads has taken on a more concerning note. The planning of our public transport network and the allocation of funding should always be made without fear or favour. Bus routes and train timetables should not be subject to political agendas. Transport planning should not be dictated by election results or electorate margins.

I have absolutely no confidence that TransLink will not be subject to political interference given that this transport minister has already shown his willingness to tamper with TransLink data for his own political gain. It was revealed at this year's estimates hearing that the figures used consistently by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads regarding patronage on the TransLink network were incorrect.

The minister has continuously attempted to argue that the TransLink network is in crisis by pointing to falling patronage. Most recently the minister suggested that patronage had decreased by 300,000 trips from the 2010-11 year to the 2011-12 year. The figures that were published in the TransLink annual report for 2011-12 support his conclusion. However, the patronage figures published in the annual report for previous years, including 2010-11, are not accurate figures and therefore give a false comparison. The minister well knows this. In December 2011 TransLink issued a document correcting previous rail patronage figures. I table a copy of that document for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, dated December 2011, titled 'Train Patronage correction' [[1498](#)].

The minister knew that this correction was made and gave media comment at the time. This correction was made because it was recognised that more accurate data is available since the introduction of the go card in 2008 and since the abolition of periodic ticketing. Prior to go cards being introduced assumptions were made regarding rail patronage that were incorrect. TransLink is not alone in making such patronage corrections. In New South Wales the O'Farrell government issued a similar

rail patronage correction in 2011, just a couple of months before Queensland did, which provided more accurate rail patronage data for previous years. I table a copy of the New South Wales correction for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, dated December 2011, titled 'BTS InfoSheet' regarding enhanced methodology for rail patronage measurement [1499].

Similarly in New South Wales they made the correction because of smart card technology, better methodology and more accurate figures. But this government seems intent on ignoring the corrections and distorting the figures for its own political purposes. The consequence of the train patronage correction in Queensland is represented in the table that I am about to table. By comparing old and inaccurate train patronage data from 2010-11 with new and more accurate data from 2011-12 the minister has been able to confect a drop in patronage of 300,000 in the past year. However, if a comparison is done using only accurate and up-to-date data there was actually an increase of 3.8 million trips on the TransLink network in the past year. I table the comparison of SEQ transport patronage for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Comparison of SEQ Transport Patronage' [1500].

When asked why the more accurate data had not been used in the annual report, the CEO of TransLink was unable to give any explanation. The minister attempted to explain away the more accurate data and accused TransLink and the former government by saying they had fiddled and conned the numbers. I assume that the minister would also be making those assertions of the O'Farrell government considering it did exactly the same thing in exactly the same circumstances. The minister went on to say that he had ordered the old methodology figures to be used. In effect, the minister admitted he was not interested in the most accurate data; he was only interested in the data that showed a patronage decrease that fed his political spin.

In its annual report for 2011-12, Queensland Rail used the more accurate methodology to report train trips and reported an increase in the patronage on the Citytrain network of three per cent in the past year. It seems that the minister is alone in ordering TransLink to provide him with the inaccurate data. The minister continues to hide behind outdated patronage figures because he is obsessed with talking down Queensland and its transport network. Now, with the introduction of this bill, what we will see is TransLink absorbed into the department, making it even more susceptible to the political agenda of this minister.

In just over seven months not only have we seen this transport minister publish incorrect data; we have also seen him sit on an important TransLink report. For weeks the minister refused to release the quarter 4 TransLink Tracker published online every quarter. The TransLink Tracker is a snapshot of the network and gives detailed breakdowns of a range of measures including on-time running, customer satisfaction and complaints. It is a substantial report that is more than 20 pages long and is released regularly.

When I asked the minister at estimates why the TransLink Tracker for quarter 4 had not been released but the Tracker for quarter 1 of this financial year had been released, the minister stated that the information contained in the quarter 4 Tracker had already been released in the TransLink annual report for 2011-12. As I have said repeatedly, this is just not true. The minister knows it is not true, which is why he backtracked a week after the estimates hearing and published the report. I stand here in this House and again, for the third time, call on the minister to guarantee that future TransLink Trackers will be published in full and on time, and I ask the minister to publish the raw data used to compile the Tracker on the government's much lauded open government website.

Dissolving TransLink is just a headline grabber and another stunt by this minister that will not improve the delivery of public transport services in this state. This bill is more about the Premier settling old scores from his time in council than improving our public transport network. When TransLink was established as an independent statutory authority in 2008 it was done so that the growth of the public transport network in South-East Queensland would be managed professionally and independently, free from any political influence. Now this government seeks to abolish that principle of impartiality, that principle of planned public transport growth, and instead has opted to politically manage TransLink—to politically engulf the planning and the delivery of public transport services in Queensland.

We have already seen Minister Emerson admit to instructing TransLink to provide him with old and out-of-date patronage figures because they suit his political purpose. We have already seen the minister refuse to release documents which the public have routinely been given on time and in full. Because of the overtly political intent of taking away the independence of TransLink, the Labor opposition will be opposing this bill.

 **Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—LNP) (4.56 pm): The Assembly referred the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee on 13 September 2012. The committee was required to report back to the

Assembly by 22 October. The committee called for public submissions by advertising on the parliamentary website, emailing the committee's subscriber list and writing to stakeholders in October 2012. No submissions were received and the committee did not hold a public hearing.

The Minister for Transport and Main Roads announced a restructure of the Department of Transport and Main Roads including the removal of the TransLink board on 31 July 2012. Under the restructure TransLink will no longer operate as a statutory authority confined to the state's south-east. Instead, it will be part of the department and will oversee the qconnect bus network, Traveltrain services and school bus services, along with subsidised regional airlines, coach and ferry services. Under the restructure all Queensland government transport services will be integrated for the first time under the one TransLink banner.

Transport operations affect everyone in this chamber, whether it is Traveltrain or school bus routes. I would like to bring to the attention of the House the issue of school bus routes. I have not been happy with the management of the school bus program in this state. I feel that it has been too rigid. I do not think the people who managed it understood the complications for rural children in particular. There is strict adherence to distances, virtually down to metres to a front gate. In rural areas some schoolchildren have to leave very early in the morning. Children in grade 1 and grade 2 are having to leave home at seven o'clock in the morning and do not get home till five o'clock at night, day in and day out. Then there are impassable roads. There are a combination of things that need to be taken into consideration.

At the end of the day, we need to be able to get children to school on school buses, rather than having some bureaucrats virtually putting a block in front of their education. We need to be able to provide those kids with something. The alternatives for parents are to try to homeschool or use a school of distance education, or to disrupt the family by mum and the kids moving into town. That is even worse. I am sure that if we use a bit of common sense and show some understanding, we can make things much better.

Throughout the state there are a lot of regional airlines and some subsidised services, which have been very beneficial. Out my way, for quite a long time we had subsidised services, although we do not have many now. The Charleville-Roma route is important because of the activity with the gas industry. Thankfully, we do not need assistance to keep that route going. The far western route to St George, Cunnamulla and Thargomindah still gets assistance. They need that route.

I want to put in a plug for assistance for regional airlines in North Queensland. People who live in Far North Queensland, and in particular the Torres Strait, need assistance. They have to travel huge distances and we again need to look at providing assistance to those people. The same things go on up there. For instance, if a Torres Strait Islander needs dental treatment, it can cost \$800 to travel to Thursday Island and back home again. People on the mainland would not tolerate that. We need to give those people some consideration and show them some understanding. That postcode has the highest cost of living in Australia and it needs to be remembered that the people need some assistance. Ferries do not operate in my electorate, although I could have used a few in recent times with all the floods we have had. In this debate we can cover a lot of issues and every electorate is impacted.

The bill repeals the Transport Operations (TransLink Authority) Act and inserts new sections into the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act that replace TransLink, with the state as a party to any contracts. It transfers all TransLink liabilities to the state and transfers any TransLink employees to the department. The committee looked very closely at this bill and made a recommendation that the bill be passed. I support the bill.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.02 pm): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. This bill represents a great opportunity for Queensland. Indeed, it represents an opportunity to fix longstanding issues with the state's public transport network and an opportunity to respond to public transport customers across the state who have been telling us they want affordable, frequent and reliable public transport. Those three planks comprise the Newman government's vision for improving public transport state-wide.

In 2008, the TransLink Transit Authority was established to manage public transport in South-East Queensland. TransLink was intended to be the one-stop shop for all things public transport for South-East Queenslanders. At the same time, the Department of Transport and Main Roads played an equivalent role outside of South-East Queensland, managing regional Queensland's public transport network under the qconnect banner. The department also played a leading role, hosting oversight of South-East Queensland public transport policy.

By definition, maintaining differing roles between agencies created role duplication and now creates opportunities for improvement with the dissolution of TransLink as a separate statutory authority. Dissolving TransLink will achieve clear benefits for operators and customers alike. We have heard about the challenges our public transport operators face dealing with multiple areas of government—challenges that make a tough job even tougher. I look forward to delivering a streamlined central point of contact for those operators, to seek their answers and support from government.

Importantly, public transport customers also stand to benefit from this centralised approach, with the Department of Transport and Main Roads being wholly responsible for all taxis, limousines, urban bus, long-distance coach, ferry, regional air and passenger rail services. Over time, for customers this will mean a single body for the management of services and the network. Most importantly, dissolving TransLink will result in increased accountability. It is quite simple: one organisation, one source of information, one coordination point for all services and benefits and, ultimately, one agency accountable to Queenslanders.

To build on this concept of accountability, I would like to reflect back to September this year when the honourable member for Indooroopilly and Minister for Transport and Main Roads shared his vision for the Department of Transport and Main Roads as the single agency accountable for public transport service delivery. The minister spoke about achieving a real focus on service delivery based on a five-year planning horizon. I wholly agree with and support the minister's vision of public transport premised on the customer.

The customer is the one who understands whether a service is beneficial to them. The customer is the one who provides feedback on the services. Most importantly, the customer is the one who pays for the services and decides, ultimately, whether to use public transport as a means of travel. I also fully support implementing a five-year service planning horizon. While thinking long term and strategically is an important aspect of delivering a public transport system, finding a balance with more immediate outcomes for customers is essential. Driving this customer focus and five-year perspective from within the department will achieve this balance. In real terms, these changes will draw a line in the sand where a new division in the department can focus solely on the customer and its five-year scope.

Aside from the dissolution of TransLink, the bill will make amendments to the civil banning order provisions to streamline administrative processes. The amendments will help ensure that applications can be made against repeat offenders who blatantly ignore their fines. A person who receives 10 or more fines for fare evasion, for instance, and who proceeds to ignore the fines will now be able to become the subject of a civil banning order application. Currently, the legislation makes it difficult to prepare applications against offenders who ignore their fines. The amendments will also transfer the responsibility to provide a court with evidence about personal hardship to the subject of a civil banning order application and allow authorised persons to direct a person contravening a civil banning order off public transport. These amendments to the civil banning order provisions are important for protecting the state's revenue on the network and protecting Queenslanders by helping to ensure their personal safety and security across the passenger transport network.

The Newman government is committed to making amendments that will result in real benefits for Queenslanders. As I noted earlier, improving affordability and frequency are the main objectives and the driving force behind public transport change. Steps have already been taken to achieve improved accountability by delivering free public transport following nine journeys in South-East Queensland. Next, we are going to slash the planned January 2013 and 2014 fare increases so that fares do not rise unnecessarily for South-East Queenslanders. In terms of frequency, we are also delivering on our commitments, with passengers on the Ferny Grove line—

Mr Mander: Hear, hear!

Mr MINNIKIN:—now enjoying 15 minute off-peak frequency for their train services, and I take that interjection from the member. Overall, we are making headway on our commitments to public transport users and this bill will only assist us further by facilitating opportunities to ensure customers receive the more affordable, frequent and reliable network they demand and deserve. As the Assistant Minister for Public Transport, I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (5.08 pm): Today, I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is about the safe, secure and efficient delivery of public transport to Queenslanders, as well as implementing plans to cut costs affecting families by revitalising front-line services, restoring government accountability, delivering better infrastructure and planning and, of course, cutting waste.

After the election on 24 March one of the very first things I did, before we even had offices and before we were even sworn in in May, was contact the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Hon. Scott Emerson. Everybody knows how important public transportation is to me and my electorate of Logan. I have been lobbying for it since the election campaign. I am always in the ear of the assistant minister, Steve Minnikin, and the Minister for Transport. I have spoken previously in the parliament about the need for public transportation in Logan.

I went and got a go card and rode bus transportation in the whole of Logan. I have talked to people at the bus stops at five in the morning, three in the afternoon, six at night and nine at night. I have submitted a report to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, TransLink and the assistant minister outlining my recommendations on how I think we can improve transportation in my area. I have organised for the assistant minister to visit my electorate. He has happily agreed to come down and check out what we have. Public transportation is not only a need but also a must in my area. It is very important to me and the people of Logan.

Bureaucratic entanglement and duplication seemed to be a typical day in the life of the former government. With two separate administrative elements pursuing the same object, the pockets of everyday Queenslanders were surely the victim of yet another bureaucratic bungle. By making effective cost-saving measures through the removal of administrative duplication and legislative mechanisms allowing the enforcement of penalties for offenders, the ability to provide better services, better safety and even support the expansion of our public transport network is achievable.

With the perilous situation our government found our economy in when we came to office, the task of supporting the public transport network was an arduous one. As mentioned before, the administrative duplication needed to be streamlined and dramatically reduced. This bill will see the dissolution of the TransLink Transit Authority through the repeal of the Transport Operations (TransLink Transit Authority) Act 2008. This step will resolve the current interface issues that have resulted from two separate elements. This bill also ensures that, with the dissolution of TransLink, employees' entitlements will be protected when their functions are transferred to the state.

This bill will also see minor amendments made to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994. They will entail the improvement of the administration of civil banning orders, the enhancement of the definition of public transport infrastructure and the extension of the maximum term for an emergency service contract without inviting offers. It will also clarify that a transit officer may either release a person on the direction of a police officer or hold them until such time as a police officer can respond to the situation.

In addition to the administrative streamlining and public safety measures that will come about with this amendment, regulation over the use of taxi meters will finally be brought into line. With the passage of this bill it will now be an offence for vehicles other than taxis to use taxi meters.

This amendment bill will achieve clarification of when penalties relating to civil bans are issued and the accruing period for multiple infringements. This amendment bill also creates the clarification that the application regarding the civil banning order does not need to provide evidence of the respondent's personal circumstances when preparing civil banning order applications.

This amendment bill enhances the definition of public transport infrastructure by ensuring that all public transportation infrastructure includes all infrastructure that is related to the provision of public passenger services for rail, light rail, bus and ferry modes of transport. This broadened definition will give administrators of public transport clear-cut guidelines in which to execute the functions and responsibilities effectively.

These measures are in keeping with our government's firm commitment to lowering the cost of living and revitalising front-line services. This legislation, as I have mentioned before, will create savings through the more effective administration of public transport infrastructure. It is through these steps that further projects within our electorates can receive the long-awaited attention they sorely deserve.

The long-term outcomes from the legislation will allow options for the expansion of public transport services for our electorates. Areas such as Logan Village, Greater Flagstone, Greenbank and Park Ridge will undoubtedly benefit as a result of this legislation—and its fiscally responsible approach to the transport network—for years to come. The cost savings of this legislation can be seen in a variety of areas including accommodation, staffing and overheads.

The former government, with every move they made, acted with no appropriate consultation with relevant and affected parties. That has now changed. This LNP government has actively engaged the Limousine Association Queensland and the Taxi Council of Queensland when making the new legislation around the regulation of equipping and utilising taxi meters in unauthorised vehicles. This move has been warmly welcomed by the respective associations.

I support this amending legislation and commend the honourable Minister for Transport and Main Roads for implementing these steps to get public transport infrastructure back on track. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (5.15 pm): I rise this evening to talk about the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I would like to contribute briefly to the debate on this legislation because it does affect the operation of the new railway line coming into my electorate at Springfield. The minister is over there smiling because he knows exactly what I am going to talk about. I have been discussing these issues with him for the last three years. That would be true, would it not?

Mr Emerson interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Exactly right. The issue that I want to talk about tonight is the extension of the railway line from Richlands through Springfield Lakes to its current destination of Springfield. Let me tell members that a Labor government will take that particular railway line through to Redbank Plains and Ripley. Ultimately, there would be a circle which would bring it to Ipswich.

A government member interjected.

Mrs MILLER: When will that be? The way this LNP government is operating it will not be so far down the track, so to speak.

An issue of great concern to everyone in my electorate is the lack of planning in relation to car parks at Springfield Central Railway Station. The minister knows that I have been bringing this up for many years. I even brought it up in the transport and local government committee that the current minister and I served on during the last parliament.

Let me assure the House that I will not give up on this issue. What we have at the moment is the crazy planning of TransLink—and it really is crazy. We have a major destination station at Springfield. Members should just imagine: we have the huge Orion shopping centre on one side of the Centenary Highway and on the other side we are building this wonderful, big, brand-new railway station called Springfield Central. Under the Labor government we decided to make this a wonderful, architecturally designed destination station.

Let me assure members that I had been haranguing my side when we were in government and now I am going to harangue the new Minister for Transport because the car-parking capability is not to the level we need at this new station. For those members who love reading the *Courier-Mail*, this was actually in the *Courier-Mail* this morning. It has been in our local satellite newspaper, it has been in the *Queensland Times*, it has been the *Ipswich News* and it has been in the *Ipswich Advertiser* that what TransLink has planned, which I think is 100 car parks, is grossly inadequate. We need at least 1,000 car parks at the Springfield Central Railway Station. It is a greenfield site.

Minister, I have discussed this with Ipswich city councillors. I have discussed it with the Springfield Land Corporation. I have discussed this matter with literally thousands of people who live in the Springfield, Augustine Heights, Springfield Lakes and Brookwater areas. I have also discussed it—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I have actually. I have discussed it with Paul Pisasale.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Member for Bundamba, please direct your comments through the chair and not across the chamber.

Mrs MILLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, in response to the interjection by the Minister for Local Government, I point out that I was with the mayor twice over the weekend and we did discuss this very issue and other issues in relation to Springfield. So we did discuss this.

The issue is that there is inadequate car parking at the new Springfield Central Railway Station. For the benefit of the Minister for Transport, my understanding is that Springfield Land Corporation is more than willing to lease the land to TransLink or whatever agency, whether it be the transport department, to provide these car parks that will be necessary at the station in the short term. I think all of us understand that in the long term roughly 86,000 people will be living in the Springfield area. We all understand that. But at the moment there are about 23,000 people living there.

What they want our young mothers to do—and we have a lot of young mothers who work full time in the area, and we all understand that—is to put prams on buses; they want our young mothers to drop their babies or toddlers off to child care; then they want them to get on another bus and drop their school-age children off at the local school; then they want them to get on a third bus—can you believe it, a third bus!—to go to the Springfield Central Railway Station; and then they want them to get on a train to get into Brisbane! Let me advise the House that I was a young mother once and I can remember—

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: Oh, love it, love it! I can remember how hard it was when I was trying to get my daughters off to child care and off to school. If our young mothers had to catch three buses and then a train at the Springfield Central Railway Station, they would have to go to work and have a kip because they would be so damn tired! They would not be able to do a day's work and then return on the train and catch another three buses to then get home. Then imagine them trying to get the kids to do the homework, get the kids bathed, get the kids dinner—holy mackerel! Can you imagine the disaster that it would be for these particular families.

Minister, this is ridiculous. Talk about family responsibilities and family and work balance! You are trying to kill the mothers of Springfield. That is what is going to happen. They are going to end up having a breakdown because they are so stressed. It would not be fair on them. Honestly, Minister, it would not be fair. So what I am asking of you this evening on behalf of the mothers of the Springfield area and Redbank Plains is to go back to TransLink and do what is appropriate for them. Let me assure you that we like our trains in Ipswich; we are a railway city. Many people in Ipswich support the railway lines. But I tell you what: we need to be able to ensure that our young mothers can keep working. We want our young mothers to stay in the workforce. We want them to be able to use the train properly. We want them to be able to park at this new Springfield Central Railway Station. So I am asking you to please go back to TransLink on behalf of our young families and do what is appropriate for these young people.

In the short term we need, I believe, at least 1,000 car parks around that station and in the long term there may be a need for more. By then the community will have grown whereby it will be easier for people to catch public transport to the railway station, but in this interim period there certainly is not that.

Minister, I have heard on the grapevine that if these car parks are not provided then perhaps there might be car-parking companies that will buy up land around the train station and build these car parks and in fact private enterprise will charge people who want to park their cars to get on Queensland Rail trains and come into Brisbane. That would be a travesty against my particular community. It would be a shocker if they had to pay \$20 a day or whatever it was for car parking when in every other car-parking area around Brisbane and along the railway lines commuters get free car parking. Minister, I would like you to comment on that as well because our people would be discriminated against, particularly our young mothers, and that would be an absolute disgrace.

Government members interjected.

Mrs MILLER: You talk about our people, yes. I look after all of the people in my electorate.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Bundamba, I have asked you to direct your comments through the chair. Please do so.

Mrs MILLER: Madam Speaker—

Ms Trad: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mrs MILLER: Madam Deputy Speaker—jeez, I can't elevate you too soon! Let me just say to the other members here that I look after everyone in my electorate, particularly the young mothers, because, unlike the men in the House over there, who probably would never know what it is like to get kids off to kindergarten, to get kids off to child care and to get kids off to school—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired.

Mrs MILLER:—and then do a day's work—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired. Member for Bundamba, I would kindly ask you to not make such faces at me again.

Mr Hopper: You nasty thing!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine! I call the member for Morayfield.

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I thank the chair of our committee, the member for Warrego, Mr Howard Hobbs, other colleagues on our committee and of course the hardworking committee secretariat for assisting us in the review of this legislation.

The Newman government was elected with a clear mandate to lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste, delivering better infrastructure and planning, revitalising front-line services and restoring accountability. This bill aims to achieve this reform agenda and it is about Queensland getting its finances and its public transport system all back on track.

This bill will dissolve TransLink as a statutory authority by repealing the TransLink act and allowing for the formal transfer of TransLink's functions to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. In fact, what this bill achieves is the removal of some very wasteful duplication. Public transport in Queensland has been operating under two separate government bodies since 2008, doing essentially the same tasks but for different areas of the state.

Under this bill the department will now be responsible for the delivery of public transport services of all types of public transport modes in all areas of Queensland. It is important to note though that, although it will no longer be a statutory authority as a result of this bill, the TransLink brand will continue and will be expanded. All Queenslanders will benefit from having a single organisation for public transport related issues and it is envisaged that this will be housed and transitioned under the TransLink brand.

Now, after explaining this bill and how this will reduce duplication and unnecessary waste, I will outline a few areas in which all Queenslanders, including those in my electorate, will benefit from the savings delivered by these decisions. In this year's budget the Newman government allocated a record amount of \$1.6 billion to public transport. Let me just outline some of the exciting initiatives that people in my electorate will benefit from due to this massive increase in funding.

Throughout my campaign I was lucky to be joined by the now Minister for Transport, the member for Indooroopilly, Mr Emerson. We stood at many train stations and we listened to the public, the transport users, tell us day in and day out what their concerns were in relation to public transport. It was always about fare prices and the cost of travelling on trains.

This government has introduced a new initiative—the initiative of free trips after nine journeys. What this means for the average person in my electorate is that once they take nine trips on their go card they will receive free trips, including weekend travel. So, to put this in perspective, a mum and dad travelling from Morayfield to the city return Monday to Friday—going to work, going about their daily

business—will benefit with one free trip on the Friday afternoon and then all weekend travel for free. Having one free trip on the Friday afternoon will save that person around \$8 from Morayfield and doing that 50 weeks a year will save that person around \$400. This is real cost-of-living relief delivered by the Newman government.

Other areas of public transport that will benefit from the cutting of waste in this program include the fact that we will halve the previous Labor government's proposed increases in fares. If the previous Labor government had been re-elected, public transport fares would have increased by 15 per cent year in, year out, like they had done for the previous three years. We have announced that we will halve that increase that people will have to pay to use our public transport network. I can tell the House that you do not increase patronage by whacking up fares. This is simply the biggest issue for those who are suffering under increased cost-of-living pressures, and the one thing that was highlighted the most to me was the cost of travelling on trains.

Labor's plan to increase patronage was to spend \$750,000 buying 190,000 backpacks that were somehow supposed to get people onto trains. We heard the Minister for Transport explain during the estimates committee that when we came to power 58,000 of these backpacks were still sitting in offices doing nothing; they were no good for anybody and they were dusted up and locked away. It was great to hear the minister explain that those 58,000 backpacks that had been sitting in that cupboard had been distributed to local charities to be put to good use.

This bill will cut waste and deliver cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, and there are a number of areas that people in my electorate will benefit from. One of these is the reduction in motor vehicle registration fees. As we have heard, this government will freeze motor vehicle registration for the next three years, or the full term of this government. We have also announced the freezing of tariff 11 electricity prices. Again, this will bring relief to those households.

Other details in the budget include a one-off \$80 water rebate, which will be welcomed by those in my electorate, and the reintroduction of a stamp duty concession on the family home. This concession means we will not only save people money on their public transport fares and offer cost-of-living relief but we will also help them when they buy a home by saving them around \$7,000 on the purchase price of that house. We have helped businesses by removing the job-destroying waste levy, which was implemented by the former Labor government in an effort to increase taxation to pay for their woeful financial mismanagement. We have also increased the threshold for payroll tax to help businesses employ more people in Queensland. A clear priority of this government is to eliminate wasteful spending and lower the cost of living for Queenslanders.

In conclusion, the Newman government is committed to the delivery of affordable, reliable and frequent public transport in Queensland. This bill will help achieve this by eliminating duplication and restoring accountability for our public transport system. This can only be a positive step for the state's public transport network. It is for this reason that I urge all honourable members in this place to support this bill tonight. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (5.32 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

Mr Rickuss: And you're excited, too.

Mr RUTHENBERG: I am incredibly excited about this bill because it brings some common sense back to the organisation of transport. This bill will ensure that, for the first time in a long time, all Queensland government transport services are integrated under the well-known brand of TransLink. The duplication of services under the current arrangements has often resulted in a continuous state of discombobulation for the public and providers, instead of a copasetic, streamlined outcome. If ever there was an example of this, it is my own experience.

In 2010 the then TransLink held 'consultation' sessions in my electorate. I use that term 'consultation' very loosely, as I think they actually held an information session, not a consultation session. I note that this was a normal tactic of the former Labor government and this occurred on more than one occasion in my electorate. The current member for Pine Rivers, the then shadow minister, the member for Aspley, and I attended the session held at the Petrie School of Arts hall. This session was useful in so far as it was obvious that absolutely no regard had been paid to the many peripheral and consequential transport planning and social issues that resulted from the change to the train timetable. It appeared to me, the member for Pine Rivers and the shadow minister that no consideration, for example, had been given to the logistics of coordinating bus timetables and the operation of level crossings as a consequence of the changes to the timetable. In fact, when questioned along these lines, the TransLink representative replied that that was not his responsibility or consideration. It was discombobulation at its worst.

The examination of the proposed timetable showed several serious weaknesses that caused major problems in our communities. As we further engaged in this process and spoke with various TransLink bus providers, they informed us that not only had they not been consulted with regard to the

new train timetable but for the 24 months leading up to the announcement the bus companies had actually been working with TransLink on an amended public bus timetable to better serve our communities.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! I am struggling to hear the member for Kallangur. There are many conversations across the chamber and I would ask members to either keep the noise down or take their conversations outside.

Mr Rickuss: Ask him to speak up, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, you are not sitting in your correct seat.

Mr RUTHENBERG: The new train timetable had absolutely no relevance—none, nada—to the two years of scheduling work that was done with the local public bus providers. It was discombobulation at its worst.

Even more stunning, having learned nothing from their train timetabling experience, in February this year the former government introduced new public bus timetables. This was a debacle and had an adverse impact on my community. Again, the excuse for 'consultation' was held, and it seemed to my community that advice given by the community was never seriously considered. It appeared to my community that this 'consultation' was a way to pretend or try to fool the community into thinking that the then government were listening. This was so far from the truth that no-one I have spoken with was fooled by it.

Members should take into account the stark difference now with the Newman government and the new regard the Minister for Transport has on this issue. Earlier this year the minister committed to a review of public transport and, as I understand it, he appointed the assistant minister to oversee much of it. We, the members, were engaged to broadly consult with our community and feed into the review. This process ensured that, before schedules and timetables are determined, as best as possible the needs of our communities will be assessed and then appropriate transport solutions will be determined. I welcome this common-sense approach to public transport planning and delivery. Minister, I congratulate you on your effort.

I note the role of Mr Neil Scales, the general manager of TransLink, in this review. I have had the opportunity to speak with Mr Scales and I can report that his experience and background in a coordinated public transport delivery is obvious and welcome. I have a great deal of confidence in Mr Scales and, through the minister, I offer whatever assistance I can to help ensure a good outcome for my community.

Further to my own experience in gathering feedback for the public transport review, I have been able to gain and document much insight into the existing problems being faced by those needing to and using buses for public transport in my community. To this end, I have done the following. I have visited with aged-care communities. I have met with residents from housing commission units for older citizens. I have met with many individuals. I have met with the three TransLink contractors providing the bus services in my electorate. I have been to bus stops across my electorate and spoken with people waiting for buses and I have sought their views. I have received emails and letters from concerned residents. Further, press releases were sent to the local papers, which printed one article on the reviews conducted by the member for Murrumba, Reg Gulley. This also generated several emails to my office. In summary, the demographic who were most concerned about bus routes were retired residents who relied on public transport because they could no longer drive to shops and medical appointments and those who were physically unable to walk long distances to bus stops. This is something that the former government forgot about in their haste to implement new timetables.

In a submission to the assistant minister, I have provided certain parameters that I believe are important for the planners to consider as they determine the revised routes and timetables. To that end, the following general issues were identified. Several people contacted me with regard to missing connections. If their original bus is running late and they miss their connection, it is a long wait for the next bus. When I spoke to commuters at bus exchanges at Petrie train station, it became obvious that this was an issue particularly in the evening. The problem is exacerbated when the changing routes are run by different providers. I suggest a mechanism be developed whereby this type of event is an exception, not the norm. Perhaps the use of radios or even expanding changeover times between buses might improve connectivity.

Another issue raised was that many buses ran with few people in them, yet the people who use those particular buses need the public transport. It seems to me that TransLink needs to encourage the use of smaller buses or even use available capacity at certain times of the day, for example, by engaging the maxi taxi fleet on an 'on-demand' style service.

Elderly people use public transport because they can no longer drive. Without public transport, they lose their independence. Taxi costs are often prohibitive for regular use. These people want to be able to access major shopping centres and medical facilities. There are several concentrations of elderly folk in retirement villages and in independent living units in my community, and public transport must serve their needs. If any member of my community would like to see my full submission to the assistant minister I would be happy to provide it to them if they contact my office.

This bill continues on the path of this government's commitments to reduce waste and duplication. Specifically, this bill will dissolve TransLink as a statutory authority by repealing the TransLink act and allowing for the formal transfer of TransLink's functions to the Department of Transport and Main Roads. As an organisational change practitioner, in my experience this will result in greater and more direct levels of accountability. Merging two delivery groups that, in effect, do the same thing just makes sense, especially where stakeholders have to deal with both groups. Merging processes and procedures, purchasing, commercial functions and the like must drive greater efficiency and effectiveness, assuming reasonable measures of management are in effect. I am confident that my community will benefit from this change, once enacted—change that is not only cutting red tape but also doing it for the right reasons.

I am a maintenance engineer by profession and so I have a deep insight into the efficiencies that will be gained with respect to reliability and maintainability, resulting in greater equipment availability if consistent, preventive and predictive maintenance regimes are enforced across the new entity. This has at its core satisfied customers and buses and trains running on time. By bringing the two entities together, common practices and performance measures can and will drive greater redundancy and flexibility in the delivery of public transport.

This bill will result in a level of accountability in government in Queensland that I think Queenslanders expect and deserve—yet again maintaining and building on the promise of greater transparency. In my considered opinion, this bill will ensure that the disjointed approach to public transport employed by the former government, and problems like equipment reliability, will finally be able to be addressed by the hardworking employees of TransLink, under the guidance of Mr Scales, the DG and ministers. I support this bill and encourage all members to vote in favour of it.

Finally, I wish to say thank you to the secretariat of our committee. They have performed an admirable job. Again, I remind the House that, without their assistance, we would struggle to do an effective job. I thank them for their service.

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeria—LNP) (5.43 pm): I rise this afternoon to make my contribution to the debate of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The key objective of the bill is to dissolve the TransLink Transit Authority as a statutory authority by repealing the transport operations act 2008. By dissolving TransLink as a statutory authority, the bill will remove unnecessary duplication and help resolve community and operator interface issues that have resulted from having two separate units of administration for public passenger services.

The bill will also dissolve the TransLink Transit Authority Employing Office. This change accords with the Queensland government's plan to lower the cost of living for families by cutting waste, deliver better infrastructure and better planning, revitalise front-line services and restore accountability in government. The bill will do this by improving the administration of civil banning orders. This will be achieved by clarifying when a penalty infringement notice is dealt with for the purpose of applying for a civil banning order. It will also change the period for accruing 10 or more penalty infringement notices up to any 12-month period in the two years before the application. It will also clarify that the applicant does not need to provide evidence of the respondent's personal circumstances to the court when preparing a civil banning order application. It will also remove the requirement for the proper officer of the Magistrates Court to prepare and give the order to relevant parties and, in so doing, allow the authorised person to direct a person in contravention of a civil banning order to leave or not enter public transport infrastructure, consistent with exclusion orders.

Secondly, the bill will also enhance the definition of public transport infrastructure. This will be achieved by ensuring that public transport infrastructure includes all infrastructure that is related to the provision of public passenger services for rail, light rail, bus and ferry. It will also broaden the definition to include bus stops to allow authorised persons to exercise their enforcement powers effectively and safely at bus stops whilst also ensuring that there is minimal encroachment on public space.

Thirdly, the bill will clarify that a transit officer may either release a detained person on the direction of a police officer or hold the person until a police officer arrives to deal with the person. It also creates offences for equipping, requiring or allowing the use of a taxi meter in a vehicle other than a taxi.

Public transport is very important to my constituents in Algeria. At the moment we only have access to a very well run bus service through the Brisbane City Council. I spoke about it last night and I will raise it again today. The Salisbury-Beaudesert rail line study has been ongoing. It was begun under the former Labor government, but it will be completed under our government, I am sure.

Mr Rickuss: John Mickel hated that transport service.

Mr SHORTEN: I take that interjection. When I was campaigning, the then local state member did not seem too enthusiastic about appealing to the government on behalf of constituents to get the rail line up and running. I have now been fighting for six years to get this rail line up and running.

Under the former government, the South East Queensland Regional Plan identified that Flagstone's population is forecast to grow to 130,000 people by 2031. If that figure is true and correct, then we will find that Beaudesert Road and Middle Road, which run through my suburb of Boronia

Heights, will be a car park by six o'clock every morning. It is imperative that the Salisbury-Beaudesert rail line study is completed. It is imperative that we as a government make it an objective to deliver for the people of not just Algester but also Lockyer, Beaudesert and Logan. Public transport is critical to achieving a number of goals: to diversify the areas where people choose to live and to give them access to education, their jobs and shopping centres.

Mr Rickuss: Would you be interested in private enterprise being involved?

Mr SHORTEN: I will not take that interjection. I will leave that alone at the moment.

I will continue to advocate for a rail line to be built. I know that the member for Beaudesert raised it again here this morning. We will be working together with our colleagues from Logan and Lockyer to see that the rail line is put at the top of the agenda for our particular area.

I would like to close by quoting from the minister's introductory speech, and it is a very important statement. In relation to the bill he stated—

It is a leap forward in restoring public confidence in public transport which was so heavily eroded under the previous Labor government.

I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise in support of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Before I speak about the bill, I want to take this opportunity to pass on some words of appreciation that I did not get time to give when I spoke on the estimates committee report. In that speech I wanted to pass on appreciation to our committee's chairman, the member for Warrego, for the fine job he does. He has obviously built up a huge reservoir of knowledge and, with that, wisdom in how to make good use of that to get the best out of his committee members. I also commend the fine work of the secretariat—Kate McGuckin, Rachelle Stacey, Susan Moran and Lisa van der Kley. I have been in public life for many years and I have never come across a finer bunch of women who really research and serve the committee well. I appreciate the help that they give us very much.

The objectives of the bill are quite clear, and I say at the outset that I accept any improvement in outputs and efficiencies in the area of public transport. I am very supportive of any decrease in costs to deliver services, any enhancement of outputs, anything that makes our dollars go further and makes people's communications with one another increase, and that is one significant reason I support this bill. Obviously the dissolution of TransLink is the primary objective of the bill, and it achieves some of this purpose by repealing the Transport Operations (TransLink Transit Authority) Act 2008 to remove unnecessary duplication and help resolve community and operator interface issues that have resulted from two separate units of administration for passenger services.

It also clarifies responsibilities and powers for staff who work in this sector. It gives authorised persons the authority to carry out certain work. Currently, authorised persons are unable to direct a person to leave or not enter public transport infrastructure when the person is contravening a civil banning order. The amendments will extend the scope of the power for exclusion orders from currently covering contravention of an exclusion order to also cover contravention of civil banning orders.

Another interesting aspect of the bill is that it will create an offence for taxi meters to be put in vehicles other than taxis or limousine services. That is an interesting issue. Another matter that is a practical concern is that six months is just not long enough for a temporary arrangement for a service. The maximum term of six months has not given the department sufficient time to complete a full, rigorous and open tender process for the subsequent contract service, so the amendment will extend the maximum term for entering into an emergency service contract without inviting offers to 12 months. For these reasons and for many others that have been shared by other speakers today, I indeed commend and support this bill.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.53 pm): I rise to speak on the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The bill dissolves TransLink, which was established in 2008 under the transport operations act as a statutory authority to perform functions on behalf of the state. It is my understanding that TransLink was to deliver mass transit services at a reasonable cost to the community and the government by bringing responsibility for mass transit in South-East Queensland under one organisation. All of TransLink's functions are now to be transferred back to the Department of Transport and Main Roads with the brand used but no longer acting as a statutory authority.

I have no trouble with reducing corporate bureaucracy under any shift in the organisational structure, but what troubles me is the associated targeted staff reductions in corporate, support and RoadTek roles within the department and TransLink of 18 per cent, or 1,970 full-time equivalents according to statements made by the minister in July. Under these cuts facilitated by organisational reform, the impact to regional areas can be dire. Those jobs on the ground relate to the lifeblood of rural and regional areas—that is, the integrity of our roads. Can members imagine what this means to a member representing an area from Winton to Camooweal and Karumba to Birdsville? I can assure members that any job losses in these areas are felt and do leave gaps. I had a distressed call from the

council in Winton after word was out that two employees were being lost to the town. This was a decision that was made many years ago by the previous government when it centralised services, only to find later that it had to reverse the decision because things were not working out and it was not the best way to deliver services. Providing efficiencies in metropolitan areas can work, but it can often be to the detriment of rural and regional areas.

I am very happy for the concentration of making public transport in the cities better. However, some aspects of this bill have failed to recognise some of the shortfalls in regional services. Mount Isa has between five and 10 taxis operating at any one time for a population of 23,000 over a radius of approximately five kilometres. This presents obvious issues in the middle of summer under the heat or in monsoonal rains when a single parent needs help getting kids to school or a battler is trying to repeatedly get into town for job interviews, both of which are situations that have come to my attention. Clearly in Mount Isa there are large gaps in public transport that many community groups and organisations have tried valiantly to close in the past.

Rather than lobby for a costly and cumbersome conventional type bus service that just will not work in a place the size of Mount Isa, and being pragmatic, there is a drive from people in the area towards a more viable option to provide a service to those members of the community who cannot afford the taxi service but need to get to, let us say, school, job interviews, pharmacies or a doctor's appointment. In order to provide a taxi like service to allow these people to do that, we need something that is less flexible than a taxi service but more affordable than those services which operate on a call-out type basis. The sort of proposal that seems to be the answer to providing something in between in those areas is in conflict with the intent of this bill—that is, using private cars and underutilised organisational buses with volunteer coordinators and drivers. This bill seeks to remove the opportunities in this way and is one aspect of this bill that I have strong difficulty with.

Some small towns have limited commercial opportunity for a full-time taxi service but may have opportunities for less formal private type arrangements, and often it serves a purpose and works all right. If we make the legislation too tight for these rural areas, then they just will not bother and these types of services may be lost to the community. To put members in the picture, I remember well coming into a small town in the Mount Isa electorate in a remote area where I presumed I was being picked up in a taxi or what looked like a taxi. It had a driver and was taking a fare. I asked the driver how long he had been driving and he said, 'I just started today. I went in to buy something from the shop and the guy asked me to pick you up!' I am probably not doing the story justice here, but I thought it was pretty funny at the time. That sort of service has a role, and I would urge the minister to look at that sort of situation, because it can hurt communities if the legislation is too tight in that regard.

Presumably there is a strong role for the changes where regulations may well provide a better outcome for travellers in metropolitan areas but may not help us much in the bush. This is something that requires consideration by the minister, who needs to acknowledge the impact of this for existing and potential services in rural and regional areas. I ask the minister to give consideration to a monitored relaxation in areas like Cloncurry and Mount Isa. These smaller towns may not seem significant in Brisbane, but certainly issues such as these have an impact on the quality of life in these areas. In saying this, I acknowledge overall the wonderful service that public transport provides in Brisbane, and any moves towards efficiencies in that area are well received. I remember well relying on this service myself while studying and working and training for footy around Brisbane. I very much relied on that service then and I know how critical it is to people in the south-east.

I acknowledge that there may be some benefits to this bill. I am happy to support anything that reduces the duplication of services and potentially provides more affordable services to those people who rely on public transport in the city. But I plead with the minister to consider some of the issues that I have raised that negatively impact on rural communities. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (5.59 pm): I rise to give support to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The primary aim of this bill is to dissolve the TransLink Transit Authority as a statutory authority, which will remove unnecessary duplication. This move will also introduce greater transparency and accountability, which, as we have heard several times this week, is an integral aim of all legislation that is being introduced by this LNP Newman led government.

This bill aims to ensure there is great capacity to effectively resolve community and operator interface issues. I have a particular interest in this bill, as it relates specifically to the improvement of integrated transport services with other providers in regional areas. Schedule 1B specifically mentions areas in the Samford Valley as belonging to the integrated mass transit area. This is significant, as it ensures that consideration must be given to ensuring that the planning strategy must give effect to the integrated regional plan.

In a submission that I made recently to the Assistant Minister for Public Transport I highlighted the need to improve services in this area. Without wishing to pre-empt the outcome of this review, I again add weight to the need to review both the frequency and the extent of services throughout the Samford Valley, Samford and Bunya regions to ensure that the new transit hub, Ferry Grove station, is effectively

utilised through improved integration of these services. When coupled with initiatives that have been already introduced and mentioned by the member for Chatsworth earlier this afternoon, such as the 10th and subsequent trips free for go card users and by capping the fare increases to half that promised by those opposite, this LNP government is delivering upon its commitment to make our public transport network more reliable, affordable and appealing to commuters.

This bill also improves the administration of civil banning orders. This amendment allows a transit officer to detain a person under the direction of police until the arrival of police and transfer to their control. This measure eliminates the risk to commuters and the public at large that may have occurred during transport to police facilities.

I cannot let the irony riddled commentary of the member for Bundamba go through to the keeper. Somehow the short-sighted lack of planning of the previous administration is suddenly our fault. As she was previously a member of the government, surely she would know that a better time to intervene and increase parking availability at a greenfield site would have been a few years ago, when the designs were being finalised. The particular irony for me is that, even with a new park-and-ride facility at Ferny Grove, an end-of-the-line transit hub that is capable of accommodating nearly 1,000 cars, that, too, will be well short of the requirement for the area. The irony is that, yet again, a complete lack of focus on future requirements for planning in lieu of immediate political advantage means that communities are making do with substandard infrastructure. Perhaps the most ironic aspect is that there were reportedly PPP partners willing to engage the state to deliver effective long-term solutions for the community but these were overlooked. In conclusion, I thank the minister and his department for the introduction of these common-sense amendments. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.03 pm), in reply: I would like to thank all honourable members for their contributions to today's debate on this bill. In response, I would like to reinforce a statement I made when introducing the bill to the House—that this is a very important bill as it forms part of this government's reform program aimed at returning prosperity, accountability and opportunity to Queensland.

This government is committed to leading and delivering a public transport system that is valued by the people of Queensland. A core commitment of this government is to lower the cost of living for families. This bill aims to cut waste and to deliver better planning and infrastructure. It will revitalise front-line services and restore accountability. Incorporating TransLink into a division of my department will deliver economies of scale, clear accountability and optimisation of services. It will do so by reducing community and industry confusion in having to deal with various parts of the government because, under the model introduced by the bill, public passenger services will be delivered by a single agency, which will help resolve community and operator interface issues that have resulted from two separate units of administration for public passenger services.

The member for South Brisbane said that this bill was all about pushing the government's agenda. She is right. The government is committed to public transport that is affordable, reliable and frequent. The previous government's agenda was 15 per cent fare increases year after year. The previous government's agenda was a three-year-low reliability of the rail network. And when it comes to frequency, public transport users know how frequently their bus or train did not show up and how frequently their fares went up. The member for South Brisbane seems to be suffering from a bit of paranoia. She thinks this bill is all just a conspiracy and the Premier is just trying to settle old scores.

Let us look at the Premier's achievements when he was Lord Mayor of Brisbane: record numbers of bus purchases; the expansion of the CityCat fleet; record transport infrastructure investments, like the TransApex plans that reduced congestion and consequently improved public passenger transport travel times, making public transport more attractive; and record funding of public transport through the council's community service obligation payments. For the benefit of the House, I am happy to table a rigid bus equivalents per bus history from the council.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Rigid bus equivalents per year since 1996' [[1501](#)].

In her speech the member for South Brisbane also attempted to relitigate issues that were covered during the estimates hearing concerning patronage figures. She tried to justify the way patronage was calculated under the previous government. Those figures showed falling patronage, so—lo and behold—they changed the way the numbers were calculated. She said that New South Wales had changed its rail patronage numbers once its smart card had been introduced. I have news for the member for South Brisbane: their smart card has not even yet been rolled out.

The member for South Brisbane suggested that this bill was about enabling political influence over public transport planning processes. Let us cast our minds back to the morning of 29 February 2012, when thousands of passengers were left stranded when a clamp failed, shutting down the rail network. What was the then government's response? Remember, it was in the middle of an election campaign. It gave free travel the next day. You cannot say that that was not a political decision. Do not forget: the government was in caretaker mode at that stage. It did not consult the opposition; it went ahead, at a cost of \$2 million.

The member for Morayfield made some very important points about the government's commitment to reducing the cost of living, including the nine-trip incentive that then allows for free travel for the remainder of the week and the minimisation of annual fare increases—halved from the 15 per cent proposed under the previous government. These are real incentives to get more people onto public transport and they are far more effective than the money poured into the backpacks and the water bottles that delivered nothing for public passenger patronage.

The member for Logan spoke about changes to the civil banning order provisions. Civil banning orders aim to ensure the safety and security of people using public transport. They also serve to protect the amenity and condition of the network. Some people seem to think they can abuse the system and behave in a way that affects other passengers and impacts on the network. A significant proportion of the worst repeat offenders do not pay their fines. The primary issue with the legislation is that the department currently cannot make a civil banning order against these people who think they do not have to pay their fines.

These amendments will clarify and streamline administrative processes, which will mean that the government will be able to pursue repeat offenders who avoid paying their fines. Currently a person can be detained by a transit officer, but transit officers are required to transport detained persons to a police officer. That means that a transit officer would need to use the network to transfer the detained person. This amendment will remove the requirement for a transit officer to transfer a person to a police officer, as this is not practical and can be unsafe for other persons using the network.

The changes to the definition of public transport infrastructure will provide for more effective application and enforcement of the legislation, particularly in relation to the enforcement of passenger transport offences. The change will make it clear that train platforms, overhead walkways, bus stops and passenger set-down areas are also public transport infrastructure. For example, the change will mean that transit officers can direct an offender off a bus and deal with the offender, if necessary, at a bus stop.

Finally, I would like to thank my ministerial staff and departmental staff for their hard work in bringing this bill to the House. I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 59—Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Choat, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempston, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, Millard, Minnikin, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seenev, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Springborg, Stevens, Stuckey, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Johnson, Menkens.

NOES, 7—Byrne, Mulherin, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Trad. Tellers: Miller, Scott

Resolved in the affirmative.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! When members are returning to their seats or leaving the chamber, could they please do so in silence.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 33, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.25 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (6.26 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.26 pm to 7.30 pm.

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (7.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That government business orders of the day Nos 4 to 6 be postponed.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

SURAT BASIN RAIL (INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT) BILL

Resumed from 14 September (see p. 2079).

Second Reading

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (7.31 pm): I move—

That the bill now be read a second time.

The Surat Basin Rail project is a private proposal to construct a 214-kilometre railway between Wandoan and Banana to enable large scale mining and export of thermal coal from the Surat Basin via the Port of Gladstone. The state has granted an exclusive mandate to SBR Joint Venture to progress the project through to financial close. That exclusive mandate was granted by the former government. Under the terms of that mandate, the SBR must be developed at no cost or risk to the state as an open-access multiuser rail freight corridor with a capacity to meet demand from all potential users.

The exclusive mandate places two key obligations on the state: the state must secure the rail corridor at the joint venture's cost and, if the project achieves financial close, grant the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture appropriate tenure rights to enable construction and operation of the Surat Basin Rail. The state must also negotiate with the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture the terms of the concession of agreements to govern the construction and operation of the Surat Basin Rail. The suite of concession agreements will include a development agreement including the construction licence, an independent verifier deed, an agreement to lease, an operating agreement lease and side deeds with the financiers and the construction contractor.

The overarching objective of the bill before the House tonight is to create a specific legislative framework for the private Surat Basin railway, which complements existing legislation that applies to railways in Queensland and ensures that the state can protect its interest under the concession agreements that will govern the construction and long-term operation of the Surat Basin railway. The bill aims to achieve this objective by enabling the lease to be exempt from section 121 and part 8, division 3 of the Property Law Act and section 67(3)(a) of the Land Title Act. The bill also provides for relevant provisions of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, with appropriate amendments to apply to the Surat Basin Rail and the rail corridor.

The bill also enables the Coordinator-General to grant certain persons access to land adjacent to the rail corridor for the purpose of railway works and investigations, when and if it is required. It also enables the designation of common areas where the rail corridor crosses non-tidal boundary watercourses and the construction, operation and maintenance of watercourse crossings on that common area. The bill also enables the designation of the land surrounding the rail corridor as a transport noise corridor under the Building Act 1975, if it is so required, and the bill enables the lessee to grant easements across the rail corridor to adjoining landholders for the term of the lease. Finally, the bill enables severance of the rail assets from the land for taxation purposes for the term of the concession period, if required.

The Surat Basin Rail (Long-term Lease) Bill 2011—the SBR bill 2011—was introduced into parliament on 24 October 2011 by the previous government. It was the first attempt at a piece of legislation connected with the Surat Basin railway. That Surat Basin Rail bill 2011 proposed the enactment of legislative provisions that would give certainty to the legal framework for the Surat Basin railway by exempting the proposed lease over the rail corridor from those sections of the Property Law Act and the Land Title Act. After introduction the Surat Basin Rail bill 2011 was referred to the former Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. A private committee briefing on the SBR bill 2011 was held in November 2011 and the public submission period was completed in January 2012. However, the inquiry lapsed when the parliament was dissolved earlier this year.

After the election, as the Coordinator-General advanced the program to secure the Surat Basin Rail corridor and negotiations with the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture on the concession agreements during 2012, it became evident that a broader range of enabling legislation was required than was contemplated in the Surat Basin Rail bill 2011. It also became very apparent to me that the rights of the landholders that were going to be impacted by this project were not adequately addressed in the Surat Basin Rail bill 2011, introduced by the previous government.

As the Surat Basin railway is the first private rail development in Queensland in which the proponent is an investor rather than a railway manager, there is uncertainty about whether that existing legislation would regulate the construction and operation of the Surat Basin railway. There was a clear need for more comprehensive legislation that addressed all of the relevant issues, those identified by the Coordinator-General and those that I was concerned about, rather than simply reintroducing the Surat Basin Rail bill 2011 to the new parliament.

The bill before the House tonight retains the provisions of the Surat Basin Rail bill 2011 and incorporates a range of new provisions relating to the regulation of the corridor and the surrounding land, statutory powers to access land, tenure over roads and non-tidal boundary watercourses, severance of assets for taxation purposes and administration of the bill by the Coordinator-General. It addresses a range of issues that would have affected landholders that were not properly addressed in the former bill.

The primary entity that will be affected by the bill before the House tonight will be the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture, comprising ATEC (Dawson Valley Railway) Pty Ltd, which is a subsidiary of ATEC Rail Group; QR Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd, which is a subsidiary of QR National Ltd; and Xstrata Coal Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd, which is a subsidiary of Xstrata Coal Queensland Pty Ltd. The Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture supports the state objectives in preparing special legislation. Consideration will be given to the implications of the bill in the state's negotiations with the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture on concession agreements.

However, the bill before the House will also have implications for landholders whose properties are affected by the Surat Basin Rail corridor. Hopefully, the impacts will be no greater than those already applying under existing legislation relevant to the railways. It builds on the existing legislation by incorporating new procedures and protections for the benefit of landholders which provide for the interests of private landholders to be considered when the Coordinator-General makes decisions under the bill, provisions that minimise inconvenience to landholders when certain powers such as statutory access are exercised by the Coordinator-General or authorised persons, and provisions that provide additional rights for compensation to be claimed when a landholder suffers loss as a result of powers being exercised, such as the closure of a private railway crossing by a railway manager. In part, these new protections reflect higher expectations for procedural fairness and natural justice and for adequate and fair compensation in contemporary legislative drafting relating to legislation that affects landholders' rights. However, the bill also reflects the government's intent that the interests of private rail proponents must be balanced with those of the private landholders and local councils with whom they come in contact.

There are no broader ramifications for the community arising from the bill. However, the environmental and social impacts of the Surat Basin Rail project were considered in detail by the Coordinator-General when the environmental impact statement for the Surat Basin railway was assessed.

Community consultation has also been undertaken by the state in relation to the Coordinator-General's assessment of the environmental impact statement for the Surat Basin Rail project under part 4 of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, with the report on the EIS released in December 2010. The proposal to declare the Surat Basin infrastructure corridor state development area under section 77 of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act was made in May-June 2010.

Surat Basin Rail will be the first private rail development in Queensland in which the proponent is an investor rather than a railway manager. Normally railways in Queensland are owned and operated by the railway manager. The Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture has advised that it intends to own the railway and contract other entities to perform the role of railway manager during the construction and operation of the Surat Basin railway. The railway manager appointed by the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture will manage the corridor, rail infrastructure and dealings with service providers. The Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture does not intend at this stage to own or operate any rolling stock as its customers will enter into their own arrangements with rail service operators.

This Surat Basin railway proposal differs from previous railway proponents which have employed a vertically integrated model in which the railway owner, railway manager and railway operator are related entities. In particular, the separation of the roles of railway owner holding tenure over the corridor and railway manager with responsibility for the control of the corridor is unique and presents a number of challenges and a number of concerns for landholders.

As the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture's intended model of private rail development is unprecedented, there is uncertainty about whether the existing legislation, in particular the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, could regulate the construction and operation of the Surat Basin railway. This bill provides comprehensive legislation to ensure relevant provisions which regulate railways within existing legislation will apply to the Surat Basin railway and adapts those provisions to address the separation of the roles of the owner and the railway manager.

There have been concerns raised in the time since this bill was introduced into this House with regard to the purpose of the provisions allowing third parties to do works in the Surat Basin railway corridor. They have been raised by Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture. But the bill provides for third parties to seek the Coordinator-General's approval to conduct works within the Surat Basin rail corridor, including construction of roads by local councils and development proposals by proponents. Proponents can also apply to the railway manager for approval to carry out works on the Surat Basin railway corridor, but if the Coordinator-General approves the development the Coordinator-General's approval will prevail.

The purpose of these provisions is to ensure works in the corridor can proceed if they are considered necessary by local councils or considered important by the Coordinator-General as the state entity responsible for the coordination and facilitation of strategic development projects. It is particularly important that these powers exist given the number of local council roads and local landholder access roads that will cross the Surat Basin railway corridor.

There have also been a number of concerns raised by landholders who are impacted by the corridor with regard to what protections will be afforded to them as landholders who will be subject to the statutory access powers. The bill will provide a statutory access regime to enable the Coordinator-General and persons authorised by the Coordinator-General to enter private land and to carry out certain activities for the Surat Basin railway. This statutory access regime will enable the effective and efficient construction and operation of the Surat Basin railway. These provisions do not relate to potential customers seeking access to rail services on the Surat Basin railway.

There are two types of statutory access powers given to the Coordinator-General. One is the power to enter the Surat Basin railway corridor and adjacent land to carry out railway works. The other is the power to enter any land to investigate the potential suitability of the land for an expansion or realignment of the Surat Basin railway corridor. These powers are similar to the existing powers of the Coordinator-General under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act and the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads under the Transport Infrastructure Act.

The powers have been included in the bill due to the private nature of the Surat Basin railway and the objective to create a stand-alone legislative framework for the railway. Only the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture, as the railway licensee or the railway lessee or the railway manager for Surat Basin Rail, will be able to apply to the Coordinator-General for an authority to exercise the Coordinator-General's statutory access powers.

There are some key features of this process which include: the applicants must consult with the landholder prior to applying; the Coordinator-General may consider anything relevant; the Coordinator-General may make inquiries and request additional information when considering the application; and the Coordinator-General may selectively decide which powers will be granted and impose conditions considered appropriate in relation to the access. The Coordinator-General must only grant an authority for land to be accessed which is considered to be reasonably necessary to carry out the works or the investigations. Time limitations will apply—three years for railway works and one year for investigations—to ensure activities are carried out within a reasonable time and limit inconvenience to landholders. Failure to comply with a condition of an authority is an offence. The Coordinator-General may cancel an authority if the authorised person has not complied with the conditions of the bill or the imposed conditions of the authority.

The bill declares that the grant of an authority to the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture or the railway manager is not a commitment or approval of the state and does not commit the state to acquiring any land. A person is not an employee or agent of the state because the person has been granted an authority.

Protections for landholders affected by the statutory access regime include: that persons entering properties must give seven days prior written notice containing the prescribed information as set out in the bill or gain landholder consent prior to entering the land; identification relating to the authority must be produced to the landholder if requested and persons exercising the powers under this bill must take as much care as is practical to minimise damage to the land or inconvenience to the landholder; and landholders may claim compensation or require restitution works to be carried out for loss or damage or the taking of materials.

Just as landholders have expressed concern about some of the issues surrounding the Surat Basin rail corridor so local councils have been quick to identify issues that affect them. The bill replicates the rights available to local councils under the Transport Infrastructure Act to seek approval to construct new roads or change the management of existing roads across the Surat Basin rail corridor. The bill also

provides for local councils to continue to construct, operate and maintain roads within declared common areas as provided for in the Transport Infrastructure Act. Notably, the bill also imposes obligations on local councils with respect to transport noise corridors should any be designated under clause 55 of the bill and chapter 8B of the Building Act 1975 which applies to rail corridors under the Transport Infrastructure Act and to supply information to the Coordinator-General regarding the Coordinator-General's functions under the bill or the local government's functions under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009.

There are also provisions in the bill to allow for the variation of leased boundaries. That has caused concern amongst adjoining landholders. However, the details of the bill should provide some comfort to adjoining landholders with regard to the effect that those provisions will have. The exemption of lease from the LTA will only impact on the parties to the lease—namely, the Coordinator-General and the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture. This act prohibits alterations to leased boundaries and would mean that the parties would have to negotiate a new lease any time a change in the lease boundaries is necessary or desirable for operational or other reasons over the long-term life of the project.

An example of a scenario in which the boundaries might change is for the expansion or realignment of the railway. Under clause 8 of this bill, the minister may declare a railway lease to be an exempt lease which will result in the lease being exempt from this section of the LTA. The aim of this exemption is purely administrative and will benefit the state by reducing the cost of administering the lease arrangements once any change to the boundaries have been made. The exemption will not impact on the rights of the adjoining landholders or the acquisition powers available to the Coordinator-General to acquire land under the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act. The exemption will not oblige the Coordinator-General to acquire additional land or to exempt any future acquisition process from being administered in accordance with the Acquisition of Land Act. Any acquisition process to acquire further land for the rail corridor will need to follow the usual statutory process.

In particular, the issue of crossings over and under the railway has caused considerable concern for landholders. The question of whether they will be provided for alternative access arrangements has been one that has been raised many times. The bill is based on section 169 of the Transport Infrastructure Act, which enables railway managers to temporarily close or regulate railway crossings if they are satisfied that it is necessary because of an immediate threat to the safety of the railway or the public who may use it. In order to afford additional protection to landholders and occupiers with a licence or easement for a private railway crossing, the bill includes abilities for these people to claim compensation if they suffer direct loss as a result of the closure and to seek review of the railway manager's decision to close or to regulate the crossing. These provisions do not exist in the Transport Infrastructure Act but they have been incorporated into this bill to reflect the policy objectives that the interests of the private rail owner ought to be balanced with those of private landholders.

There have also been questions raised about the capacity for the railway lessee to grant easements over the Surat Basin rail corridor and how that might diminish the rights of landholders. The bill will enable the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture, as the railway lessee, to grant and register easements across the Surat Basin rail corridor to adjoining landholders for the term of the Surat Basin rail lease. Under section 23 of the LTA, the only person who can grant an easement over land to be burdened is the registered owner. In this case this will be the Coordinator-General, as the owner of the Surat Basin rail corridor.

In order to enable the safe and efficient operation of the Surat Basin Rail, it is considered appropriate that the joint venturer, as lessee and party to the concession agreements, should be able to grant and administer easements over the Surat Basin railway corridor to adjoining landholders for the term of the lease. This approach is consistent with the powers available to railway managers. It will not prevent the Coordinator-General from granting or registering an easement that burdens the corridor. Notably, the bill provides the capacity for the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture to grant easements to adjoining landholders. However, the easements will only be able to be created and registered if signed by the relevant landholders, and it is expected that the easement terms will be managed by the joint venture's railway manager.

There has also been concern raised with me in regard to managing watercourses and how the powers in relation to managing watercourses in the bill may create a liability for landholders. In that respect, the bill replicates the Transport Infrastructure Act. These provisions of the Transport Infrastructure Act give the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads powers to manage the impacts of watercourses on railways, and that has existed for many years. Under the terms of the bill, the Coordinator-General may give a railway manager approval to construct or divert a watercourse in carrying out railway works. An approval may be given with or without conditions.

The clauses of this bill provide the Coordinator-General with powers to manage water from a watercourse which is collected and obstructs, or is likely to collect and obstruct, traffic on the railway. Under these powers the Coordinator-General may require the owner of the land on which the

watercourse is situated to take action that the Coordinator-General considers necessary or desirable to reduce or prevent the collection of water. Alternatively, the Coordinator-General may exercise statutory access powers to enter the land on which the watercourse is situated to take the necessary action.

These clauses have been included in this bill to give the Coordinator-General sufficient powers to regulate the Surat Basin railway in a manner consistent with other railways in Queensland. The powers in this bill have the potential to create a liability for landholders in relation to a watercourse on their land. However, it is considered that when exercising the powers the Coordinator-General will take into account whether the water has collected on the Surat Basin railway corridor as a result of the construction or the diversion of a watercourse by the railway manager or the actions of a landowner. The Coordinator-General may choose to regulate the impact of the railway manager's works by imposing conditions on that approval.

This bill does not address potential flooding of landholders' land as a result of the railway. These matters were considered during the environmental impact assessment process for the Surat Basin Rail project under the state development act during the period 2007 to 2010, and the Coordinator-General issued his evaluation report for the project in December 2010, recommending that the project proceed subject to the recommendations and the conditions contained in the report. The conditions contained in that report require the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture to ensure that the impact of flooding on neighbouring land is taken into account during the engineering design of the railway.

I want to thank the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee for its careful consideration of the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on Monday, 29 October 2012. I now table a copy of the Queensland government's response to that report.

Tabled paper: Copy of a letter, dated 16 October 2012, from the Director-General, Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to the Chair, State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee relating to the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 [[1502](#)].

I propose to move amendments during consideration in detail which will give effect to the government's response. The committee's report made eight recommendations. I have carefully considered the committee's report and I will address the recommendations in detail.

The government accepts recommendations 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 made by the committee, with one modification to recommendation 4. The second recommendation relates to the powers in part 3 of the bill to access land outside the railway corridor to carry out railway works and investigations. The committee has suggested that as the responsible minister I could facilitate the development of a memorandum of understanding between affected landholders and Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd to address concerns arising from part 3. The government does not support this particular recommendation, but it agrees with the committee's intent and considers that the current drafting of the bill already offers a mechanism to achieve the desired outcome.

The government is conscious that landholders are presently negotiating agreements with the Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd and with the railway manager about the interface between their properties and the railway. I am concerned that this recommendation may result in landholders feeling compelled to enter into further agreement regarding potential statutory access. It is not clear at this point how often these powers might be exercised, if at all. As an alternative, the bill provides for the Coordinator-General to impose conditions on a works authority or an investigation authority. If considered appropriate when making a decision under part 3, the Coordinator-General could set conditions about ongoing consultation with landholders and matters of particular concern to landholders. Failure to comply with such a condition would be an offence and would allow the Coordinator-General to cancel the authority. This approach has the advantage of the force of legislation which would not be available under the proposed memorandum of understanding.

In recommendation 4 the committee proposes that the bill include a statutory review of the proposed act within five years of its commencement. The government supports this recommendation with some modification. Given the size and significance of the task to build the railway, the government considers it would be more beneficial for the bill to be reviewed once construction has been completed and the railway is in its early years of operation. I am therefore happy to propose that the bill be amended to provide for a review to be conducted within 10 years of the bill's commencement.

Finally, the committee has recommended that the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 be reviewed at the same time as the proposed act. The government does not consider that this is appropriate. The impact of private involvement in the funding and delivery of the railway infrastructure on the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 can be taken into account at the relevant time.

The government is committed to facilitating the Surat Basin Rail project and ensuring that the railway can be operated in a safe, efficient and effective way that takes due account of the rights of landholders who are affected by this project and properly compensates them for the impact that this project will have on their businesses and their lives. That is why the government and I as the minister have been willing to take into account the recommendations that have been made by the committee. I

think this is probably the first bill that has been amended to this extent in this House after its consideration by a committee. I congratulate those members of the committee and all of those people who made submissions to the committee in their deliberations.

The committee system in this parliament is still relatively new, and I spoke about the intent with which it was introduced earlier in this House today. Another important part of the intent with which the committee system was introduced was to allow legislation such as this to be properly scrutinised by the people it will affect the most—that is, the landholders, the communities and in this case the private operator of the railway. It is gratifying to me and I believe to other members who were part of designing that committee system that in this case the committee system has worked. The members of the committee have done the job. They have provided the opportunities for the inputs, and I as minister have been prepared to accept their recommendations and I will be moving amendments to give those recommendations effect during the passage of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MALONE** (Mirani—LNP) (8.00 pm): It is with real pleasure that I rise tonight to speak on the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012. As chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, I commend the committee members and the research staff who worked so hard to put the committee report together. This report is a significant step forward in terms of building infrastructure here in Queensland. This is a billion dollars worth of rail line in a corridor that traverses possibly a third of Queensland. There is no doubt that this has raised some concerns with the landholders in the corridor it will go through. Even as the committee deliberated on this report, the landholders were raising concerns but in negotiation with the developers of the project and the ultimate proponents of the project. It was rather difficult for the committee to get all the facts and make some judgements about where it was going to finally end up.

I am very pleased, as I am sure the other committee members are, that the government has recognised the importance of the bill, and I am sure the Deputy Premier is very aware of that as he has been working on it for a long time. The Deputy Premier has spelt out very clearly the technical aspects of the bill before the House tonight and there is probably no need for me to go into it in that depth. This is a very significant project. It is one of the biggest projects we have seen—it is certainly the biggest rail line project Queensland has ever seen—and it sets the tone for further rail line corridors to be gazetted through Queensland as the export of coal goes ahead.

I would also like to comment on the committee process. I am the chair of the committee, and I can say that we have been rather busy. I commend the members of the committee for their dedication and their support not only of the chair but also of the research staff. With the numbers the opposition has in the House, it is very difficult for the deputy chair, Tim Mulherin, the member for Mackay, to always be there, but I can say that we have worked fairly closely together, although we have had our disagreements. Overall, I think this project and the research that went into it prove that the committee system will work and work well.

I commend the government for recognising most of the recommendations we made. I believe the Deputy Premier has made one or two minor amendments to those recommendations. I think the overall work the committee has done has been significant and it certainly sets the tone for the future. Basically, the committee system has been in place for less than a year and I think the project we are talking about and the report that was presented in this case have been rather good.

There is not a lot more I need to say, so I will confine my remarks basically to the recommendations of the committee. At the time the committee was making decisions, there were still some issues that were outstanding. It was rather heartening to have AgForce and the rail proponent appear as witnesses before the committee. Unfortunately, we found that neither had spoken to each other, so introducing them at the hearing was a step forward. I hope they were in close contact from then on to rectify some of the issues that could potentially be a problem. I believe most of those issues can be worked through with landholders.

The Deputy Premier has indicated that there will be a review of the process and the issues that have arisen 10 years after the rail line has been built. That will be a good way to make sure that further projects such as this can be streamlined to make sure they fit the expectations of all Queenslanders and the investors in this country. With great pleasure, I support the legislation before the House tonight and congratulate the Deputy Premier on his great work in bringing this together.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.05 pm): The opposition will be supporting the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill but I need to raise a few issues here. The Surat Basin Rail project has received strong support from the former government, which the Deputy Premier recognised. It will deliver a 214-kilometre rail line between Wandoan and Banana that will act as a southern missing link opening up thermal coal exports in the Surat Basin. It is a project that will support a thousand jobs during construction and 44 during its operation, and it has the potential to unlock about \$300 million in royalties per year. Most importantly, the Surat Basin railway provides a model for the private sector, rather than the taxpayer, to fund railways to support the coal industry. That is \$1 billion that this government will not have to spend thanks to the work of the former government.

The previous Labor government set up an exclusive mandate process with the successful consortium consisting of Australian Transport and Energy Corridor Ltd, Xstrata Coal Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd and QR Surat Basin Rail Pty Ltd. As part of this process, we will also ensure that this rail corridor will be open to third-party access, meaning that competition for the export of thermal coal from the Surat Basin will not be restricted. It is Labor that supported the emergence of the LNG industry in Queensland through a mandatory gas target that led to exploration that showed an industry was viable. It was Labor that laid the foundations for the opening of the Surat Basin for thermal coalmining as well. We acknowledge the importance of this project for the future of Queensland's economy and for creating jobs.

While the opposition supports the intent of the legislation, there are practical issues that are not explicitly resolved. These issues have also been raised in the recommendations of the committee, and the opposition is strongly supportive of proposed amendments to clauses 14 and 15 to require a reasonable effort to consult with landholders—this is at recommendation 3 of the committee. It was pleasing to hear the Deputy Premier say that the government will support that. We are also particularly supportive of recommendation 2 to develop a memorandum of understanding between affected landholders and the rail proponent. We are disappointed that the government has not accepted that recommendation, but I note that the minister believes the intent is there within the legislation. Further, I believe recommendation 7 in the committee's report—to make legislative amendments at part 4 to require consultation in relation to diverting or constructing watercourses—should be supported, and I am pleased that is now occurring.

I would like to commend the work of the committee in relation to this legislation. This is probably the first time a committee report has come to this chamber where the government has listened to most of the recommendations, so that is an encouraging sign and I hope it will continue. AgForce Queensland raised a number of concerns in their submission to the committee. These include the issue of certainty on what consultation will be required prior to a proponent entering adjacent land to carry out activities or to demolish, destroy and remove plant equipment, workshops, sheds, buildings or roads on adjacent land, or to divert a watercourse.

Part 2 of this bill removes the application of section 67(3)(a) of the Land Title Act and section 121 and part 8, division 3 of the Property Law Act. This means that the proponent and the Coordinator-General can amend the lease boundary without having to go through the process of applying for a new lease. It is noted in the explanatory notes that these provisions are inconsistent with the principles of natural justice. While the proponent is protected through commercial arrangements in the Surat Basin Rail operating agreement, this also raises an issue of uncertainty for adjoining landowners in the event there is some realignment of the corridor. Once again, the minister said that the Coordinator-General has powers to place restrictions on the extent of the authority to access adjacent land and to impose conditions on access.

I also note that the Coordinator-General has imposed a time frame for an authority to carry out railway works of no longer than three years and for investigations of no longer than a year. This should help to at least limit the time frame of uncertainty for adjacent landholders. However, consultation with landholders must be guaranteed through the Coordinator-General prior to any amendment of the lease boundary. All of these matters require the Coordinator-General to establish a clear process whereby the landholders are properly notified and consulted and through which they have an avenue of representation.

As AgForce have also set out, landholders should be provided with an ability to appeal to the Coordinator-General to have any structures removed from their property that have been built and are no longer required by the rail infrastructure proponent. There is also no clear mechanism in the legislation for compensating an adjoining landholder if a rail crossing is closed during construction impacting their operations. Tonight, we heard the Deputy Premier give some assurance that that issue of compensation can be addressed. I encourage the government to work closely with the Coordinator-General to ensure that there are adequate notification, consultation and potential compensation mechanisms for regional landholders.

Under section 40 of the legislation, the Coordinator-General can compel adjoining landowners to remove a build-up of water. The government should not allow instances whereby a landowner is compelled to remove a build-up of water on their property at their own cost where the build-up of water is a result of changing hydrology from the construction of the railway. I note that, once again, the Deputy Premier gave some assurances around that: the Coordinator-General would look at whether the construction of rail infrastructure would cause that impact and then would be able to give some direction. Consideration should be given to the extension of the notification time frame beyond seven days at clauses 16 and 24 where an authorised person is entering an adjacent landowner's property to carry out construction works on that land. This ought also apply to works by the proponent under section 20(2)(e)(vii) that involves demolishing existing infrastructure on adjoining land.

Furthermore, adjoining landowners should be notified well in advance where a proponent decides to locate any chemicals on their land. As AgForce point out, if a landholder is not properly notified, they could be left unknowingly in breach of a national vendor declaration in relation to their produce. While

the bill mandates that compensation would likely cover such an event, there are also reputation issues for many agricultural producers in relation to vendor declarations, particularly the Queensland beef industry, the majority of which is an export market. The concerns raised by AgForce are genuine and require close monitoring by the government and the Coordinator-General. I urge this government to take on board the concerns of AgForce as the Surat Basin railway project progresses. I do this because there are already too many examples to name here of the government turning its back on regional Queensland communities.

In its submission, the Murray-Darling Committee requested that the government ensure that national and state biodiversity strategies are considered during construction and that this project does not adversely impact on native vegetation and the surrounding landscape. I urge the government and the Coordinator-General to closely monitor compliance with the environmental impact statement conditions as this project progresses and that the vegetation and biodiversity target intentions of the Murray-Darling Committee are recognised. The Murray-Darling Committee outlined in their submission—

The potential for multi-use easements/corridors must also be considered in order to reduce the impact on vegetation and agricultural land.

The opposition is supportive of this submission and the need to minimise the impacts on prime agricultural land in the Surat Basin. With the progression of a number of new rail lines opening up the Galilee Basin and the Surat Basin, it is important that hydrological impacts are mitigated and closely monitored and that prime farming and agricultural land is not turned into flood plains and wasteland. Already we have seen the LNP government turn their back on a commitment of the previous Labor government to legislate to restrict mining around regional communities. We are yet to see what the LNP will do to the strategic cropping land that the previous government reserved for future agricultural production.

The opposition will be supporting this legislation, as I said. I would like to congratulate the chair, the member for Mirani, Mr Ted Malone, on the way that he and the other members of the committee acted during the public hearings. I also commend the public servants from the Office of the Coordinator-General for their willingness to be frank with the committee. I found the whole process refreshing. I would also like to thank the committee secretariat for their hard work and effort in making sure that we were able to meet the deadline imposed by the government. I would also agree with the member for Mirani that in all of this it really comes down to developing relationships. We can put legislation in place that provides a framework for all parties to work, but that framework can only really be used when there is a dispute. The best thing is for the proponents to sit down with landholders, listen to their concerns and work with them. If they do that they will get great outcomes. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.16 pm): I also rise to support the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012. Madam Deputy Speaker, you might be surprised as a fellow Gold Coaster that, as a member of the committee that investigated this particular bill, I have a keen interest in activities in the Surat Basin. It was my intention to speak at length about this matter, but I think the Deputy Premier has discussed this matter quite succinctly in his speech, so I will limit my remarks.

Ultimately, the Surat Basin Rail project proposes to construct a 214-kilometre southern line between the towns of Wandoan and Banana. The Surat Basin Rail link has been called the 'missing link' for some time, but I see the project as the 'critical link' to the future prosperity of the state of Queensland. It is a critical link because the Surat Basin railway will help unlock an estimated four billion tonnes of coal reserves in the Surat Basin for large-scale, open-cut mining and for subsequent export through the Port of Gladstone. It will also create employment for many Queenslanders during the construction and operational phases.

There are benefits for my electorate of Burleigh associated with the opening up of the Surat Basin region by rail. Those benefits are associated with the possibility of fly-in fly-out work in the mines that will expand into the region. The electorate of Burleigh is strategically located in close proximity to the Gold Coast Airport which, as we all know, is Australia's sixth largest airport. The Gold Coast is also the home of the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

While the federal government sits in Canberra trying its hardest to strangle the mining sector and to send investment overseas by levying extra taxes and red tape, it is the Queensland LNP government that has taken the initiative and attracted investment through private sector collaboration. With the commencement of this rail project, the next stop for Queensland is increased prosperity. I congratulate the Deputy Premier on the timely manner in which he has brought this bill before the House. I also congratulate him on the consideration that he has given to our committee's recommendations and the fact that he will move amendments because of those recommendations. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise to support the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012. As a member of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, I speak with some knowledge of the development. The project sets a benchmark by being the first private rail development in Queensland. This project, known as the southern missing

link, will connect rail lines between the towns of Wandoan and Banana. The project, referred to as the Surat Basin joint venture, has an estimated cost of \$1 billion—a sizeable investment by any means—and is necessary to develop the Surat Basin coal reserves estimated to be in the vicinity of four billion tons of thermal coal and exported through the Port of Gladstone at the Wiggins Island coal export facility.

The Surat Basin joint venture was granted an exclusive mandate in 2006 in that the railway must be an open access multifreight rail system developed at no cost or risk to the state. The state government will acquire the rail corridor and these costs will be borne by the joint venture's costs. If Surat Basin Rail achieves financial close, the state intends to grant the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture a concession to construct and operate the Surat Basin Rail. The suite of concession agreements will include a development agreement and licence for construction of the railway and the operating agreement and lease for operation of the railway over the long term. These agreements will codify the rights of the parties and ensure that the allocation of costs and risks is consistent with the public-private partnership policy.

As stated earlier, this is the first private rail development in Queensland in which the proponent is an investor rather than a railway manager and the state must create certainty as to legislative and regulatory frameworks which apply to the Surat Basin Rail. It is intended this government will assist to fast-track the Surat Basin Rail project to secure finance, with the end goal to enhance the potential economic gains for the state from development of new rail infrastructure and mines in the Surat Basin.

The bill has seven policy objectives to effectively manage conditions of assignment and termination of the Surat Basin rail lease under the contractual regime set out in the Surat Basin Rail operating agreement. This requires exemptions from sections of the Property Law Act and the Land Title Act 1994 and requires relevant provisions, with some amendments necessary to provide for the private nature of the project, to remain consistent with other statutory arrangements for rail infrastructure in Queensland. This project represents an important piece in the chessboard of development for the Surat region. It proves that the private sector in collaboration with a government is prepared to move in the best interests of all Queenslanders. I want to thank the Deputy Premier for the hard work that his department has put into this. I also want to acknowledge the hard work that the committee and the committee staff put in. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (8.22 pm): I rise to speak on the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 and offer some brief comments as a member of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee before whom this bill went for examination. The policy objective of this bill as stated in the minister's explanatory notes is to create a specific legislative framework for the development and management of the Surat Basin Rail which will complement existing statutory arrangements for rail infrastructure in Queensland and protect the state's interests under the concession agreements which will govern the construction and long-term operation of the Surat Basin Rail.

As has already been acknowledged in a couple of speeches tonight, this bill follows on from the previous bill that was introduced into the last parliament but lapsed upon dissolution of the House in February this year. I note that the former bill also went through the process of departmental briefings and calling for submissions prior to lapsing and that the objectives of the bill now before the House are similar and much of the content of the previous bill is contained in this current bill. The Surat Basin Rail project is a unique project for Queensland. It is the first private rail development of its kind and it is vitally important that we get the framework for this railway right because it will set the foundation and parameters for any future private rail developments.

Of particular importance to the committee were questions raised in the submissions around the impact that this corridor will have on landholders whose properties overlap or border sections of the Surat Basin rail corridor, and I thank the Deputy Premier for his comments on these particular issues in his contribution earlier this evening. The committee noted a number of concerns that were raised, including a landowner's need to be given information about works and investigations to be undertaken on their land, the placement and/or removal of permanent structures on land adjacent to the rail corridor, the impact on a landowner's liability if chemicals or other substances are brought onto the land by a third party, and the length of notice required before a third party can enter a landowner's land. AgForce particularly covered these concerns and others in much detail in its submissions to the committee.

The committee came to the position that we outlined in recommendation 2, which the Deputy Premier has already indicated will not be adopted, but I thank the Deputy Premier for addressing this recommendation and certainly appreciate the rationale that he has given in not accepting that particular recommendation. Critical to that recommendation and a number of others is the necessity of regular consultation that must be undertaken and should be undertaken with affected parties, particularly given the unique and groundbreaking nature of this project. This need for consultation also underpins recommendation 7 and the committee noted that the Coordinator-General should take into account the impact of adjacent landowners and occupiers before any watercourse along the corridor is diverted.

I also just wanted to briefly mention recommendation 4—and again the Deputy Premier has addressed that recommendation—that the bill include a provision requiring a review of the proposed act. I certainly thank the Deputy Premier for accepting an amended version of that recommendation so that that will be reviewed within 10 years of its commencement. Again, due to the fact that this is the first private rail project of its kind in Queensland, it is important that we get this right and that we learn very quickly from any issues that arise along this journey. This rail corridor is an important infrastructure asset for our state but could also be the first of a number of private rail projects, so regular reviews are crucial to ensure the success of both this and future projects of this nature.

The Newman government made a commitment to progress the Surat Basin Rail project in our six-month action plan that we released earlier this year. That this bill has been introduced into this parliament in the early months of this government is a practical demonstration of the commitment our government has to growing Queensland's resources sector as well as a demonstration of our commitment to regional Queensland.

In closing, I want to thank the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for its briefing and contribution to the committee's work and thank those stakeholders who participated in the process through their submissions. I also want to thank the committee secretariat and my fellow committee members for their work throughout this process. I again thank the Deputy Premier for his acceptance of many of the committee's recommendations on this piece of legislation. After the committee's scrutiny of the bill and with the recommendations of the committee being noted and many adopted, I am pleased to commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.27 pm): I rise in the House to provide a brief contribution to debate on the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012—mercifully! I endorse the comments made by the minister and the chairman of the committee that the machinations of the committee in this case worked well and were competently managed by the chair.

This joint venture is Queensland's first private investor in rail which raises some ideological questions as to where the responsibility lies for the provision of new infrastructure, particularly where shortfalls currently exist. However, I must say that it is very pleasing to see development of this nature occurring in our state and it is hard to consider it anything but a great win for this state. It provides 214 kilometres of rail over the southern missing link between the towns of Wandoan and Banana and is close to \$1 billion worth of asset. It is pleasing to know that this will produce 1,000 jobs during construction and an estimated 20 jobs during operation.

Landholder issues were my primary concern in terms of the impact of this bill, and these views were well represented by AgForce, amongst other interest groups. AgForce generally supported the approval of the project with a few concerns, mainly regarding proper consultation prior to works, and I believe that these have been given adequate regard. Under the terms it is acknowledged that the railway must be an open-access multifreight rail system developed at no cost and risk to the state but will presumably be operating with a primarily commercial agenda that may be inhibitive to users other than coal.

I always express some reservations about having private ownership of our significant infrastructure for ideological reasons, but in this case it is hard to argue that the removal of the burden for taxpayer funds is a bad result. However, I have concerns that if all of our rail lines are privately owned in the future there could be a lost opportunity for control of our supply chains, particularly for smaller users who do not have the same commercial appeal to the owner. Multiuser agreements and third-party access may be there, but when the focus of any rail line is on commercial returns there will be losers in terms of access. Some industries will not fit the model for privately owned assets, which could in some cases produce a negative outcome. In doing that, in some areas we could be compromising the viability of peripheral industries. However, I do not think this is the case in this instance.

A lot of smaller freight operators and cattle rail users have always benefited from government built and controlled rail development throughout Queensland. If the majority of our rail is eventually privately owned, we could be denying Queenslanders the growth that we have enjoyed in previous years, including in other industries apart from mining. By and large, I am supportive of this bill and what it has set out to achieve and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (8.30 pm): I rise in this chamber to speak in support of the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012. I applaud the Deputy Premier for bringing this vital bill to the House. It is important to have a framework that will provide for coal rail infrastructure in this great state of Queensland.

The objective of the bill is to create a specific legislative framework for the development and management of the Surat Basin Rail, SBR, which will complement existing statutory arrangements for rail infrastructure in Queensland and protect the state's interests under the concession agreements that will govern the construction and long-term operation of the SBR. As coal is one of our largest export products, it is critical that we support a project that will increase jobs and expand the coalmining

industry, which also has flow-on economic effects to complementary industries. If we are serious about supporting industries in Queensland, this bill needs to be supported as it makes it clear that Queensland is a place for heavy industry and is open to business—indeed, it is a real can-do state.

It is essential to support infrastructure such as the Surat Basin Rail project, as it ensures that the industry in Queensland can keep up with the demands that exist from relevant stakeholders. We need to support mineral resource growth by supporting the creation and expansion of infrastructure in Queensland to make sure that we continue to prosper as a state and make it economically viable for resource industries to invest. Indeed, the Fraser Institute *Annual survey of mining companies for 2011/2012* showed just how much as a state we have slipped in terms of economic competitiveness and attractiveness for investment in the resources industry. How many ALP members opposite would have even read or heard of the Fraser Institute report?

Developing certainty with the legal and regulatory frameworks that this bill presents will ensure industry stakeholders and landowners know the lie of the land when it comes to the future development of this project. That is of paramount importance to the industry. It is important that the Newman government makes it clear that we are willing to work with all stakeholders that are affected by this infrastructure to ensure we get the best outcome for all involved. Unlike the seven members of the ALP opposite, the Newman government really wants to engage with business in order to drive our vital export markets and ensure that we remain competitive.

As a former businessman and property developer, I wholeheartedly support this bill as I understand the need to get behind transportation infrastructure as it means growth for the immediate area, growth for the region and, indeed, growth for the state as a whole. Ultimately, the flow-on effects will help my own electorate of Chatsworth in the years to come. Queensland needs to embrace growth in its regional areas to ensure we do not get left behind and we can continue our fiscal repair process, to fix up the utter economic mess we inherited from the previous inept Labor government. It is important that we make it attractive for the coal industry to grow in Queensland. It means more job opportunities for Queenslanders and, in turn, it means great things for the Queensland economy.

The Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 makes it clear that the Newman government is willing to listen to the concerns of affected landowners—unlike the previous Labor government that seemed not to want to work with anyone. Unlike those opposite, we need to make sure landowners and industry can work together. That can be facilitated only by a state government that is willing to listen to all key stakeholders.

This bill is vitally important to the growth of jobs and our state economy overall, as it ensures there is a greater chance of potential economic gain for the region in the Surat Basin Rail project area. I am very pleased to support this bill, as I believe that making it clearer and easier for industry to build infrastructure in Queensland will ensure we have a future in the resources industry, which was one of our four key pillars that we took to the last election.

We need to be upfront with the application process to ensure projects are not delayed, thereby stalling the economy. The Newman government is committed to supporting infrastructure to make sure we have a strong future with the resources industry and that we provide a stable framework that is clear to all stakeholders. Business at all levels values certainty above all else. The fundamental difference between the Newman government and the seven opposition members across from me is that we know that, if we wish to truly prosper and grow as a state, creating infrastructure is the only way forward for Queensland business.

The true test of our legacy as a government will be the efficacy of the decisions that we make here in this House today for future generations of Queenslanders long after our time in this chamber has ended. I commend the Deputy Premier for bringing this important bill to the House. I thoroughly commend the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (8.35 pm), in reply: I thank the members of this House who have contributed to the consideration of this bill. I particularly thank the members of the committee. I recognise the contribution that was made by the member for Mirani as chairman of that committee. I thank the member for Burleigh, the member for Keppel, the member for Pine Rivers and the member for Chatsworth for the contributions that they have made in the consideration of the bill before the House tonight.

I also thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the opposition's support for the bill. I will not address some of the unfortunate politically oriented comments that he made. It is unfortunate that he chose to make those comments when addressing the bill, because they could only be described as cheap shots. But I thank him for the support that the opposition is giving to the bill.

I think the record of the previous government in respect of issues that relate to landholders' rights and the impact on landholders of infrastructure projects, and resource extraction projects in this particular area, says more than I can ever say in the summation of this debate. In fact, members who have been here for any period of time will know that I have spoken at length about the poor record that

the former government had and the extent to which its inability to manage these issues led to the quite unfortunate community disaffection that we saw in relation to the resources industry generally but the coal seam gas industry in particular. Government has a responsibility to manage these issues—to understand the issues, to listen to the community, to listen to the stakeholders who are most affected and to ensure that the legislation that we pass into law in this House both reflects and takes into account the issues that have been raised. The previous government did not do that, but that is what I think we are doing here tonight.

The job that we are doing here tonight has been made better by the committee system—by the members who worked on that committee, who did the hard work, who examined the bill in detail, who listened to the submissions that were made by stakeholders and who made recommendations based on those submissions. As I said earlier, and as a number of members have also remarked tonight, it is pleasing to see the committee system produce better legislation than would otherwise have been produced in this parliament. That is what the committee system was designed to do. The committee that was headed by the member for Mirani and the other members who were part of that committee and who have contributed to the debate tonight can be justifiably proud that they have set a benchmark. They have set an example which I hope we will see repeated many times in this parliament. We will see more examples of where legislation is amended to take account of the community input.

Those of us who have been here for a long time could remember instances where the committee process would have produced better legislation. When we were considering the committee structure in this House and how the effect of legislation can never be fully understood unless it is viewed through the eyes of the stakeholders and the community members it affects, there was one classic example that I referred to many times—that is, the vegetation management legislation.

If the vegetation management legislation had been subject to the same type of scrutiny from a committee that this Surat Basin Rail bill was subject to, had there been an opportunity for the stakeholders who were affected by that legislation—and who remain affected by that legislation to this very day, the landholders whose rights were so profoundly affected, whose capital values were so profoundly affected—to say to the legislators, ‘This will be the effect on me. This will be the effect on my circumstances,’ in the same way that the stakeholders in this particular legislation have had, then that legislation would have been better than it is today and it would not have caused the enormous degree of community disaffection, the enormous degree of angst, the enormous degree of lingering anger that continues in rural and regional Queensland.

That is but one example that I point to because it is probably the worst example of legislation. It was the worst piece of legislation that I have seen go through this House—bar none. It was a piece of legislation that was implemented by people who did not understand the effect that it had on the community, on the stakeholders, on the individuals, on the businesses, on the communities that were affected by it.

That history very much guided those of us who were part of the process that put in place the committee system that has produced results here tonight. That is very gratifying and I think it is a great legacy for people such as Mike Horan, Robbie Schwarten and Judy Spence. People worked together, in what was probably one of the very rare cases of bipartisanship that I have ever seen in this place, to put in place a committee system that allowed this sort of input from people who are affected by the legislation. I hope that we do see a lot more of those types of results here.

I encourage all of the members on the committees to provide to stakeholders, individuals and anyone with an input into legislation an opportunity to have their say in that regard. I would, however, repeat the comments that I made earlier today in this place that the committee system was never designed to treat every piece of legislation in the same way. There are pieces of legislation that have an effect on people in the community that deserve much more fulsome consideration by the committee system than others do. There are pieces of process legislation that do not need to spend a long time before a committee. There are pieces of urgent legislation and pieces of legislation that enact what is clearly the government’s agenda that do not need to go to a committee at all. We need to be able to learn to differentiate between those types of legislation.

The piece of legislation that we consider tonight is clearly one that needed to be considered carefully by the committee. It is clearly a piece of legislation where opportunities needed to be afforded to people to put forward their submissions about how this legislation and the proposal that it addresses affect them and their businesses. It is only when you hear those stories, it is only when you sit and talk to those people, it is only when you read those submissions and understand their situation that you understand how the legislation may be made fairer and more just. I think this parliament has been through a good process tonight. I congratulate the member for Mirani as chairman of that committee and the other members of the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—



Mr SEENEY (8.44 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 14 (Granting works authority)

Page 11, after line 15—

insert—

'(1A) The Coordinator-General must not grant the works authority unless satisfied the applicant has made reasonable efforts to consult with the owner or occupier of the land to be entered under the authority.'

Amendment No. 1, together with amendment No. 2, give effect to recommendation 3 of the committee's report. Recommendation 3 of the committee's report reads—

The committee recommends that clauses 14 and 15 of the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 be amended so that the Coordinator-General may only grant a works authority or an investigation authority if satisfied that the applicant made reasonable efforts to consult with the owner or occupier of the land.

Amendments Nos 1 and 2 amend clauses 14 and 15 of the bill to give effect to the committee's recommendation. The purpose of these amendments is to strengthen the requirement for consultation with landholders whose properties may be accessed under a works or investigation authority under the terms of the bill. Part 3 of the bill provides powers to enter land to carry out railway works or investigate the suitability of land for a rail corridor if necessary in the future. If the railway licensee or lessee or the railway manager wish to apply for a works authority or an investigation authority, clause 12 of the bill requires the applicant to first consult with the landholder about the proposed entry and to provide details of that consultation to the Coordinator-General.

It is implicit in the bill that the Coordinator-General would consider the nature of the consultation undertaken with landholders before granting an authority under part 3 of the bill. However, the government agrees with the committee that the requirement for the Coordinator-General to be satisfied with the consultation ought to be made more explicit to remove any doubts in the minds of the landholders. That is what this amendment—amendment No. 1, together with amendment No. 2, which together amend clauses 14 and 15—is all about. I commend the amendments to the House. I table the explanatory notes pertaining to those amendments.

Tabled paper: Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill, explanatory notes to the Hon. Jeff Seeney's amendments [1503].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15—



Mr SEENEY (8.47 pm): I move the following amendment—

2 Clause 15 (Granting investigation authority)

Page 12, after line 3—

insert—

'(1A) The Coordinator-General must not grant the investigation authority unless satisfied the applicant has made reasonable efforts to consult with the owner or occupier of the land to be entered under the authority.'

I spoke about amendment No. 2 in conjunction with amendment No. 1, so I commend amendment No. 2 to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 16 to 37, as read, agreed to.

Clause 38—



Mr SEENEY (8.47 pm): I move the following amendment—

3 Clause 38 (Approvals to divert or construct watercourses)

Page 29, lines 15 to 18—

omit, insert—

'(2) In deciding whether to approve the diversion or construction of a watercourse, the Coordinator-General must consider—

(a) for the diversion of a watercourse—

(i) the effect the works for the diversion would have on the watercourse's physical integrity and flow characteristics; and

(ii) the impact of the diversion on land adjacent to the watercourse; and

(b) for the construction of a watercourse—the impact of the construction on land adjacent to the watercourse.'

This amendment gives effect to recommendation 7 of the committee's report. Recommendation 7 states—

The committee recommends that cl 38 of the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 be amended to place the Coordinator-General under a duty to consider the impact that the diversion or construction of a watercourse would have on adjacent landowners and occupiers.

I am well aware that this issue, as I indicated in my second reading contribution, has been the cause of much discussion amongst landholders. I accept the recommendation that the committee has made that amendment No. 3 be put in place to try to deal with some of the issues that have arisen in those discussions. Clause 38 of the bill replicates section 167 of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 to ensure that the Surat Basin railway is regulated in a manner consistent with other railways in Queensland. The committee's recommendation will result in the bill departing from existing legislation.

In this instance, the government agrees that modification of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 provisions for the Surat Basin railway to require the Coordinator-General to consider potential impacts on adjacent land would improve the bill. The amendment is consistent with the government's policy objectives that private landholders ought to be dealt with fairly under the bill. I believe that the amendment makes it very clear that the private owners of infrastructure such as the Surat Basin railway have a very clear obligation. That has been made very clear by the amendment that has been suggested by the committee. I commend that amendment to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 38, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 39 to 43, as read, agreed to.

Clause 44—



Mr SEENEY (8.50 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 44 (Approval to carry out works near the railway)

Page 35, after line 10—

insert—

'(2A) However, before giving an approval under this section the Coordinator-General must consult with a railway manager and the railway licensee or railway lessee.'

Amendment No. 4, together with amendment No. 5, gives effect to recommendation 6 of the committee's report, which states—

The committee recommends that cl 44 be amended to include a subsection along the lines of cl 33(4).

Clause 44 of the bill enables the Coordinator-General to approve an application by a person to conduct certain works near the railway. Clause 34(4) requires the Coordinator-General to consult with the railway licensee or lessee and the railway manager when considering an application by a local government for approval to construct, maintain and operate a road across the railway. This too has been an issue raised by local governments where local roads intersect the railway corridor. The committee has recommended that the Coordinator-General be required to consult with the railway licensee and the railway manager before approving works under clause 44.

I thank the committee for this recommendation. I consider a requirement of this nature would not only improve decisions made under clause 44, which allows the Coordinator-General to approve works, but also improve decisions made under clause 45, which enables the Coordinator-General to direct that unsuitable works be stopped and rectification works completed, if necessary. The amendment will ensure that parties with a relevant interest in the Surat Basin rail corridor land and the railway have an opportunity to present their views before the Coordinator-General exercises powers under clauses 44 and 45 of the bill. Amendment Nos 4 and 5 will give effect to those changes and I commend those amendments to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 44, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 45—



Mr SEENEY (8.52 pm): I move the following amendment—

5 Clause 45 (Power to require works to stop)

Page 36, after line 7—

insert—

'(6A) Before giving a direction under subsection (2) or a notice under subsection (4), the Coordinator-General must consult with a railway manager and the railway licensee or railway lessee.'

I have spoken about this amendment in the consideration of the previous amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 45, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 46 to 49, as read, agreed to.

Clause 50—



Mr SEENEY (8.53 pm): I move the following amendments—

6 Clause 50 (Interfering with railway)

Page 39, line 4, after 'relevant person'—

insert—

'under this section'.

7 Clause 50 (Interfering with railway)

Page 39, line 6, after 'authorised'—

insert—

'under section 44 or'.

8 Clause 50 (Interfering with railway)

Page 39, after line 27—

insert—

'(7A) If a railway manager gives an approval under this section, the railway manager must give the Coordinator-General written notice of the approval.

'(7B) The notice must include details of the works or other thing to which the approval relates.

'(7C) An approval given by a railway manager under this section is of no effect to the extent the approval—

(a) is inconsistent with an approval given by the Coordinator-General under this section or section 44; or

(b) is for works for which the Coordinator-General has given a direction under section 45(2) or a notice under section 45(4); or

(c) is for works or another thing for which the Coordinator-General has refused to give an approval under this section.'

9 Clause 50 (Interfering with railway)

Page 40, line 6, 'otherwise'—

omit, insert—

'if there is no railway manager'.

These amendments give effect to recommendation 5 of the committee's report, which states—

The committee recommends that the apparent inconsistency between clauses 44-46 and clause 50 of the Surat Basin Rail (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012 be resolved.

Recommendation 5 relates to the relationship between clauses 44 to 46 and clause 50 of the bill, which enable the Coordinator-General and a railway manager for the railway to approve certain works in the rail corridor. The government considers that the bill as currently drafted provides for the Coordinator-General's decision to prevail over a railway manager's decision in the event of an inconsistency. However, the government has considered the committee's report and agrees that for clarity it would be beneficial for the bill to be amended to provide unambiguously for the primacy of the Coordinator-General's powers.

Amendment Nos 6, 7 and 8 will amend clause 50 of the bill to ensure that the Coordinator-General is notified of any approvals given by the railway manager and provide that any approval by a railway manager will be of no effect if it is inconsistent with a decision made by the Coordinator-General under clauses 44, 45 and 50. Amendment No. 9 clarifies that it is only envisaged that the Coordinator-General would exercise powers under clause 50 in circumstances where there is no railway manager. I commend the amendments to the House.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 50, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 51 to 70, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr SEENEY (8.55 pm): I move the following amendment—

10 After clause 70

Page 51, after line 2—

insert—

'70A Review of Act

'(1) The Minister must review the operation of this Act no later than 10 years after the commencement of this section.

'(2) The Minister must, as soon as practicable after the review is finished, table in the Legislative Assembly a report on the outcome of the review.'

This amendment gives effect to recommendation 4 of the committee's report, which states—

The committee recommends that the Bill include a provision requiring a review of the proposed Act within five years of its commencement.

As I indicated in my second reading address, the government supports this recommendation with modification. From the time the Surat Basin rail project achieves financial close, it will take several years for the project to reach practical completion and be available for rail service operators to transport coal through to the Port of Gladstone. As the key aspects of the bill will not be implemented until the railway is in operation, a review of the bill within five years may be limited in scope. To achieve the intent of the committee's recommendation but take into account the relevant phases of the Surat Basin rail project, the bill will be amended by this amendment to provide for a review to be conducted within 10 years of the bill's commencement. Amendment 10 proposes that subclauses 70A(1) and (2) be included in the bill to require the minister to review the operation of the future act and table a report on the outcome of the review in the legislative assembly. I commend the amendment to the House.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 71, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (8.57 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. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (8.57 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (8.58 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 13 November 2012.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (8.58 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Rochedale Community Garden

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (8.58 pm): It was my great pleasure on 23 September to attend a wonderful event in my electorate. That was the regular meeting of the Rochedale Community Garden. This is a wonderful community initiative in the Mansfield electorate which has grown quite dramatically in a very short time thanks to the dedication of its many members. Since its first meeting in June this year, a 600-square-metre plot of land that has been vacant for 14 years has been turned into a large, thriving community space. Close to 100 different types of vegetables, fruits and herbs have now been planted, and membership of the Rochedale Community Garden has doubled to about 35 to 36 families. People come from Rochedale, Mackenzie, Daisy Hill and Kuraby to experience and enjoy this garden, which is really the only facility of its type in that area. It is a great project and it has the potential to create a real sense of community and connection to the environment.

The garden helps educate people, particularly children, about where their food comes from and how it is grown. It also encourages people to be closer to their source of food. In doing so, it manages to take the conversation about big issues like food security and sustainability down to a local, practical level. It also has the obvious benefit of feeding the volunteers and their families.

I would like to draw particular attention to the garden's founding members—Steve Griffin, the president, and Carolyn Collins, the vice-president, whose leadership and dedication are in fact the backbone of this project. Steve has donated the land on which the garden is based as well as materials used in the construction of the garden beds. Carolyn, who runs Turner's Garden Centre on Miles Platting Road at Rochedale, has contributed garden products and plants and her vast knowledge and experience of horticulture. They have both donated a significant portion of their time and energy to get the garden underway.

I would urge people to drop in and have a look. The address is 160 Rochedale Road, Rochedale. The formal meetings are each Sunday afternoon from three o'clock. There is one this coming Sunday afternoon. It is great to encourage your family and children, in particular, to get involved. There is a membership fee of \$40 per family.

So what is next for the garden? They have received some grant money from Councillor Adrian Schrinner for a composting toilet to be situated on-site. They are building a shed and some more garden areas and they would like to move towards a permanent shelter and a clean storage facility. Those are the aims for the garden in the forthcoming months and years. I very much look forward to working with them and watching the garden grow. I encourage the residents of the Mansfield electorate to go and join the garden.

Dakabin State High School

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (9.02 pm): Yesterday I had a visit from students from Dakabin State High School. I was very impressed with the young people and after spending time with them and hearing of their dreams and plans it gives me much confidence in our future. I have worked very closely with the principal, Mr Schuh, and the P&C since being elected to get the much needed capital funds to rebuild the school. I am pleased to report that our collective efforts have resulted in the much needed repairs and improvements commencing. I thank the minister for that.

Consequently, plenty of action on facilities in 2012 has seen Dakabin State High School continue to rebuild its reputation in our community. I am impressed with the incredible loyalty and commitment of the staff, parents and students at the Dakabin State High School. In 2012 the school has undergone a landscaping program that has seen grass laid on what was once bare dirt. Retaining walls have been erected to stop water and mud damage to classrooms. Classroom renovations have repaired electrical and water issues.

I am happy to report that the newly announced \$1.4 million for the special education unit means construction has begun. That will include a new business centre and two refurbished teaching spaces. Nine teaching spaces are also marked for refurbishment under the year 7 to secondary program. Work is expected to commence prior to the commencement of the 2013 school year.

The recently announced expansion of funding to remove backlogged maintenance issues has been gratefully received by the school. Major projects like the covered walkways and the hall roof can be undertaken as a matter of urgency because of the injection of a further \$100,000 to Dakabin's maintenance fund. I thank the minister and his DG and the regional director for their assistance in this matter.

Dakabin State High School, despite the adversity of past years, continues to produce outstanding senior results for students in our community. In 2011, 69 per cent of tertiary bound students were awarded an OP of between 1 and 15. Some 98 per cent of graduating seniors received a qualification. Some 78 per cent of graduating students received a QCE and 80 per cent of graduating students achieved at least one VET certificate. This is an excellent school.

There is much to be done. Our ESL unit continues to draw disadvantaged students from all areas of Brisbane north and the Sunshine Coast. Commencing with nine students in 2009, the expected enrolment in the unit will be over 100 by 2014. This specialised program will require specialised facilities to continue at this site. I give the minister fair warning that he will be hearing from me on this issue. I simply want to congratulate the principal, Mr Schuh, and his staff, the students and parents for their commitment to and support of this outstanding school. I say to my community that this is a great school.

Townsville, Rugby League Test

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (9.04 pm): I take this opportunity tonight to speak of the Australia versus New Zealand test match that was played at Dairy Farmers Stadium in Townsville on 10 October. Townsville played host to our first-ever test match between Australia and New Zealand in front of a sell-out crowd of almost 27,000. For those who might have missed the test match or have been living under a rock, the Kangaroos defeated the Kiwis in a closely contested and nail-biting game 18-10.

North Queensland has a proud history of hosting rugby league tests. We have hosted three tests between Australia and Papua New Guinea—first in 1998, followed by 2000 and then the World Cup in 2008. However, this was the first between Australia and New Zealand.

Hosting an event of this magnitude is the result of a combined effort by Townsville Enterprise and Events Queensland. Without the strong support and tenacity of both these organisations to rope in the ARL Commission, I probably would not be speaking on this tonight. They worked side by side to outbid two major capital cities in order to bring the event to Townsville.

The relationship between Townsville Enterprise and Events Queensland is a strong and vibrant one. Together they delivered a prestigious event. I congratulate Townsville Enterprise CEO, Mr David Kippin, and Townsville Enterprise General Manager, Tourism and Events, Ms Patricia O'Callaghan, for their dedication, hard work and commitment in bringing the test match to Townsville.

Events like this also reflect the success of the ongoing partnerships between the ARL and Events Queensland and of course the strong leadership and guidance from Minister Stuckey. I also thank Events Queensland for their contribution, hard work and dedication. We all know that events of this calibre underpin tourism in North Queensland and are significant contributors to our economy and to building a better Queensland.

The Australia and New Zealand test match alone provided an estimated economic boost in excess of \$3.5 million towards our regional economy. It provided in excess of 19,000 bed stays with over 40 per cent of those coming from outside the region. This goes hand in hand with our V8 race, the under-19 international cricket world cup and the Townsville Festival of Chamber Music, which is now a significant event in the Queensland's events calendar.

In addition to those events, we have also hosted major international music acts such as Tim McGraw and Guns N' Roses. We currently have a campaign to bring Pink to Townsville. The test match showcased our great city in both the national and international market and we continue to open our doors to the rest of the world to show that Townsville is really a great place to visit and a great place for an event.

John Muntz Causeway

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (9.07 pm): I wish to update the House on the progress of the John Muntz Causeway. This causeway is located on Oxenford-Tamborine Road and is a major arterial link in the southern part of the Albert electorate. This important arterial link was damaged during the 2010 floods which struck our state and was rendered closed to traffic until repairs were carried out. These repairs were somewhat controversial as multiple members of the community voiced concerns over the viability of repairing a causeway which should have been replaced many years ago.

Furthermore, the previous government spent vast amounts of hard working taxpayers' money on two other bridges on the Oxenford-Tamborine Road whilst the most critical bridge, the John Muntz Causeway, was left neglected. Upon completion of the repairs, the causeway was reopened to traffic. However, the repairs were unable to withstand the next flood event in 2011. The 2011 floods caused extensive damage to the upstream side of the culverts. These culverts cracked and emergency repairs were once again undertaken to stabilise the causeway. Subsequently, only a single lane of traffic can cross the causeway.

These interim repairs have allowed this vital link to be once again somewhat operational. However, during peak traffic times, the line of vehicles queued to use the causeway stretches for over one kilometre in each direction. To help manage traffic, traffic management lights have been installed.

The residents of Albert have had to endure this motorist's nightmare for far too long. However, I am delighted to announce to the House that the Newman government has provided funding for the construction of a new bridge. The new bridge is expected to be 60 metres long and constructed immediately downstream of the current structure.

Mr Hart: How much money?

Mr BOOTHMAN: The cost of the construction of a new bridge will be about \$4 million. The design of the new bridge will provide improved flood immunity and reduce flooding impacts during future wet weather events. I can advise the House that a new design for the replacement bridge is close to completion and it is anticipated that construction will begin in April 2013, subject to contractor availability and weather conditions.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads have also informed me that they are arranging project signage to be installed on either side of the causeway to advise road users of the construction time frame for the new bridge. On behalf of the residents of Albert and all those who utilise this major arterial link, I wish to thank the Newman government for funding this crucial project.

Andrew, Mr C

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.10 pm): I had the honour of being one of the speakers at the funeral of Cedric Andrew Andrew last Friday, 26 October 2012. Cedric Andrew was a much loved member of the Mackay South Sea Islander community and the wider community who passed away on 16 October at the age of nearly 102. It was a sad occasion but also a joyous occasion as we gathered to celebrate the wide and varied life of our great, dear friend Cedric Andrew.

I have known Cedric and his family for decades and helped celebrate his 100th birthday last year. The wonderful thing about having known someone like Cedric is that he was a true legend of the Mackay community. Cedric was a listener and a communicator and had great stories about the many changes he had seen over the generations in our community. Cedric was a proud family man and is survived by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Cedric and his family have made a huge contribution to telling the history of South Sea Islanders in Mackay to academics and the wider community by sharing their knowledge and culture. His willingness to share his quiet wisdom and understanding, gleaned over more than a century of just living, means that part of Cedric will live on in the Mackay community.

Every time people in Mackay cross the Cedric Andrew Bridge over Sandy Creek—he was born on the banks of that creek—they will be reminded of the strengths and the values that Cedric brought to this community. Those future generations who may not know of him will think when they pass over that bridge that he must have been an important man. The naming of the bridge in his honour was a tribute not just to Cedric but also to the South Sea Islander community in Queensland, of which Cedric was such a proud member.

The way that Cedric's grandparents were brought to Mackay is still a source of shame for our community, but the wonderful tapestry of social, cultural and spiritual life that is Queensland today owes much to the rich tradition of the South Sea Islander people. Cedric typified that spirit. Cedric was a true pioneer. He was one of the first Australia-born South Sea Islanders to own freehold land in Queensland. Cedric was pivotal in raising the historical significance of the old mission hall, resulting in the preservation of the hall. During the dreadful period of our history that was the White Australia Policy, the old mission hall was an important meeting point for members of the South Sea Islander community who were facing repatriation.

Cedric was a dedicated trade unionist and a proud Labor voter all his life and worked tirelessly as an advocate for Mackay's South Sea Islander community. Cedric singled out his involvement in politics, through his life membership of the Australian Workers Union and his association with the Labor Party, as being one of his proudest life achievements other than his family when he celebrated his 100th birthday last year. As the region's longest living resident, Cedric's contribution to Mackay is unmatched and I know he will be sorely missed by many in the Mackay community. My thoughts and prayers go out to Cedric's family and friends, in particular his daughter, Christine, who has dedicated her life to caring for her parents.

Atkinson, Mr R

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.13 pm): On behalf of the opposition I would like to place on record our thanks to Commissioner Bob Atkinson, who retired this week from the Queensland Police Service. I want to echo what the Premier said in this House earlier this week as well. Commissioner Atkinson has served the people of Queensland very well. He is a very dignified man. He held that role with honour and respect.

I have known Commissioner Bob Atkinson for about 10 years now and I have always found him to be a man of humility, a man of grace and a man of dignity. I have seen him on various occasions over those years at multicultural events, and he was very passionate about involving the Queensland Police Service with the different multicultural groups right across Queensland. I am glad that the new commissioner, Ian Stewart, will continue in that tradition. I also want to place on record the opposition's support for the announcement by the police minister that Commissioner Ian Stewart is taking over the

helm. It is a great appointment and Commissioner Stewart demonstrated his strength and his leadership, and I think all Queenslanders would recognise that strength and leadership, throughout the floods.

I did want to share one story with the House about Commissioner Bob Atkinson. About nine or 10 years ago a police officer was tragically killed in an accident. I knew his daughter. His daughter said to me that for the months and years following that tragic accident, Commissioner Atkinson would regularly visit the family. He would visit the family and he would talk to the children and the mother just to see how they were going. He never told anyone that he did this. I think that is a sign of a man who puts others ahead of themselves. He did not ask for any recognition of the role he was playing in making sure that that family was okay.

I also want to place on record that I think Commissioner Atkinson saw his fair share of interesting ministers over those years—both Labor and LNP, ending with Minister Jack Dempsey. He is a fine man. He leaves a lasting legacy. He has over the years, I believe, reformed the Police Service. They are very credible. They are hardworking throughout the state and they are doing a great job. I think he will be remembered for many, many years to come. I hope that he and his wife, Glenda, enjoy retirement. He has worked very, very hard. He has dedicated most of his life to the Police Service and he will be sadly missed.

Sexual Violence Awareness Month

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (9.16 pm): While it is often a pleasure to engage with the community, there are times when the simple need itself can be a sad, if not tragic, indictment on our society. Both I and the member for Woodridge were recently invited to attend a candle-lighting ceremony by the Centre Against Sexual Violence in Logan Central which is an annual initiative under the Sexual Violence Awareness Month campaign. This year, as in previous years, the CASV joined together with the Murrigunyah Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Women to remember people who have suffered and are still suffering due to the impact of sexual violence on their lives by the lighting of candles and pausing to remember them and their struggles and healing.

The aims of the Sexual Violence Awareness Month campaign are to raise community awareness about the prevalence of sexual violence; to promote the prevention of sexual violence; to encourage the community to take a stand against sexual violence; to encourage those who have been and/or are experiencing sexual violence to seek assistance and support; and to encourage all members of the community to break the silence around sexual assault and abuse. Sexual violence is often a taboo topic of conversation, particularly for a survivor. The sense of shame and stigma surrounding this crime ensures this, and yet sexual violence can occur at any time and under any circumstances, without discrimination to gender, age, income level, profession or belief system. It can affect us all at some time in life, whether through personal experience or the experiences of those close to us.

While it is generally known that there are many cases of sexual assault that go unreported, the Australian Institute of Criminology have regrettably reported that the prevalence of sexual abuse occurs to one in three girls before the age of 18. Statistics also show that 27 per cent of total sexual assaults in Australia were perpetrated against females under the age of 14. These figures represent real people—someone's daughter, someone's wife, someone's mother or grandmother who are the victims of sexual assault and violence.

There is also a significant correlation between sexual violence and homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, imprisonment, physical complaints, parenting issues and problems with interpersonal relationships. As I mentioned at the beginning of this speech, the fact that occurrences of sexual violence facilitate the need for such awareness is indeed a sad indictment on our society. It is equally true that those people, the ladies and supporters of the Centre Against Sexual Violence and the Murrigunyah Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, are a shining example of the efforts being made to address this disgraceful issue. I commend them for their support to victims and their ongoing efforts to raise awareness of this issue.

Georgetown, Dental Health Services; Curr, Mr R

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (9.19 pm): I rise in the House to speak on the issue of dental services in Georgetown in the far north-eastern reaches of the electorate of Mount Isa. Michael Rafferty, from the Georgetown Progress Association, has passed on this information to me as a plea to the government to not forget the people of the bush for such a critical service. I was advised that this service used to be monthly; however, the last service that was provided was in June this year. A five-month wait for a visiting dentist is a poor outcome and cannot be ignored. The nearest dentist is otherwise located at Atherton, which is a 600-kilometre round trip, and this is a burden by anyone's measure. There is no funding to reimburse travelling and accommodation expenses for people travelling to Atherton for dental care.

The previously existing dental service was wound back for a number of reasons. It now relies on the RFDS to bring the visiting dentist at a reported cost of \$1,000 per round trip, reportedly funded by Queensland Health, and a new sterilisation unit was needed at the hospital. I have learned today that the dental health team from Cairns will travel by road at the end of November to deliver dental care. This is welcome short-term relief but falls well short of being a solution. There is still no assurance that the service will be reinstated on a regular basis.

Given the importance of dental health to a person's health and wellbeing, I appeal to the Minister for Health on behalf of the people of Georgetown to reinstate the dental service that was previously available. To this end, I table a non-conforming petition signed by 141 people that represents well over half of the entire population of 254 people, suggesting that most of the adult population of the area.

Tabled paper: Non-conforming petition regarding the cancellation of dental service in the Etheridge shire, North Queensland [\[1504\]](#).

Once again, these people do not ask for much and they do not have a lot in their part of the world, but they deserve some commitment towards a resolution to this problem.

I would also like to quickly make reference to the recent passing of a lesser celebrated but highly regarded icon of the north-west cattle industry. I feel this person who was less celebrated deserves recognition in a place like this for the part he played in developing Queensland. Robert Curr passed away on 21 October 2012. His passing represented the passing of an era of hardened stockmen who spent their life on the horse, prior to roads and the prevalence of road trains in very wild and remote country. His forebears were the very first pioneers in the gulf country and they worked well with the first Australians to develop the cattle grazing industry and pave the way for so many people who rely on that industry today. His extended family still reside there today and they are a strong part of the North Queensland community.

Robert Curr and his brothers are people who make us all proud to be Australians. Outback Australia has its own role models, too, and for a very great many of us Robert Curr and his family have been our role models. One of the things that he would have been most proud of is that this tradition will live on in the Curr family, who are still out there proudly manning Australia's frontiers, among our country's best. We will surely miss Robert Curr.

Police Service

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (9.22 pm): I would like to endorse the words of the Leader of the Opposition in her recognition of the retiring Police Commissioner, Bob Atkinson. I found Commissioner Atkinson to be a man of impeccable character, an outstanding gentleman and a man who was really passionate about the Queensland Police Service and those 10,500 police officers he led over the last 12 years. All I can say is, Bob, I wish you well in your retirement. I trust that it is a long and healthy retirement and I trust that our paths will cross again.

I also want to put on the record here tonight how sad I was to learn of the resignation of Assistant Commissioner Alan Davey from the Central Queensland police region based in Rockhampton. Alan Davey has been the officer in charge of the central region now for about four years. He is an outstanding policeman of some 38 years service, and I believe he is far too young to be tendering his resignation from the Queensland Police Service. Whilst we have this changing of the guard in the Queensland police, I trust we will not have a fallout as a result. We cannot afford to lose men of the calibre of Alan Davey from the Queensland Police Service. It is people of this calibre, this integrity and this decency who lead from the front. I hope the ship will stabilise and it will move forward in a purposeful direction under the captaincy of Commissioner Ian Stewart. I wish Ian Stewart every success in his term at the top.

I also want to comment this evening on the innuendo that has been levelled around my electorate in Western Queensland about some of the police stations that could be under threat of closure. I am talking about Yaraka and Adavale—one-man, lonely, remote, outpost police stations. They say that preventative medicine is better than the medicine itself, and I can say that having a policeman in these remote areas is certainly better than having no officer at all. I have spoken to the minister today and I can report that there is no chance in the world that those two remote outposts will close at Adavale and Yaraka. I want to put on the record for those people out there who pump these stories and this innuendo that this LNP government is about front-line services. It is about providing protection to all Queenslanders regardless of where they live. It is very pleasing to know that Adavale and Yaraka are going to remain as police stations in the electorate of Gregory for many more years to come.

Toowoomba North Electorate, Schools

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (9.25 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise tonight to talk about some of the school visits I have had in the electorate of Toowoomba North. It has been a great pleasure to get around to these schools and inform them of some of the funding that has been made

available to them, particularly in relation to school maintenance and most recently literacy and numeracy. One of the schools I visited was Harlaxton State School where I had the pleasure of spending the morning with their prep class.

I would like to remind parents who have children who will be turning 5 by 30 June 2013 that time is approaching to enrol them in prep at their local school. The Queensland prep year gives all young Queenslanders the very best start to school by helping them make a smooth transition to year 1 and it sets them on the path to lifelong learning. Prep is not compulsory but it is highly recommended. It runs five days a week and the children can stay all day.

At Harlaxton State School, I got to meet the prep teacher, Gillian Thompson, a teacher with 35 years experience. I had great fun with the teacher and the children as they got to show me their engine room, their office, their interactive whiteboard and some computer reading programs. The engine room is an innovation of Mrs Thompson and is a system which drives everyone's learning. Some of the children—Justice, Justin, Ally-Bell and Rhys—showed me their interactive whiteboard, and Takara and Sky demonstrated the Reading Eggs program on the computers. Both of these tools are state-of-the-art and they provide interactive and self-driven learning for students. It was really good to go to Harlaxton State School. It is actually the state school of my children's grandfather and great-grandfather who both did their primary education there. It is good to see the school moving ahead.

I also had the pleasure of visiting Toowoomba North State School recently and we discussed maintenance. I visited this school earlier in the year and I asked them what their biggest issue was. It is an old school, and they pointed to the ceiling and they said it is really hard for the children to concentrate when the paint falls off the ceiling and onto their books while they are reading them. So it was with great pleasure that I was able to discuss with them the \$160,000 the minister has made available to update the maintenance of that school to ensure that the school has the quality facilities the children deserve. I do not think any children in our state system deserve paint falling off the ceiling and onto their reading books while they are trying to learn, and Toowoomba North State School will now be able to take that maintenance money and get the ceilings painted and ensure the children have a much brighter future.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.29 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Barton, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, 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, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young