



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

### Thursday, 21 March 2013

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## THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2013

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Member for Redcliffe; *Courier-Mail* Article

 **Mr DRISCOLL** (Redcliffe—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise this morning on a matter of privilege I wish to raise regarding a false and sensationalist article in the *Courier-Mail* today. This article makes the false allegation that I have lied to this parliament. Madam Speaker, I emphatically confirm to you and this House that such an allegation made in a newspaper is false. I most certainly have not lied to this parliament and I find such a claim to be contemptuous and disgraceful.

This article relies on private emails, including from my wife especially, to base its false allegation. My wife's terminology in private emails to me is not relevant to my actions as an MP. In reality and fact, what ultimately came about with regard to the article was a community and not-for-profit group amenity and benefit. I welcome any legitimate scrutiny of my work as the member for Redcliffe from any legitimate agency based on facts, not based on smear and innuendo in the *Courier-Mail* in tandem with the Labor Party and some individuals jealous of the fact that I have been given the honour of representing my beloved home town of Redcliffe in this Queensland parliament.

### REPORT

#### Ombudsman

**Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Ombudsman a report titled *The asbestos report—an investigation into the regulation of asbestos in Queensland*. I table the report for the information of members.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Ombudsman: Report, dated March 2013, titled 'The asbestos report—an investigation into the regulation of asbestos in Queensland' [[2307](#)].

### PETITIONS

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

#### Tablelands Regional Council, Boundaries

**Mr Knuth**, from 162 petitioners, requesting the House to redraw the divisional boundaries of the Tablelands Regional Council to move the Walsh River, Watsonville and Irvinebank towns into Division 2 [[2308](#)].

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

#### South East Queensland Bus Network Review

**Mr Judge**, a paper and an e-petition, from 959 petitioners, requesting the House to extend the consultation period of the South East Queensland bus network review and undertake to review a diverse range of bus commuters in order to provide a thorough and reliable basis for any rationalisation and/or termination of bus services [[2309](#), [2310](#)].

Petitions received.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Ayr Community Cabinet

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.34 am): I am pleased to announce that the next government community cabinet meeting will be held in Ayr on 21 and 22 April. This is the seventh community cabinet this government has conducted in regional Queensland following on from successful meetings in Townsville, the Whitsundays, Cairns, Goondiwindi, Kingaroy and the Fraser Coast. I am really looking forward to meeting with the local residents and businesspeople of the

Burdekin. It is a region that contributes so much to our state economy. It is also a region that lies at the heart of this government's strategy to create new opportunities for all Queenslanders. And the people of the Burdekin electorate are certainly fortunate to have a high-calibre local member—a wonderful lady—who goes in to bat for her home turf every day. Whether it is the region's top-quality agricultural produce, its stunning natural scenery or its role as the gateway to our resources industry, the Burdekin is a place of great opportunity.

This government is fostering the region's potential by investing in local communities and giving them the services they deserve. Some of the investments that we have made in the Burdekin include a new fisheries officer position, extra police officers, almost \$100,000 to rehabilitate the Woongaloo wetlands between Townsville and Ayr, funding for natural disaster preparation and access to new touring arts productions. By taking cabinet to different regions we get an on-the-ground feeling for how things are progressing and get to hear a cross-section of views about how we can make a change for the better in this state. In each community, the cabinet gets to see firsthand how this government is creating new and better opportunities for Queenslanders. Community cabinet gives local residents, businesses and non-government organisations direct access to ministers and me—a chance to raise issues with relevant ministers and this is a golden opportunity for locals to discuss their concerns and thoughts directly with the cabinet. I expect that we will meet with people from across North Queensland who will go to the effort of travelling to Ayr for meetings with ministers. I look forward to them telling us about their ideas and accepting their input. I certainly encourage everyone to consider registering for a meeting and I look forward to catching up with them next month.

### **Liberal National Party Government, The Next 12 Months**

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.36 am): Earlier this week I outlined to the House how the past year has been one of change for our state—change that was desperately needed. During our first 12 months in office this government has delivered improvements for Queensland and Queenslanders. And we are not going to stop. We have done the hard yards to undertake urgent fiscal repair work and to turn around the state's finances. We have reported regularly to the Queensland people in our six-month plans about how we are tracking on achieving our goals and we will continue to do that. We are just beginning to see the results of our work to deliver on the five pledges we made to Queenslanders in seeking election.

The government is now looking forward to the next 12 months of working to make Queensland a great state with great opportunity. A great state means Queenslanders having access to great jobs, a great lifestyle and great services from government. Over the next 12 months we will continue to deliver on the commitments that we have made. We will continue to support sensible development, we will back business growth and we will empower local government and local decision making. Through our open data initiative we will put more and more government information out there for Queenslanders to access for free and to use. We will build infrastructure that is better and more resilient for Queenslanders both now and in the future as we continue the flood recovery task. We will take head-on the ongoing challenges of balancing the state's books and making sure we get value for money from taxpayer dollars—challenges that have been illustrated by the Commission of Audit.

Over the coming months we will develop a new plan that will take in the views and ideas of Queenslanders about how they would like to see their state grow over the coming decades. The Queensland Plan will be a collaborative process that will involve the community, industry and all levels of government to set the long-term vision for Queensland. We will implement our Blueprint for Better Healthcare in Queensland to build health services and community confidence in partnerships across all health sectors and levels. We will release our 20-year tourism plan to get Queensland back to being Australia's No. 1 tourist destination. We will release a 30-year water strategy which will plan for affordable, secure, and sustainable water services across Queensland. We will release the Queensland Agriculture Strategy for doubling the state's primary production by 2040. We will implement the government's response to the skills and training task force report and release an action plan to help meet industry's training needs and grow the Queensland economy. And we will continue the ongoing fight to reduce the burden of red and green tape on business, even while people from faraway Canberra continue to load the burden back the other way.

The next 12 months will also bring the conclusion of the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, the Queensland Health payroll inquiry—and won't that be interesting, particularly with the things we have been seeing in recent days?—and the review of Queensland's police and emergency services. We will respond to the recommendations of these inquiries and take whatever action is necessary.

As the second year of this Queensland government begins, people from across this state can rest assured that their government will continue to work hard and, importantly, work with them and for them to ensure that they have access to the great jobs, great lifestyle and the great services that they deserve.

### **Mining Industry, Code of Practice for Local Content**

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.40 am): The resources sector is crucial to Queensland's future. The mining industry provides more than 70,000 direct jobs and, through \$28 billion in local purchases, an estimated 400,000 indirect jobs. In the approval pipeline are proposals forecast to be worth \$71 billion on top of the \$56 billion investment already happening in the CSG industry.

Our government is intent on leveraging that investment to provide economic growth and job creation across the state. We want to see as much of the resource sector investment spent here in Queensland with local firms employing local people. To this end we have asked the Queensland Resources Council to lead a process, in partnership with the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association, to establish a new, collaborative approach to engage local industry and secure enduring community support. Today the QRC is releasing its new code of practice for local content for major mining projects. I table a copy of the code for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Resources Council, Code of Practice for Local Content, 2013 [\[2311\]](#).

It focuses on full, fair and reasonable access for local industry in all aspects of these big projects. The code asks proponents to adopt practical local content strategies to make sure there is early engagement with Queensland industry and inclusive procurement practices for the major projects. It provides guidance and support for proponents to deliver effective strategies. It establishes an implementation framework and a group of industry stakeholders, including suppliers, to monitor and refine delivery. Importantly, the code also provides a means to assess progress and to report outcomes publicly. For it to be successful it needs to be a partnership. Proponents who work with local industry and provide full access to their projects will expect competitive supply.

Our state government will do its part in promoting adoption of the code through supplier education and helping to position local industry to tender successfully. Programs like those of the Industry Capability Network, which supports access to project opportunities and fosters supplier development, will help proponents deliver effective local content strategies. Project proponents will benefit directly from taking ownership of local content principles. Wherever local companies rise to the challenge there is an opportunity for long-term local supply solutions to their needs. A reliable local supply chain can do much to reduce risks and offer better whole-of-life project value. The code's principles and its framework for practice have the potential to secure real benefits for Queensland. This is another measure to ensure we are creating opportunity, prosperity and jobs for Queenslanders in the future.

### **Newman Government**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to reflect on the achievements of the Newman government in the 12 months since we took office. During the election campaign we made a number of commitments to the people of Queensland: to restore Queensland's finances and put an end to Labor's waste; to revitalise front-line services; to reduce the red tape that impedes business; and to grow a four-pillar economy based on tourism, agriculture, construction and resources.

We also made the commitment to lower the cost of living for Queensland families. I was particularly proud to introduce the Treasury (Cost of Living) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill in the first sitting week of the 54th Parliament, one of the first bills introduced by this government. That bill and our first state budget both contained initiatives aimed at alleviating the pressures on households and businesses.

To get Queensland's economy going again we knew we had to give Queenslanders confidence: confidence to raise a family; confidence to build a home; confidence to invest and expand a business. We introduced a raft of carefully targeted measures, including a \$15,000 Great Start Grant to make the dream of homeownership a reality while also stimulating the construction industry. To help Queenslanders struggling with the rising cost of power we froze the standard electricity tariff for 12 months, while South-East Queensland water users benefited from an \$80 rebate. Our changes to the payroll tax threshold go to the heart of our belief that small business is the lifeblood of the Queensland economy. We established Projects Queensland, a stand-alone unit within Treasury, to deliver value for money for taxpayers and foster public-private partnerships on major infrastructure projects. Two-way trade is vital to the Queensland economy, which is why we announced a comprehensive review of Trade and Investment Queensland to develop a clear plan and focus for this important agency. Perhaps most significantly, we set Queensland's government finances on the path to recovery. Just five days after being elected, we announced that we would conduct an independent audit of the state's finances. We appointed commissioners and we received recommendations for fiscal repair.

In what little time we had left in the 2011-12 financial year, the Newman government immediately set to work and identified savings of \$186.5 million—or \$2.8 million a day. On 15 June, in their interim report, the three independent commissioners warned that a business-as-usual approach would result in debt reaching \$100 billion by 2018-19. In other words, if Labor's wasteful spending had been allowed to continue, Queenslanders would have been paying an interest bill of \$115 million a week—or \$685,000 an hour. As a result of the measures we have implemented, in 2014-15 Queensland's gross borrowings are now forecast to be \$4.8 billion less than under Labor, dropping from \$85½ billion to \$80.6 billion. That is a saving of over \$1.3 billion in interest repayments over the forward estimates. We are working towards a fiscal surplus, which will mean that Queensland is able to support itself and live within its means. We will not be spending more than we earn and racking up more and more debt on the taxpayer funded credit card.

It is encouraging to note that the changes already implemented by this government have been well received by the market and ratings agencies. We have consistently said that the fiscal repair task will take time and we know there will be several challenges ahead. Natural disasters and global conditions do take their toll on the state's finances. But if the last 12 months are anything to go by, Queenslanders can rest assured that the Newman government has the determination and discipline to return the state to a position of financial strength. We will not lose sight of what we were elected to do: make Queensland a great state with great opportunities.

### Darling Downs, CSG Industry

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.46 am): Today I acknowledge that there has been a great deal of speculative commentary about the impact of coal seam gas activities on residents and communities of the Darling Downs, particularly around the town of Tara. This has been an ongoing issue for some time. People have responded with concern to the wide range of claims circulating in the media and also in general community discourse. Residents and the wider Queensland community are entitled to understand the facts of the situation as they relate to concerns about public and environmental health. Today I table a report and a series of appendices that provide core data about coal seam gas on the Downs.

*Tabled paper:* Department of Health: report, dated March 2013, titled 'Coal seam gas in the Tara region: summary risk assessment of health complaints and environmental monitoring data' [\[2306\]](#).

The *Coal seam gas in the Tara region: summary risk assessment of health complaints and environmental monitoring data report* looked at environmental monitoring of air, water and soil quality, noise, as well as health complaints made by residents from July to November 2012. It found no clear link between CSG activities and health complaints but made six recommendations to guide future activity. Coal seam gas has been a workplace feature in Queensland and around the world for many years. In appendix 2 of this report, occupational health physician, Dr Keith Adam, reports on workers with daily exposure to CSG. He writes—

Despite regular monitoring of the health of coalminers, both in Queensland and internationally, no health effect from potential exposure to methane has been recognised.

That may be so, but a new industry based on drilling, mining and piping CSG is a whole new experience for Queensland and our communities. The report recognises that an ongoing response is needed to provide up-to-date data and to promote further research and open public scrutiny. Its recommendations are a coordinated response by government agencies, including a community

reference group to help identify health, community and social concerns; the introduction of community support initiatives in affected areas; future health clinics in the Tara region, with community input about their nature, location, frequency and timing, including strategies to address aspects of mental health; regular, timely and accurate feedback to communities in relation to health, community and social concerns, including reports on air monitoring; the continuation of air monitoring by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to identify emissions and the extent of community exposure; and the possibility of measures to monitor and mitigate exposure to low-frequency noise.

I acknowledge that this report may not resolve all the concerns of people living in or around areas where CSG related development is underway, so it is my recommendation that local residents and representatives consider the findings of this report and follow subsequent developments. This government is serious about its role in protecting the public interest, providing robust data based on scientific principles and creating a frank and open dialogue between local communities and industry. This report and its recommendations will now be circulated among government agencies. A comprehensive response will be developed and implemented.

### **Department of Natural Resources and Mines**



**Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.50 am): When the Newman government was elected almost one year ago, we committed ourselves to getting Queensland back on track after years of Labor neglect to restore Queenslanders' faith in their government. As the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, I am proud to say that my department has made a number of significant contributions in support of that commitment.

In the resources sector, our primary focus has been the reduction of red tape to encourage increased investment and activity in the industry. The Newman government has taken significant steps towards unwinding the complex web of unnecessary legislation imposed on the resources sector. Last year the House passed the Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Bill 2012, which was designed to streamline the approvals process for resource projects while maintaining Queensland's rigorous environmental assessment mechanisms.

In only one year my department has overseen the beginnings of an oil shale industry and the re-establishment of a uranium mining industry in Queensland. While commercial oil shale and uranium industries will not commence immediately, we have taken the first steps towards creating new job opportunities and increased economic activity for Queenslanders in the regions.

We have also passed legislation that takes the first step in helping Queenslanders in Indigenous communities own their own homes. Previous legislation had prevented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from obtaining perpetual leases in Queensland's Indigenous communities. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Holding Bill 2012 rectifies this, because this government is also committed to supporting Queensland's Indigenous communities.

After only three months in government I took action to release water under the current Gulf Resource Operations Plans for the Gilbert and Flinders river catchments. The decision to release a total of 95,000 megalitres of water from the two rivers forms part of this government's plan to support an irrigated agriculture industry in North-West Queensland. Irrigated agriculture on the Flinders and the Gilbert has been talked about for a long time and, after years of inaction by those opposite, the Newman government has taken steps to make this a reality.

Yesterday the Deputy Premier and I announced an overhaul of Labor's draconian vegetation management framework, an announcement welcomed by the rural sector and the Indigenous communities that it promises to support. We are giving landholders the opportunities they deserve to act as responsible stewards of their land without unnecessary interference by the government.

We have also significantly reformed and simplified Queensland's rural leasehold renewal strategy, removing the onerous future conservation area assessments as part of lease renewal assessments, and reducing the heavy burden of paperwork imposed on lessees during this process. After years of red tape and after years of neglect of our resources and agricultural sectors, once again Queensland is a great state with great opportunity. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has achieved all of this and more in just one year. I am excited by the prospects of achieving even more for Queenslanders in the years to come.

## Police Service

 **Hon. JM DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (9.53 am): A year ago the LNP won an historic election victory, ending years of long misrule within this great state. The people of Queensland spelt out loud and clear that it was time for change. They told us that they were sick and tired of seeing our great state's wealth and opportunities squandered by reckless spending and mismanagement. They were horrified by the level of debt left to be shouldered by our children. They were horrified and disgusted by the lenient treatment handed out to the very worst in our society who preyed on our most vulnerable. They totally rejected a mindset that put the concerns of criminals before the plight of their victims.

That is why this has been a year of rapid change. While change can be unsettling for some, it was absolutely vital that we did not let the people of Queensland down and we make no apology for taking a tough line with offenders who are used to a slap on the wrist. We are well on the way to fulfilling our promise to put an extra 1,100 new officers on the beat and move another 200 officers back onto the front line. We have also met our commitment to providing 15 additional school based police officers, who commenced at the start of this schooling year. We have doubled the maximum penalty for serious assaults on police officers from seven to 14 years. We have introduced a new offence for the murder of a police officer, with a non-parole period of 25 years. We have increased the evade police penalties to a mandatory \$5,000 and two years loss of a licence and increased the non-parole period for murder from 15 to 20 years imprisonment for a single murder and 20 to 30 years imprisonment for multiple murders.

We have also reacted quickly to tackling gun crime, as Labor's lenient laws sparked ever more brazen attacks, particularly among illegal bikie gangs. Under Labor, criminals who use guns were getting fines equivalent to those of minor traffic infringements. Our legislation introduced the toughest new laws within Australia, with minimum mandatory sentences for anyone caught trafficking, supplying or possessing an illegal firearm. Just last week we had a major victory when the High Court upheld Queensland's criminal association laws, clearing the way for a possible ban on the Gold Coast chapter of the Finks. Coupled with the unexplained wealth laws, this will strike at the heart of organised crime.

We have also been careful to make sure that lawful gun owners, sporting shooters and farmers are not caught up in this legislation. In fact, we have introduced many changes that aim to reduce bureaucratic red tape around weapons licensing, helping those who legally hold a firearm, as well as freeing up police from behind desks and copious amounts of paperwork. We have formed the Ministerial Weapons Advisory Panel to listen to the views of legitimate gun owners. Voters told us that they have had enough of hoons turning our suburban roads into racing tracks and disturbing the peace. That is why we have introduced to the House the nation's toughest anti-hooning laws, which will put the brakes on hoons and get them off our streets.

We have two major reviews, either completed or underway, that take a fundamental look at how we do things and how the departments of this vast portfolio interact with each other. All those initiatives have one main aim: to do things better and more efficiently so that Queenslanders get the world's best services.

In the space of technology, we have a vision of bringing Neighbourhood Watch online, as well as seeing the introduction of MyPolice blogs, which I have had the privilege of launching at numerous sites in electorates across the state. This first year in government has not been without its challenges with unprecedented natural disasters. Our emergency services personnel again showed why they are the envy of the world and why we should all be deservedly proud of being Queenslanders. This is a great state with great opportunities. It is state where people are quick to volunteer, to step up to help each other and play their part in the community. By working together we can truly celebrate our strengths, creating a safe community and a strong economy.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Member for Redcliffe

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.57 am): For the benefit of members of the House, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a statement made in my matter of public interest speech on 19 March 2013. As the matter is before the Ethics Committee, I have discussed the matter with Madam Speaker so as not to contravene standing orders.

When I said, 'I submit that Mrs Driscoll has not declared a conflict of interest ...', I should have said, 'I submit that the member for Redcliffe has failed to declare Mrs Driscoll's interest through his statement of related persons' interests'.

I apologise for any confusion. It was done inadvertently and I am happy to correct the record.

**Madam SPEAKER:** I acknowledge that the Leader of the Opposition has approached me on this matter. In accordance with standing order 271, in my opinion it does not prejudice the matter that has been referred to the committee.

## FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.59 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 25 of the Finance and Administration Committee. This report covers the portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 15 November and 27 November 2012 considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 18 April 2013. The committee did not identify any significant issues regarding consistence with fundamental legislative principles or the lawfulness of the subordinate legislation. I commend the report to the House.

*Tabled paper:* Finance and Administration Committee: Report No. 25—Portfolio subordinate legislation tabled between 15 November and 27 November 2012 [[2312](#)].

## EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

### Report

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.59 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Education and Innovation Committee's report No. 13 on subordinate legislation tabled between 1 August 2012 and 12 February 2013. This report covers subordinate legislation: No. 144, Education and Training Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012; No. 170, Education and Training Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2012; No. 199, Education and Training Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2012; No. 229, proclamation made under the Education and Training Legislation Amendment Act 2011; and No. 230, Education Legislation Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2012. 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.

*Tabled paper:* Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 13—Subordinate legislation tabled between 1 August 2012 and 12 February 2013 [[2313](#)].

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Member for Redcliffe

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.00 am): My question is to the Premier. I refer to media reports this morning concerning the member for Redcliffe and ask: has the Premier fulfilled his ministerial responsibilities in ensuring the proper expenditure of public moneys associated with entities involving the member and has the Premier fulfilled his leadership responsibilities by speaking to the member about those reports?

**Mr NEWMAN:** The first thing I should say to the Leader of the Opposition is that my understanding would be that it is not my job to interfere in the operations of electorate offices which the article in today's *Courier-Mail* is all about.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** He is your member.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take the interjection. He is my member. But I say now that I do not ever intend to interfere in the operation of electorate offices which are a matter ultimately for this parliament and processes like the CLA and the Ethics Committee. It is all about the separation of powers. I will not interfere and that is the reason why.

What I will say on these matters is this. I need to really put this to bed today. There have been many allegations. There have been allegations made and on every single occasion this government and my team have referred those allegations to the relevant authorities, whether they be ethical standards units in departments or the Crime and Misconduct Commission. On every occasion those matters have been referred. It has not taken canvassing of it in the public domain, whether in this parliamentary chamber or through the media, for us to act. I have demonstrated and my ministers have demonstrated this week that the allegations were referred for investigation a long time ago.

What concerns me is that this is now taking on the appearance of some chocolate Easter egg hunt. You get an Easter egg and you are told by the Leader of the Opposition that there is another one over there and another one down there. That is very serious because what it shows is that people are withholding information. There are people out there drip-feeding information to the opposition—in the Labor Party, in the federal electorate of Petrie. I say that quite deliberately. Maybe Yvette D'Ath, Andrew Fraser and former minister Stirling Hinchliffe have a few things that they might want to offer. If they have information let them bring it forward.

On every occasion we have demonstrated that these matters have been investigated. If they bring the information forward there is a process, and the process will be used. We will not do what the Australian Labor Party did with Mr Nuttall. We will not seek to investigate our own person and have a vote to exonerate them. We will not do as a couple of fathers of members opposite did—vote to save Gordon Nuttall. We will not do that. We will have the proper process involved. We will have those authorities investigate these allegations.

It is very serious to withhold information. Today, I urge the opposition or indeed anybody else in Queensland if they have more allegations bring them forward for investigation.

### Health Services

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My next question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his election promise to invest in front-line health services, and I ask: will the Premier advise why a year later front-line mental health programs at Prince Charles Hospital are the latest to be axed, including the recovery support service, a position dedicated to Indigenous mental health and a job of the state's only Huntington's disease coordinator? I table the memo for the Premier's information?

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Health memorandum, dated 13 March 2013, to all staff at Metro North Mental Health, Prince Charles Hospital, relating to clinical service review and associated proposed workforce changes within the hospital [\[2314\]](#).

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take the question the following way. This government has boosted health funding across this state by over 7.4 per cent, \$817 million, this financial year. There is only one cut to health funding in Queensland and that is Wayne Swan's health cut of \$103 million. There is a Senate committee that has actually ruled on this in recent days saying that there has been a health cut from the most disgraceful, dishonest, dysfunctional federal government we have ever seen in this nation's history. Wayne Swan is a Treasurer who has never ever achieved a surplus; a Treasurer who started with zero debt—in fact, he started with money in the bank—and has racked up \$300 million in debt. This is getting very close now to the full extent of the normal federal government's operational budget.

What we have done is empower local communities with our hospital boards across this state. They have to make decisions on how they provide front-line services. What has been going on? I remember a famous interview with former health minister Stephen Robertson. In fact, I carry around the audio on my mobile phone. On occasions I play the interview where Stephen Robertson is trying to tell Michael Smith on 4BC why he was not responsible for ambulance ramping and that it was another minister.

**Mr Nicholls:** It was the sick people probably.

**Mr NEWMAN:** It was a sick people problem, though. I will take the Treasurer's interjection. What was done? That is a front-line service. What we have seen is ambulance ramping reduced by 90 per cent.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left!

**Mr NEWMAN:** They want to know about front-line health services and I am happy to tell them how services are improving. The waiting times in EDs are dropping away. We are actually seeing people get into EDs and through within the four-hour standard. We are also seeing some positive recovery and green shoots in terms of people going in for surgery.

The trouble for the Labor Party is that they do not get one thing because they have never run businesses and they are financial incompetents and illiterates. More money is not the answer. Better management, better leadership, strength of leadership, strength of character, real people, local hospital boards running hospitals—that is the answer to getting a better health system in this state. By the way, we would have a better health system in Australia if the federal government got out of the space and stopped mucking around.

### **Gympie, Floods**

**Mr GIBSON:** My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier please provide an update to the House on how the government is helping Gympie families and businesspeople to rebound from the recent floods?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the member for Gympie for his question because I know he is a strong local advocate for his community which has done it tough in the last few years. Indeed, they have faced five floods over the past two years and four within the last 12 months. My heart goes out to them. It is soul destroying.

The most recent flooding took place, as members would be aware, just four weeks after the Australia Day floods. You do not, I believe, find anywhere in Queensland that has been hit harder by flooding than Gympie. They are renowned for their resilience. They actually know how to deal with floods. But it is clear when I speak to them that the flooding has taken its toll. Many businesses had just reopened after the January floods when the February flood hit. Now a month after the event some businesses still have not reopened.

However, I note with some pride and respect that that community, Gympie, does not want to be seen as a victim, and the member for Gympie and the mayor, Ron Dyne, are working together to get the best outcome moving forward. They have brought us their concerns regarding the economic aftershock and they have put forward to Minister Crisafulli a Gympie economic flood recovery plan. We have made all the usual disaster assistance funding available to the community but we want to do more.

Today I am announcing, today I am committing, to assisting the Gympie community with a \$200,000 grant for a flood study to be equally funded by the Gympie Regional Council and the state government. While it is unlikely that we could ever flood proof Gympie, this flood study will assist in identifying mitigation measures long overdue that may help reduce the impacts of floods on the local community. It is, as I have been talking for some time now, about improving flood resilience and restoring confidence. I see the smirks and the smiles on the member for South Brisbane's face. You would think someone who had a community that had been flooded would be more respectful of the people of Gympie when we are actually putting something on the table that was never done by Labor in 20 years in office.

We are also, as a bit of hearts and minds stuff, assisting the local community by working with Racing Queensland to secure additional race support for the Gympie Turf Club race day on 20 April, with increased prize money for the 'Sustain Gympie' race, supporting another request from the member and the mayor. We want to help this town because Gympie saved Queensland, I reflect, in 1867 when the young colony was almost bankrupt. Now it is time for Queensland to help save Gympie.

### **Newman Government**

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his election promise that he would lead an open and accountable government. I ask: will the Premier release the list of people and organisations who attended the first of the series of secret \$11,000-a-place fee-for-service dinners on 11 March at the five-star Hilton Hotel with his Minister for Agriculture?

**Mr NEWMAN:** Just to give the members opposite a bit of a history lesson again about what we have already done about openness and accountability, we have restored the offence of lying to parliament. We are publishing openly the ministerial diaries. We are making sure that we do declare and we will declare meetings with lobbyists in those diaries. And yes—

**Mr Mulherin** interjected.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will come to that, Deputy Premier, through you, Madam Speaker. And, yes, the attendees at that dinner will be declared when the ministerial diary is released. But what have the Labor Party done? Will the Leader of the Opposition hand over her diary today? Will it happen today finally? I think not. Where are the registers of contact with lobbyists that were meant to be kept by the former government? I am going to make the allegation today: I think they destroyed them, Madam Speaker. I think they shredded them as they scurried out of those offices.

But I have some questions for them about fundraising. I remind them that the former Treasurer Andrew Fraser attended a Builders Labourers Federation fundraising lunch, two grand a head, and then said that it was not for the purposes of cash for access. I note also in the return signed by the member for South Brisbane that the BLF donated money to the Australian Labor Party in the last few years. Was this a money-laundering operation, Madam Speaker? What did the BLF get? What did Andrew Fraser get?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, I will just ask you to take your seat. There are too many interjections and I am having trouble hearing the Premier's contribution. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** We know how you spell hypocrisy: it is A-L-P. Here is another article in 2009—

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Treasurer Wayne Swan have refused to release documents under Freedom of Information laws that would reveal the Labor donors they met with as part of the business observers programs run at state and federal party conferences.

They are such hypocrites. We are making a commitment to release these details. They come in here and raise these things. I have another question for them today, because there is another interesting name that appears on multiple occasions in this return signed by the member for South Brisbane, and the name is Obeid. Eddie Obeid donated to the Australian Labor Party Queensland Division. I want to know what he got for his donations, because we know from New South Wales that when Mr Obeid gives money he expects something in return. What did the member for South Brisbane know? What did she get for those favours? What will she tell the House today was given to Mr Obeid in Queensland?

### **Sexual Health Services**

**Ms MILLARD:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister outline for the House what impact the federal Labor government's \$103 million health cut to Queensland is having on the delivery of sexual health services and advise if any other third parties are joining him in his campaign to recover money from federal Labor?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I thank the honourable member for the question and also for her very hard work on behalf of her constituents in her electorate. Certainly there have been some changes that have come about as a consequence of the brutal \$103 million midyear reduction in Queensland Health funding by Wayne Swan and the federal Labor government. Indeed, we have virtually heard nothing but excuses from those members opposite. We have heard nothing but silence from the union movement in Queensland. Indeed, we had the Nurses Union out there saying that it was only a tiny little glitch. But then they put in a secret submission, which they did not put on their website, to the Senate committee saying that, yes, there was a \$103 million cut and it was probably going to have some impact. You will not hear them out there talking about it. You will not hear them out there talking about their collegiate alliance with the Labor Party and how they are not going to actually stand up for the people of Queensland when it comes to this brutal effect.

In response to the honourable member's question, the impact of this across Metro North is \$22 million over a 12-month period or equivalent to \$40 million over a six-month period. What they have to do is to make up the equivalent of 400 FTEs within a six-month period from December of last year. That is the effect of the cuts from the Commonwealth government. Of course this does not mean that it is going to come out of the area of employees necessarily, but they are going to have to make some changes as they balance their budget and as Wayne Swan and the Labor Party hide behind the hospital board, as they expect the hospital board to deliver on the brutalisation of the Queensland health system with removal of this \$103 million.

What it has meant with regard to sexual health services in the Metro North area is that now the Metro North health service will be looking at the scope of sexual health services that they do provide in conjunction with the Medicare Local, in conjunction with local GPs and nurse practitioners, to look

at what they need to be doing apropos the Commonwealth-state national health reform that clearly says primary health care is a part of the core responsibility of the Commonwealth government. So they will be working through that. As of 1 July as they go through this adjustment phase and look at core responsibilities and how they respond to these Commonwealth cuts, they will actually be reducing some of those services and putting them quite appropriately to the Medicare Locals and the primary care sector.

When it comes to HIV, which is a core responsibility of this government, we will be working with the ministerial advisory council to actually see what we do with those services beyond 1 July and whether they should be retained by us as core responsibility or whether we also should work with the Medicare Locals and the primary care sector to deliver those.

*(Time expired)*

### RoadTek

**Dr DOUGLAS:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. With regard to the RoadTek TMR Banyula depot at Nerang, could the minister please confirm what the future is for employees after September of this year and will future maintenance work be done by private contractors?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the honourable member for Gaven for his question. I also thank the many members here this morning—across the chamber and from all sides of politics—who attended the Ride2Work Day. It is a great event and I do appreciate that today we had 14 politicians there from state and local government. That is the highest number we have ever had in the four years I have been attending that event, so it is a great effort.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr EMERSON:** Can I say to the member for Mulgrave that no-one fell off at all, but I do acknowledge that the member for Mulgrave was there and the member for Mount Isa was there as well, and I also acknowledge that the health minister, Lawrence Springborg, was there. Riding is a great activity in terms of improving your health.

In terms of the question, as we announced last year, RoadTek will be moving out of the south-east corner. It will be retaining a significant role—its role—in rural and regional Queensland. Why is that? Because in the south-east corner there is a fully contested market. There is a private sector that is ready, willing and able to do this work. As Australian Bureau of Statistics' figures demonstrate, over the last 10 years the cost of delivering roads and tunnels in Queensland has increased well above that of the rest of Australia. We are trying to do more with less at the moment because of the legacy of debt and deficit left to us by the previous government. We want to do more on roads. As I announced last year, RoadTek will retain a role in regional and rural Queensland, but it will be moving out of the south-east corner because of that contested market. The private sector has well and truly indicated that it has people ready to go. Groups like Orocon and Werrett-GHD are ready to do the work to involve themselves in this area. We believe we can deliver that work with better use of taxpayers' dollars. That is what we are about as a government: trying to do the work and do more. The reality is that we need so much work to be done.

As we saw with the effects of Oswald, that has cost us probably an extra \$1.5 billion. Our budget has been impacted because of the terrible events associated with Cyclone Oswald. We are trying to do as much as we can across the state. The budget is tight because of the legacy of debt and deficit. That is why we made the decision to go to the private sector in the south-east corner. Let me again assure members of the House that in rural and regional Queensland we will be retaining that role for RoadTek across Queensland.

### Queensland Economy

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer please inform the House of any challenges the government may confront as it continues to restore the state's finances?

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question, because it is a serious issue. In the days ahead we will reflect on what we have achieved in our first 12 months in government. While the list is impressive, there is more important work that remains to be done and

we remain focused on the task ahead. Measures already implemented by the government have been favourably noted by ratings agencies, with our rating remaining on hold due to what the agencies describe as our more prudential fiscal approach. While promising, we still have a long way to go to regain the AAA credit rating that Labor lost in 2009 and to lock in the gains from last year's budget decisions.

Regaining the AAA credit rating, as I have said many times in this House, will reduce the state's interest bill enabling us to spend more on service delivery and infrastructure. As we consider the 155 recommendations contained in the independent Commission of Audit's report, we are also mindful of the external economic challenges that lie ahead. Domestically, Queensland is having to struggle under the weight of a federal Labor government that is incapable of managing money. We see in the *Australian Financial Review* today that the federal Labor government is at risk of breaching its \$300 billion debt ceiling this year—\$300 billion.

In September last year we wrote to the Gillard government raising concerns about the \$2.5 billion of expiring national partnership agreements that Queensland will no longer receive because of federal Labor. Instead of working with the states, they responded in their Mid Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook by cutting \$751.4 million from health and education in Queensland alone. They have refused to review the way the GST is distributed to make it fairer for the resource states. They have introduced a poorly designed tax on carbon and mining that has hurt business and consumers. These same taxes have failed to bring in anywhere near the revenue that was promised.

Julia Gillard and Wayne Swan continue to make promises that are scant on detail, costly and unfunded and rely largely on state support. While the Gillard government refuses to reimburse the state for \$725 million we are owed for reconstruction works carried out for previous disasters under the previous Labor government, the floods and cyclones of the Australia Day weekend and the ensuing repair bill will also take its toll on the state's bottom line.

On the global front, exports make up about 22 per cent of the Queensland economy, which means any deterioration amongst our trading partners can also significantly affect us. Developments in the EU and the US are impacting on Asia, resulting in falls in demand and prices. A weaker global outlook at the time of our Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review resulted in the downward revision of several key indicators including employment and gross state product.

The state faces continuing headwinds. We have plugged the leaks and started bailing out the water, but we are still a long way from safe harbours. A lot more will need to be done before the government's finances are as sound and as robust as they once were. While we go about the repair task, it is worth remembering that Queensland is a great state with great opportunity.

### Unemployment

**Mr PITT:** My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his election promise to deliver a four per cent jobless rate. With jobless rates at GFC levels, with the scrapping of Skilling Queenslanders for Work, and with the sacking of 14,000 people, is the Premier on task to reach his four per cent target?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am delighted that the honourable member would ask me a question today that perhaps had a bit of relevance to what really interests Queenslanders. So I do thank him for that.

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Our target is four per cent. We said that it would take six years to achieve that, so we have five years to go. The figures that we have seen from the independent Australian Bureau of Statistics, those labour force statistics, are quite encouraging because the trend is in the right direction.

**Mr Pitt** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I am happy to answer their questions any day, any time but they never seem to want to hear the answers. Just like they do not have any policies, remember? I might digress for a moment. We have been here for a year and we have a policy which is four per cent unemployment, and we are working every single day towards that objective with our four-pillar approach. But after a year here—less about two or three weeks—what did the opposition say? The Leader of the Opposition advised Queenslanders that on Labour Day we might hear a policy from them. Well I say that October is far too long to wait. October is too far to wait for Labour Day, and they of course know what I mean.

We have seen great results in the tourism industry. The green shoots of recovery are particularly encouraging when there is an eight per cent increase in tourism numbers, when there is a nine per cent increase in spend and we know that young people are going back to work in that sector. The approval of major resorts like Great Keppel Island and Ella Bay mean we will see investment in tourism jobs and investment in construction jobs in the short term. We have seen the approval by the government of a great new office project which will employ a thousand—

**Ms Trad:** Tower of power.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The BLF and the CFMEU's construction division were very complimentary. Cbus, which has the savings of workers in the construction sector, is particularly thrilled to see a thousand jobs created each year for the next three years. A thousand direct jobs employed over the road, and all they can do is come in here and guffaw and carry on.

The reduction of red tape will mean that small and medium sized businesses can go forward. They ask the questions but all they can do is rant and rave, interject and not listen to the answers because they do not want to know the answers—just like they would not work hard enough for Queenslanders, but we will. The last 12 months have done a lot for the economy and the shoots of recovery are now there.

### **Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services**

**Mr LATTE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please outline to the House the initiatives she and her department have undertaken to strengthen child safety and community services in Queensland since coming to government 12 months ago? Is the minister aware of any risks to the state government's ongoing efforts to deliver front-line services in her portfolio?

**Ms DAVIS:** I thank the honourable member for the question and for his continued interest in supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Since coming to government 12 months ago, the Newman government has been working hard to deliver outcomes for vulnerable children and our communities. We immediately had to face the reality of a massive black hole that was unfunded in child safety but we have worked really hard to fix Labor's financial mismanagement to make sure that child protection is funded into the future.

We also inherited a child safety system that was clearly unsustainable. We want the best outcomes for children and young people, and that is why this government launched the commission of inquiry to take an honest look at the system. The Carmody inquiry is working hard to chart a new road map for the next 10 years and I look forward to seeing its recommendations.

The Newman government also introduced new supports to help protect children across Queensland. The two-year trial of Fostering Families is kicking off in South Brisbane, in Maryborough and in Toowoomba. That will provide early intervention services to help keep families together. This trial will provide practical in-home support to families where children are at risk of neglect.

The member asked me about risks to future success. I can confirm to the House today that, as the Queensland government goes about seeking to address serious issues facing the homeless population, including the development of a homeless strategy, the federal government is at the same time threatening to withdraw funding. Whilst we are looking to make long-term plans with long-term investment, the federal government is looking to rip tens of millions of dollars out of homelessness funding in Queensland. Whilst the federal Rudd Labor government made addressing homelessness a priority, it is disappointing that the Gillard Labor government has not followed suit. The Gillard government's cold and callous approach is to see some important homeless services funded by the Commonwealth adversely impacted from 1 July. This would include landmark projects like Common Ground in South Brisbane, which receives \$1.32 million in federal funding—a project championed by Mr Rudd. One wonders whether the Gillard government's decision to walk away from homelessness has more to do with burying Mr Rudd's legacy than it does with tackling real social issues.

We on this side of the House are looking to make long-term investment in the homeless. It is unfortunate that the federal government is more interested in itself than in working with the Queensland government to address policy issues and challenges.

### **Mental Health Services, Prince Charles Hospital**

**Mrs MILLER:** My question is to the Premier. I refer the Premier to his election promise to invest in front-line health services, and I ask: will the Premier advise why staffing levels are being cut in the secure mental health rehabilitation unit at the Prince Charles Hospital?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have already been asked this question once today, but I am happy to repeat my answer. If the opposition wants to put a question to the health minister, he might want to talk in more detail about it. Because the question is about front-line services I will talk about front-line health services. We are seeing a quiet, but quite determined, revolution in the delivery of secondary and tertiary health services in this state. Again I reiterate to those opposite that ambulance ramping has dropped by around 90 per cent. For those opposite, the EDs—the emergency departments—in our hospitals are performing better than ever before, and I congratulate the hardworking men and women in our hospital services who are doing such a great job.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr Douglas** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The member for Gaven will cease interjecting. There are too many interjections from my left. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** Turning to surgery, we are seeing some green shoots of recovery, if I can put it that way, in the way that the waiting lists are being managed. We have taken away the shroud of secrecy, the complete Labor Party approach to everything, which is to cover it, just as they did when they self-investigated Gordon Nuttall. They then had the gall to come in here and suggest that we should conduct ourselves in the same way. If you are into openness—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I will take the interjections because they were obviously about secrecy. I will take what I heard. I want to ask a question in the chamber this morning and I expect a response from the 'Leader of the Opposition', the member for South Brisbane. Here I believe is the signature of the member for South Brisbane on a return of donations to the Australian Labor Party dated 25 February 2011. I only have to go a few pages in to see a donation of \$5,000—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** It is relevant because I am addressing the interjections. Here is a donation from Obeid Corporate of \$5,000. What was that for?

**Mrs MILLER:** I rise to a point of order. Madam Speaker, my question was in relation to mental health and I am asking for your ruling on relevance.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, I ask you to return to the question. The Premier has time on the clock to answer the matter.

**Mr NEWMAN:** With respect, I have been answering the opposition's question and I am taking their interjections in which they claimed that they were not secretive. They are secretive. I challenge them today to reveal to the Queensland people what the donation of \$5,000 to Obeid Corporate was all about. The member for South Brisbane signed off on it, but there is more. On 25 August 2009 the member for South Brisbane again signs off on a return and there is another donation of \$1,200 from Mr Eddie Obeid. There is another donation of \$1,200. There is a further donation—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have said my piece. What were those donations for? What did Mr Obeid get, because he only gives money when he gets stuff.

### **Queensland Plan**

**Mrs SMITH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Can the minister please provide the House with an update as to how the Queensland Plan is progressing?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr Mulherin** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order! I have warned members before about interjecting and chatter while questions are being asked. I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and ask members across the chamber to show courtesy to the person who is asking the question. I call the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection.

**Mr POWELL:** I do thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her fantastic question. I am pleased to take the opportunity to update the House on our progress and Queensland's progress towards developing a 30-year vision for our great state. Yes, work is well underway in the preparations for the Queensland Plan.

I am pleased to inform the House that almost every member has agreed to lead engagement in their local communities, and I thank them for their commitment in helping shape Queensland's future. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the Premier's and my desire for this to be a truly non-partisan process. The Queensland Plan will be created by Queenslanders for Queensland. It will go beyond politics and personal priorities to be a genuine reflection of our collective aspirations and our priorities for the future. I would like to thank the opposition for their support of the Queensland Plan today.

Many members have already taken the initiative and started conversations in their electorates. It is very important that we hear from all voices across Queensland's many and varied communities. There has already been a fantastic response from the community with many people visiting the website, registering their interest, calling my office and speaking with their local member. We have had interest from active citizens and groups from as far north as Burdekin and Dalrymple down to the Gold Coast, including Southport. And we are only getting started. The process will really kick off in Mackay on 10 May at the first state-wide summit. Members of this House, community representatives from each of their electorates and mayors of each of our local government authorities will come together to discuss the real challenges and the opportunities we need to address in our vision for this great state. In Mackay we will also identify the issues we need to discuss across the state to develop that vision.

Mackay is the start of this journey. After the summit is when the real heart of the engagement kicks off. It is where each MP, assisted by the project team, will undertake local community activities. These grassroots efforts will run from May right through till September and will be supported by state-wide campaigns including a website, online surveys and a range of other activities. These activities will be shaped by what occurs in Mackay to ensure everyone is given an opportunity to be involved and to contribute. I look forward to working with all honourable members through the process to develop the Queensland Plan. Queensland is a great state with great opportunities and this is our chance to make sure it remains that way for generations to come.

### **Yungaburra, Flying Foxes**

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment. For over seven years residents at Oleander Drive in Yungaburra have suffered with a roost of flying foxes. When the numbers increased to over 35,000, residents received a letter from—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, members! I will pause the clock. There are too many interjections again. I did not see where they were coming from but I warn members that I will warn them under the standing orders. Give the person who is asking the question the courtesy of being heard. I ask the member to start again.

**Mr KNUTH:** For over seven years residents at Oleander Drive in Yungaburra have suffered with a roost of flying foxes. When the numbers increased to over 35,000, residents received a letter from the department threatening \$100,000 fines or jail time for disturbing the roost. I table the letter.

*Table paper:* Form letter to residents, dated 7 September 2012, from Karen Dabinett, Wildlife Ranger, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, regarding flying fox colony in Yungaburra [\[2315\]](#).

However, the department refuses to allow the Tablelands Regional Council to disperse the flying foxes. Will the minister give a directive to his department to include dispersal in the damage mitigation permits so they can rid this community of this scourge?

**Mr POWELL:** I thank the member for the question. It gives me another opportunity to share the fantastic work that EHP is doing in working with communities, councils and farmers around the state to redress the imbalance when it comes to managing flying foxes in our communities.

The tone of the member's question does disappoint me. It sounds like he is still using his old tactics when dealing with the extreme-green-leaning Labor Party and the old DERM. The member for Dalrymple needs to realise that he is dealing with a new government—an LNP government, a government that is working with communities, councils and farmers around the state. I call on him to put aside his political tactics and actually sit down and work with me, his community and his council to get an outcome.

I take this opportunity to remind the member of the work we have already done to redress the imbalance. In September last year we reintroduced laws to allow farmers lethal damage mitigation permits in the state. As recently as earlier this year a disallowance motion was moved by the extreme green member for South Brisbane. Had the member for Dalrymple bothered to turn up, he would have been able to participate in a debate to ensure we maintained those lethal damage mitigation permits for farmers.

When it comes to communities like the one the member referred to, we are working each and every day to ensure we get the balance right. We are addressing wellbeing issues for residents around Queensland. In Pittsworth, in the electorate of the leader of the member who asked the question, my staff attended a community rally on Friday. They sat and worked through the issues with the community at that rally on Friday. That community—not the council—applied for a damage mitigation permit on Monday of this week. That permit was approved on Tuesday of this week. That is indicative of the new EHP. This is not the old DERM—

**Mr KNUTH:** Point of order, Madam Speaker. We are talking about Yungaburra residents, and—

**Madam SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**Mr KNUTH:** That is my point of order, Madam Speaker.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Take your seat. That is not a point of order under the standing orders. I warn the member under standing order 253A. I call the minister.

**Mr POWELL:** My point is that we have gone beyond our election commitment. Not only are we working with councils to achieve a wellbeing outcome for their communities, we are now working with communities themselves to ensure we get the balance right when it comes to managing flying foxes.

What I am actually concerned about is that the member for Dalrymple is not interested in getting an outcome for Yungaburra. If he did get an outcome for Yungaburra he would not have anything to go on about. He would not have anything to put in the paper in terms of grandstanding. If the member for Dalrymple were genuinely concerned about the people of Yungaburra he would sit down with me and sit down with his residents and come up with a solution that we can deliver for the people of Yungaburra. I again draw the attention of the member to examples from across the state, including in the electorates of Mount Isa and Condamine. It is time to stop playing politics and time to start working for your people.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs**

**Mr MALONE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier.

**Mr Knuth** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Member for Mirani, please take your seat. I have warned the member for Dalrymple before with regard to interjections under the standing orders. I have also warned members that I will not tolerate people interrupting when members are asking questions. I gave that courtesy to the member for Dalrymple earlier. Under standing order 253A I now ask the member for Dalrymple to leave the chamber for an hour.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Dalrymple withdrew from the chamber at 10.44 am.*

**Mr MALONE:** My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier. Will the minister please advise the House of significant actions undertaken by his portfolio over the last 12 months?

**Mr ELMES:** In my portfolio, cause and effect are tightly coupled. To make a difference, we not only need to recognise the causes but also need to provide for outcomes to be effective and significant. That is why when we promised to review alcohol management plans in consultation with

Indigenous communities we set about it in an appropriate way. I met with mayors from the Aboriginal shire councils in October about the terms of reference and the review process. The mayors, along with their councils, community justice groups and other stakeholders, are taking a lead in the review.

The Newman government is working to remove barriers to sustainable homeownership on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land on communal title. By removing bureaucratic roadblocks we can open the door to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people owning their own home—a home that can be passed on, to come home to and to allow them to participate in the broader economy.

My Assistant Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the member for Cook, is undertaking extensive consultation on an option for freehold landownership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At a very practical level my department has, through its program office, undertaken extensive land surveys for areas in the Far North where boundaries simply did not exist. Road plans have been registered and approved for Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Mornington Island, Napranum, Pormpuraaw and Wujal Wujal.

I am particularly committed to economic development and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. I signed memorandums of understanding only last week with Leighton Contractors, the Queensland Farmers Federation, AgForce, Construction Skills Queensland and Industry Partnerships Australia to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation. The Newman government is supporting successful programs like Myuma, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civil construction and prevocational training organisation that is producing real opportunities for Queensland's Indigenous community—real training, real jobs, real outcomes.

To that end we have established a multicultural advisory group, which is also informing us on contemporary approaches to promoting multiculturalism across the state. Members of the round table are key ethnic, business and community leaders who have respect and the know-how to secure high-level cooperation from groups across the multicultural spectrum. That is being led by my other assistant minister, the member for Brisbane Central, who cannot talk today.

We want to promote and celebrate Queensland's diverse cultural heritage and allow all Queenslanders to be part of the experience. We are working hard towards finalising plans for Queensland's Multicultural Week. As the name suggests, it is a week-long celebration to be held across the state. We have also finalised our grants program for the rest of the state. I look forward to reporting back as the weeks and months progress.

*(Time expired)*

### **Gladstone, Infrastructure**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. In relation to necessary infrastructure for the Gladstone community to manage growth, will the minister clarify progress on infrastructure such as the Kin Kora roundabout and the Phillip Street duplication?

**Mr EMERSON:** I thank the honourable member for Gladstone. Many ministers of this government have visited Gladstone and we all know the great hospitality we get when we do. Having said that about the hospitality, I do not want people to think that there is not that steely resolve and determination by the member for Gladstone to deliver for her electorate. When she is smiling and greeting us, she is also hammering us to ensure that we are delivering for Gladstone. When I have visited Gladstone with the member for Gladstone we have looked at those two projects—the Kin Kora roundabout and also the Phillip Street duplication—and we have discussed them. I am very happy to give an update on where we are at with those two projects, member for Gladstone.

In terms of the Kin Kora project, it is undeniable that that is the most significant road project needing work in that area of Gladstone. At various times of the day there are long delays on that roundabout. I understand from our discussions at the time that about 30,000 vehicles use that roundabout every day in Gladstone, so it does cause real challenges. At the moment there is a study underway to look at what we can do in terms of future works, which may include additional lanes and signals on that roundabout. That work is becoming more and more crucial on that roundabout, because Stockland also has a development at that roundabout which will add even more pressure to that roundabout.

In terms of the Phillip Street duplication, we are working with council, including Mayor Gail Sellers, and with the member for Gladstone on that project. The Phillip Street duplication is something that TMR is working with the council on in a collaborative submission for the second round of the Roads to Resources Program. We acknowledge the challenges with that and as part of that we will

see an additional lane and also the rock cuttings involved to expand it. I can assure the member for Gladstone that the LNP Newman government is very much aware of the challenges in Gladstone on those two projects and we are determined to keep working with the local community and working with the council, as we do, including with the Minister for Local Government, David Crisafulli, who always works with councils across Queensland. We are very happy to continue to work with the member for Gladstone to deliver those projects into the future in Gladstone. I again thank the member for her efforts on that and I know that she will continue to hammer on my door for those projects.

### **Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts**

**Dr DAVIS:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Will the minister kindly inform the House regarding the measures his department under his leadership is undertaking to make Queensland a great state with magnificent opportunities?

**Mr WALKER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Not only does he have great interest in areas of health, which is his assistant minister portfolio area; I know he is particularly interested in the IT section of my portfolio. I am glad that he has asked this question because I am pleased to report that my department has been a central part of the Newman government's efficiency, creativity and productivity agenda. One of the first things we did when we came to government was to initiate the largest ICT audit in Queensland's history. This audit is going to underpin a raft of changes which will increase the efficiency of government services and put in place the proper processes which will prevent another absolute debacle like the Health payroll from ever happening again, and this audit has shown that the Health payroll is simply the tip of the iceberg. Right across government ICT we have problems—we have a mess—and this audit will help us address those issues. It will also simplify access to government services—that is, we can use technology to reduce red tape, one of our core policy agendas.

In the arts sector I have been lucky enough to make some fantastic announcements such as our Artist in Residence Program for artists and local school communities and our Creative Recovery—Building Resilience program for our flood devastated areas, but there is still much more to come there. The most important thing that we have announced is the new arts investment framework that we are planning to deliver. We are fundamentally overhauling the way in which grants are going to be delivered in this state. We are listening to Queenslanders, we are getting their feedback and then we are shaping our policy around what it is that those on the ground want and need to prosper into the future. I will be guided on this framework by Queensland's first Arts Investment Advisory Board. This board, which the Newman government appointed, is going to assist us as we slash red tape, streamline processes and create greater transparency. I was pleased to attend the first meeting of the board, which is chaired by Mark Fenton, and had a great discussion with the members of the board, and already there are some great ideas coming through from that board in that regard.

In the field of science, we are rolling out the welcome mat to businesses by slashing red tape and getting government out of the way. Recently I was able to attend the launch of the Science and Engineering Centre at QUT following a \$35 million contribution under the Innovation Building Fund and I had the chance to test out The Cube, which is also known as the world's largest iPad—a great interactive system for secondary school kids to interact with QUT and its science program. The Newman government is committed to expanding that even further. We have contributed \$42 million in funding for the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University. We know there is more to be done, but I am looking forward to working to cement and expand the Newman government's efficiency, creativity and productivity agenda.

*(Time expired)*

### **Caltabiano, Mr M**

**Mr BYRNE:** My question is to the Premier. A year after promising an open and accountable government and given that the Premier is now covered by parliamentary privilege, will he reveal the reasons behind the sacking of his hand-picked director-general, Michael Caltabiano?

**Mr NEWMAN:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I will answer in two parts—the openness and accountability issue and then the issue in relation to Mr Caltabiano. I might deal with Mr Caltabiano first. There is a CMC investigation that has not been concluded—has not been finalised—and I am not going to talk about that. What I have said already in the media—

**Mr Mulherin** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** Order, member! I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** I have nothing more to add on the subject. In relation to openness and accountability, again let me give those opposite a lesson on openness and accountability. It means revealing who you are meeting, and I direct those comments to the Leader of the Opposition. Who are you meeting with? Who are the people who will be attending Labor Party fundraisers? Those opposite do not reveal that. They never reveal who attends their fundraisers. We have had the challenge today about the connection with Mr Obeid. I want to explore that some more. The ICAC inquiry in New South Wales has clearly demonstrated in the last couple of months that Mr Obeid does not give money unless he gets something. So if he gave money to the Australian Labor Party in Queensland, what—

**Ms Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:**—did he get? I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr NEWMAN:** The Australian Labor Party in Queensland does cash-for-access functions. The difference between the Australian Labor Party and what happens with the LNP is that the LNP declares these things openly and transparently. We release ministerial diaries and we acknowledge that functions that fundraise for parties are important. What happens over there in the Australian Labor Party—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The member for South Brisbane has been making a number of interjections and I warn the member for South Brisbane to cease her interjections. I call the Premier.

**Mr NEWMAN:** With regard to members of the Labor Party and their approach to these things, they say they do not do cash for access, but they do. They do not declare who goes to the functions. They do not reveal their diaries. They have somehow lost their contact with lobbyists registers—probably shredded them, probably a breach of the law. Again, I urge the media today who cover this parliament to go and ask them why those opposite cannot produce their contact with lobbyists registers and why State Archives do not seem to have them. If I am wrong I will withdraw. If I have got it wrong, I am happy to apologise to them. But openness and transparency is over here. The dim, dark ways of the past are over on the other side of the chamber. There was article after article where Anna Bligh would not say who was meeting with their ministers. There was article after article demonstrating that the Labor Party conducted these fundraisers but kept saying, 'We don't do cash for access.' Well, that is the biggest porky of all time. Those opposite continue to do these things, but they will not be open and they will not be accountable. They never have, and the Australian Labor Party will never learn.

### **Department of Energy and Water Supply**

**Mrs FRANCE:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Could the minister update the House on the achievements of the last year within his portfolio?

**Mr McARDLE:** I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question—a member who is dedicated to her community and who, during the recent bad weather in January, worked very hard on behalf of her community. In the past 12 months the government has moved quickly to address many issues in regard to both power and water, including freezing tariff 11, highlighting the very heavy cost of the solar bonus scheme to the Queensland public purse, put in place two committees to look in depth at the issues facing power and how it impacts upon people across this state, put in place a 30-year power strategy so that we can look long term as to what we need do to assist everybody—businesses and domestic users—to achieve long-term goals, repealed the Daintree power policy that had impeded people in the Daintree from getting a reliable source of power for years and highlighted

the carbon tax put in place by Prime Minister Gillard. We also amalgamated the bulk water entities. We put in place—and are still doing so—a debt price path for the \$7 billion debt in relation to the water grid. We rebated \$80 on people's water bills. We are giving back to local irrigators control of their channel irrigation schemes, and much more.

I make this one comment. In about October last year the Prime Minister said that she would drive down the cost of power by \$250. She could do that almost in one fell swoop by cutting the carbon tax. She could save the people in this state almost that amount of money by revoking the carbon tax—by cutting the 10 per cent carbon tax—and by taking off the green schemes as well. Those two steps together would put in place a reduction of somewhere around \$250. She is not prepared to do so. She does not have the ticker to do so.

*(Time expired)*

**Madam SPEAKER:** The time for questions has ended. I wish to acknowledge the schools visiting today: St Michael's College at Caboolture, in the electorate of Pumicestone, and Robina State School in the electorate of Mermaid Beach.

## HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note



**Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (11.01 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 19 of the Health and Community Services Committee tabled on 13 March 2013.

I would firstly like to say thank you to our research team, the director, Sue Cawcutt, and Lee Archinal. The Family Responsibilities Commission is a statutory body established under the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008. The core objectives of the Family Responsibilities Commission include safeguarding and restoring child safety, school attendance, lawful behaviour and responsible tenancy. The Family Responsibilities Commission plays a key role in the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, which seeks to restore social norms and local Indigenous authorities in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are living in these communities and who are receiving welfare or Community Development Employment Project payments are within the jurisdiction of the Family Responsibilities Commission. This jurisdiction continues if the individual relocates from the community.

At the commencement of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial in July 2008, approximately 3,000 people were living in the four communities. Of those, approximately 1,065 were receiving payments and 757 people were participating in Community Development Employment Project programs. Under the Family Responsibilities Commission Act the Family Responsibilities Commissioner can conduct conferences where a welfare recipient in one of the communities has a child who is not enrolled in school or is not meeting designated school attendance requirements; has come to the attention of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for a child safety matter; is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court; or is in breach of a social housing tenancy agreement.

The report shows the outcome of the performance measures of the commission over three years: some good, some less good in regard to improving trends. I draw attention to three good results that I feel need to be mentioned. In regard to the commission's performance indicators for child safety—children at risk of harm and/or actually harmed—notices from the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services have decreased. Between 2009 and 2012 the total number of child safety and welfare notices received by the Family Responsibilities Commission decreased by almost 50 per cent. The greatest decrease occurred in Aurukun. The committee thinks that it is an outstanding result.

The second measure that I wish to draw the attention of the House to is in regard to lawful behaviour. In regard to the Family Responsibilities Commission's performance indicator for lawful behaviour—criminal offending decreases—notices from the Magistrates Court decreased. Between 2009 and 2012 the total number of Magistrates Court notices received by the Family Responsibilities Commission decreased by almost 20 per cent. The greatest decrease occurred in Aurukun, with 37 per cent fewer notices received in 2011-12. The third area in which we have seen improving trends is responsible tenancy. In regard to the Family Responsibilities Commissioner performance indicators for responsible tenancy—breach of tenancy decreases—notices from housing providers decreased. The committee notes that between 2009 and 2012 the total number of housing tenancy notices

received by the Family Responsibilities Commissioner decreased by almost 70 per cent. That decrease in housing tenancy notification is largely attributable to the significant decrease in notices in Hope Vale.

The committee notes that the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, after two extensions, is due to end on 31 December this year. I understand that the Social Policy Research Centre of the University of New South Wales has conducted an external evaluation of the trial. We note that Minister Elmes has expressed support for extending elements of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial beyond 2014 and into other Indigenous communities. Minister Elmes has stated that the government will not commit to any further extensions of this trial. Rather, it will use the outcomes of the trial to—

... inform our future work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland.

I encourage the minister in this effort. Finally, on behalf of the committee, we acknowledge the pivotal role that local commissioners have played in the operation of the Family Responsibilities Commission and their efforts to try to restore socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority within their communities and supports identifying opportunities to build on this role.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (11.06 am): As a member of the committee, I would also like to commend the report on the oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission to the House. Firstly, I would like to recognise the work of the secretariat; the former chair of the committee, Mr Peter Dowling; and former members of the committee, Mr Aaron Dillaway MP, Mrs Desley Scott and Mr Michael Trout MP.

The FRC plays a key role in the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, which seeks to restore social norms and local Indigenous authority in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge. At the commencement of the CYWR trial in July 2008, approximately 3,000 people were living in these four communities. Of those people, approximately 1,065 were receiving welfare payments and 757 people were participating in the Community Development Employment Project program. The CYWR trial is based on a mutual obligation philosophy that people who are in receipt of welfare payments or who are participating in the CDEP program have an obligation to the community not to behave in ways that are detrimental to their family or to the wellbeing of the general community.

The FRC is a statutory body established under the Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 to support the restoration of socially responsible standards of behaviour and local authority in welfare reform community areas and help people in welfare reform community areas to resume primary responsibility for the wellbeing of their community and the individuals and families of that community. The core objectives of the FRC include safeguarding and restoring child safety, school attendance, lawful behaviour and responsible tenancy.

I would like to thank the commissioner, Mr David Glasgow, as well as the local commissioners from Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge for their great work and participation in the program, which includes the conducting of conferences where welfare recipients in one of the communities has a child who is not enrolled in school or is not meeting designated school attendance requirements; has come to the attention of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for a child safety matter; is convicted of an offence in the Magistrates Court; or is in breach of the social housing tenancy agreement. These conferences provide a forum for the person or any other relevant parties to discuss with the FRCs why and how their situation occurred. These conferences are conducted in the local language if the client's first language is not English and are informal and confidential. Local commissioners translate as required. At the conclusion of the hearing the FRC may give the person a reprimand, recommend or direct a person to attend community support services, give Centrelink a notice to manage all or some of the person's welfare payments, or pay all or some of person's welfare payments to someone else—for example, someone who is looking after the child.

In the limited time I have available to me, I would like to highlight one of the successes of the conference: the drop in the number of in jurisdiction child safety and welfare notices received by the FRC between 2009 and 2012 from 371 to 161—a drop of nearly 50 per cent. In closing, the report highlights that the final evaluation report will include results from a social change survey conducted in each of the CYWR trial communities during 2011-12 and notes that the outcome of this evaluation will inform future Queensland and Australian government welfare reform policy. I would like to commend this report to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGISTRATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 27 November 2012 (see p. 2759).

### Second Reading



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.10 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 repeals three acts and amends 16 acts and one regulation. The primary purpose of the bill is to discontinue the Queensland registration scheme for dental technicians and speech pathologists. Aside from a short period in the Northern Territory, no other Australian jurisdiction has registered speech pathologists. The three other jurisdictions that registered dental technicians—New South Wales, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory—discontinued registration after the profession was not approved for inclusion in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health practitioners. Thus, this bill brings Queensland into step with other states and territories.

Queensland is a signatory to a 2008 Council of Australian Governments' Intergovernmental Agreement to implement a national regulatory scheme for health professions. As a signatory to this agreement, Queensland is committed to the principles of a national model for registering health professions that have been deemed to require regulatory oversight. Despite the dental technology and speech pathology professions being considered for national registration on more than one occasion, these professions were deemed not to have met all of the criteria for national registration and were declined entry into the national scheme. In fact, both professions met only two out of the six criteria required for national registration.

In the case of dental technicians, it was determined that their work does not pose significant risk of harm to the public and those risks can be appropriately managed through other existing consumer protection and employment mechanisms. Speech pathologists were recognised as undertaking work that may involve intrusive procedures and use of ionising radiation. However, any risk with these procedures was deemed to be potential only and has never eventuated. Again, it was found that the risk can be appropriately managed through existing mechanisms.

Regulatory oversight of professions is ordinarily conducted on a self-funding basis. For professions that have small representation, this can result in significant costs to practitioners in the form of annual registration fees. The assessment of both professions for national registration found that the cost of registration significantly outweighed the benefits. The passage of this bill will result in dental technicians and speech pathologists joining other allied health professionals who do not have regulatory oversight, such as social workers, audiologists, dietitians, nutritionists, counsellors, assistants in nursing and dental assistants.

Dental technicians are employed in the public and private sectors. They provide dental appliances, such as artificial dentures, mouthguards, crowns and bridges to the prescription of a dentist or dental prosthetist. In the public sector dental technicians work in a variety of settings, including clinics, hospitals, laboratories and outreach services to correctional centres and aged-care facilities. Speech pathologists also work in both the public and private sectors where they assess, diagnose, treat and provide management services to people whose communication or swallowing ability is impaired. Within hospital and health services, speech pathologists work in hospitals, mental health facilities and community health settings. Their clinical areas of expertise include paediatrics, acute care, aged care and rehabilitation. Speech pathologists also work in policy development and research roles.

Discontinuing registration for these professions will not affect the employment or day-to-day activities of dental technicians and speech pathologists. There will, however, be some administrative changes required. Registered health practitioners are currently exempt from requiring a blue card to work with children or a yellow card to work with adults with a disability. Some speech pathologists will therefore require a blue card or yellow card to continue providing professional services. For affected speech pathologists, a blue card will cost \$73.45 and a yellow card will cost \$75.05. In both cases, the card is valid for three years, which represents a fraction of the cost of registration and related fees over the same period. The fee may be covered by the individual or their employer, depending on their employment agreement.

As these health professionals already undergo criminal history checking for registration purposes, the bill includes a transitional clause to provide affected registrants with a three-month period in which to obtain a blue card or yellow card if necessary. Speech pathology is currently a service that is eligible for Medicare rebate. Registration is a prescribed criterion in the Commonwealth health insurance legislation for Queensland speech pathologists to register for Medicare rebate. I have written to the federal health minister to request amendments to the Commonwealth legislation, subject to passage of this bill, to change this criterion to that for all other states and territories which is that a speech pathologist must have membership with Speech Pathology Australia. Dental technicians and speech pathologists employed in the public sector are currently employed on the basis that they hold current registration with their relevant board. Once registration is discontinued, these professionals must still meet minimum qualifications for employment as a dental technician or speech pathologist.

The registration scheme provides a mechanism for investigating and taking action about complaints about dental technicians and speech pathologists. Discontinuing the registration scheme will not remove the ability for complaints about the professional conduct of these professionals to be made and addressed. Like other allied health professions, there are other existing mechanisms for complaints to be made. The Health Quality and Complaints Commission will continue to have oversight of the professions in relation to their professional behaviour. Therefore, relevant complaints can be reported to, and investigated by, the HQCC under its existing powers. In the public sector, employees of Queensland Health or a hospital and health service are bound by relevant legislation, including public service directives and the Public Service Code of Conduct. Official misconduct can also be investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Relevant professional associations have codes of ethics that members are required to abide by. These associations may take action against members who breach ethical codes. The bill provides for unresolved complaints being investigated by a registration board to be referred back to the HQCC for action. The HQCC can then continue to deal with the matter under its existing powers. It is anticipated there will be very few or no disciplinary proceedings ongoing at the time registration is discontinued. However, in the case that there is a disciplinary proceeding ongoing, the registrant will be given an opportunity to elect to continue the proceeding; otherwise, it will lapse. This will ensure that registrants are afforded natural justice by enabling them to respond to allegations.

Workforce mobility is important for ensuring the ongoing delivery of health services. One of the benefits for interstate based dental technicians and speech pathologists will be that they will now have the ability to work in Queensland without requiring registration. This removes a barrier to interstate practitioners moving to Queensland to meet short- or long-term workforce shortages. The abolition of the registration scheme is also consistent with the government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden and red tape by 20 per cent by 2018.

I note that the Health and Community Services Committee provided its report on the bill and recommended that the bill be passed. I would like to thank the committee for its consideration of the bill. I am grateful for the meticulous scrutiny of the bill by the committee, which resulted in the identification of a couple of very minor, typographical errors with section references. I take this opportunity to advise members of the House that I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to rectify those minor errors. The committee held a public briefing, involving officers from Queensland Health, a public hearing involving key stakeholders and invited submissions from the public. Ten submissions were received and I thank the public and stakeholders for their interest in this bill.

A strong theme in submissions received by the committee was the potential or perceived risk to the public and to vulnerable people, if the registration schemes for both professions are discontinued. I acknowledge the low risk to the public arising from some speech pathology and dental technology services. However, as determined by the ministerial council, these risks do not meet the threshold for requiring regulatory oversight. Speech pathologists may be required to use invasive techniques and procedures, for example, when undertaking swallowing assessments. An assessment of these procedures when considering the speech pathology submission for national registration determined that the associated risks are low and present as isolated incidences. Furthermore, those procedures are usually undertaken by a speech pathologist in a clinical setting, under clinical supervision with other health professionals in the vicinity.

In regard to dental appliances, registration does not guarantee or regulate the quality, safety or efficacy of these appliances. As dental technicians work to a prescription of a dentist or dental prosthetist, these practitioners will aim to ensure safe and appropriate devices for patients. The

Therapeutic Goods Administration regulates therapeutic devices, including dental appliances. Under some circumstances, and subject to constitutional limitations, the TGA may take action if appliances are found to be unsafe or do not meet minimum standards.

I reiterate the comments I made in my introductory speech, that speech pathologists and dental technicians play vital roles in the integrated delivery of health care to Queenslanders. They comprise dedicated and skilled health practitioners whose involvement in healthcare provision is essential for ensuring comprehensive care. Cessation of the registration system merely removes the regulatory burden that is placed on those professionals. It does not impact on their role or importance within our health services. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.24 am): This bill is a lost opportunity for the Queensland government to show leadership in health workforce reform. Abolishing state registration for the speech pathology and dental technician professions is a backward step. Deregistration is not required under national health workforce reforms and the transition to national registration for those professions should continue to be supported by the Queensland government.

Over the past five years, the federal Labor government has pursued a national health reform agenda to build an agreed division of responsibilities for health financing and for the delivery of health services between the states and the Commonwealth. This LNP government has effectively torn up those national agreements through savage budget cuts and the resulting mass sackings and closures of essential health services. This LNP government is in denial about the \$3 billion in cuts over the next four years that it has imposed on our hospitals and health services. Dressed up as 'efficiency requirements' and 'devolution of decision making', those cuts have gutted community based health services and our hospitals are now closing beds and operating theatres.

The federal Labor government has made major reforms in the national management of the Australian health workforce. Those reforms have included the creation of Health Workforce Australia to forecast supply and demand for various health professions across all jurisdictions and to initiate change, collaboration and innovation to build a sustainable health workforce that meets the healthcare needs of all Australians.

In March 2008, COAG signed the Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions, which provides for a single national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions, a national scheme to transition state and territory based schemes. COAG agreed to the inclusion of 10 professions into the national scheme from 1 July 2010. Those professions were medicine, nursing and midwifery, optometry, osteopathy, chiropractic, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology and dentistry and other oral health professions. In July 2012, four further professions transitioned to the national scheme managed by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Those professions were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation practitioners and occupational therapists.

Much to their dismay, speech pathologists and dental technicians were not included in those initial rounds of the national scheme. The justification for this decision by AHPRA rested on perception of risk to the public. While the level of risk attributed to occupational therapists was considered sufficient to warrant inclusion in the national registration scheme, it was not for speech pathologists. This decision has been disputed by Speech Pathology Australia and it is still negotiating with AHPRA for inclusion in the national scheme. To support their objections, Speech Pathology Australia cites the invasive nature of a number of clinical procedures in the throat and the fact that many of their patients are vulnerable and people with a disability.

Registration provides a number of protections for the public against poor practice by individual practitioners. Those protections include the ability to suspend or reprimand clinicians for unsafe or unethical practice. Those public protections are not available where health practitioners are unregistered and practice standards are self-regulated through certification by professional associations. The following oral health professionals are included in the national scheme: dentists, oral health therapists, dental therapists, dental hygienists and dental prosthetists. Dental prosthetists are normally also qualified as dental technicians. Submissions to the Health and Community Services Committee on this bill clearly stated that dental technicians are an integral part of this oral health clinical team. Submissions by dental technicians, their professional association and by the Dental Technicians Board of Queensland have all argued for inclusion in the national registration scheme to ensure appropriate standards of care and patient safety. For dental technicians, there remain serious safety issues with preventing iatrogenic infection, including HIV and hepatitis C.

The primary objective of this bill is to abolish the state registration scheme for the dental technology and speech pathology professions. The bill will also abolish the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards, redeploying or retrenching eight staff. Dental technicians and speech pathologists practising in Queensland wish to remain registered. Indeed, a number of practitioners in other states retain Queensland registration to support the profession in its transition to national registration. While those professions are not currently registered elsewhere in Australia, they have been in the past. Speech pathologists were previously registered in the Northern Territory. Dental technicians were previously registered in four other jurisdictions. Queensland is the only state or territory with state based registration of health professionals.

While the LNP government is claiming that the legislative changes presented in this bill are to bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions under the national scheme, they are, in fact, cost-cutting exercises that undermine the potential for wider health workforce reform. A number of other unregulated or more correctly self-regulating professionals are also seeking national registration. Those include, most vigorously, social workers, as well as audiologists, exercise physiologists, sports scientists, sonographers and prosthetists and orthotists. Perhaps if sports scientists were a regulated profession with appropriate practice standards and mandatory CPD requirements, the current scandals involving AFL and NRL may not have occurred.

AHPRA is resisting any further expansion of the national scheme on cost grounds. A number of professional associations are working on processes for enhanced self-regulation and certification while in parallel pressuring AHPRA to reconsider its position.

The Queensland government has the opportunity here to provide national leadership in the health workforce reform agenda by maintaining state registration for dental technicians and speech pathologists while these processes for national registration are worked through. The speech pathology and dental technician professions are registered in a number of comparable countries and provinces overseas and it is only a matter of time before they will be in Australia.

The burden of registration used as part justification for this bill is overstated as an overwhelming number of current practitioners support continuing registration and oppose deregistration. Speech Pathology Australia has surveyed their members with findings indicating overwhelming support for continued registration in Queensland and for achieving national registration in the near future.

The costs of maintaining the Queensland registration boards are met by professionals' fees. There are certainly opportunities for greater efficiency in the operations of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards. The staff establishment of this office has been progressively reduced from 15 staff to eight. Further efficiencies are achievable if the functions of the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards were rolled into the health workforce system manager role of Queensland Health.

There were discussions to this effect before the LNP government took office but that has not now been pursued. Choosing this policy option, rolling the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards into Queensland Health, would contain costs, reduce pressure to raise registration fees and maintain state registration as a platform for national registration in the near future.

This government seems intent on attacking our health workforce. The minister has made this clear in his attacks on the nursing profession. Our nurses are standing up for their patients and their communities as services are cut and staff sacked. This LNP government has, with this bill, shown a lack of leadership in health workforce reform. Instead of supporting the speech pathology and dental technician professions, this LNP government has chosen to sack more staff, leaving chaos, uncertainty and a demoralised workforce in their wake.

Good health policy requires leadership, cooperation and coordination. Health policy under the LNP appears to focus on staff cuts, service closure and now potentially privatisation. The opposition has serious concerns about the impact of this bill on the dental technician and speech pathology professions and on their future participation in the national registration scheme for health practitioners.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (11.31 am): I have heard some codswallop in my time but some of that speech was right up there. I hold in my hand a copy of the report that was tabled in this parliament and I do not see a dissenting report.

The committee recommended the bill be passed. I want to acknowledge the efforts of the committee secretariat staff with regard to this bill, led by Sue Cawcutt, our very able research director. Thanks to the team for their efforts. Ten submissions were received by the committee and at the public hearing on 12 February both the Speech Pathology Australia Queensland branch and the Dental Technicians Board of Queensland were invited and appeared to give evidence before the committee.

The repeal of the registration acts brings Queensland into line with all other Australian jurisdictions. Dental technicians and speech pathologists are not registered anywhere else in Australia. Except for a brief period in the Northern Territory, speech pathologists have only ever been registered in Queensland.

Prior to 1 July 2010 the Queensland health practitioner registration scheme regulated the chiropractic, dental, dental prosthetics and dental technology, medical, medical radiation practice, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, optometry, osteotherapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology and speech pathology professions.

Please hear this date. In March 2008—and just for the purposes of the record, I understand that it was a Labor government in charge of Queensland on that date—the Council of Australian Governments reached an intergovernmental agreement committing the states, territories and Commonwealth to establish a single registration and accreditation scheme for 10 health professionals. We are following through on an intergovernmental agreement that was put in place by a Labor government. I fail to see how we are lacking leadership. Fair dinkum, what a load of codswallop.

The new national boards for the professions are supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. Under the intergovernmental agreement, the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council is responsible for agreeing on the inclusion of new professions in the national scheme. The guiding principles for the criteria for assessing the need for statutory regulation of a health profession are that the sole purpose of occupational regulation is to protect the public interest and not to protect the interests of health occupations. I cite other occupations that have very well-organised industry groups that maintain accountability of their professions—for example, engineers and accountants.

There are six criteria for assessment of the registration. Criterion 1: is it appropriate for health ministers to exercise responsibility for regulating the occupation in question or does the occupation more appropriately fall within the domain of other ministries? Criterion 2: do the activities of the occupation pose a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of the public? That is a very important point with regard to this. Criterion 3: do existing regulatory or other mechanisms fail to address health and safety issues? Criterion 4: is regulation possible to implement for the occupation in question? Criterion 5: is regulation practical to implement for the occupation in question? Criterion 6: do the benefits to the public of regulation clearly outweigh the potential negative impact of such regulation?

A health profession must meet all six of the criterion to be considered for registration under the national scheme. Again, I point to the very fact that this was agreed to by the former Labor government. In July 2010, the 10 health professions I have already identified transitioned from Queensland registration to the national scheme. On 1 July 2012 a further four professions—and those were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation technologists and occupational therapists—transitioned to the national scheme. This left only dental technicians and speech pathologists registered in Queensland under the original state health practitioners registration scheme.

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency has determined that the professions do not meet the criterion for national registration and therefore do not require regulation under the national scheme. In particular, the Queensland health practitioner regulation agency assessed the two professions as having a very low or non-existent risk to the public.

The abolition of state registration does not prevent the dental technology and speech pathology professions from seeking to be considered for national registration in the future by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. The professions would, however, need to demonstrate to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency that they meet the criteria for regulation under the national arrangements.

The Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland raised the issue of appropriate accountability and regulation, as did a range of other submissions that did not support the cessation of registration for speech pathology. This is an important question and so I would like to address that question.

In Queensland the Health Quality and Complaints Commission has the authority to investigate complaints against any health professional. The Health Quality and Complaints Commission responds to complaints about unregistered providers depending on the issue raised. At the public hearing Speech Pathology Australia was concerned that the powers of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission to investigate complaints about speech pathology would not extend beyond the health sector. The committee notes that the aspects of speech pathology most likely to present a risk to a patient are likely to be provided as part of providing a health service and would therefore be within the powers of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission to consider a complaint.

It is important to note that the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council is considering the regulatory or other means to protect the public from unregistered health providers who fail to observe minimum standards of professional conduct. Consultation on regulatory options was undertaken by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council in 2011. No outcomes had been publicly reported at the time this bill was being examined, but Queensland Health advised the committee that further work on this issue is anticipated in order to provide a mechanism for ensuring the safety of the community with respect to unregistered health professionals.

There are other arrangements in place that safeguard the services provided by professionals. Those employed within the public sector undergo qualification checks. Within the private sector, speech pathologists in jurisdictions other than Queensland have access to billing arrangements under Medicare if they are members of Speech Pathology Australia, the professional association. If a person seeing a speech pathologist is being billed under Medicare, they can be 'quite confident that the person has the appropriate qualifications'.

The national professional associations for speech pathologists and dental technicians also have a code of ethics or a constitution and allow for members of the public or the profession to make a complaint if they believe there has been a breach of the code or constitution. I again endorse the committee's recommendation to pass this bill.

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (11.40 am): I rise in support of the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. As has been referred to already by the honourable minister, the member for Southern Downs, as well as the member for Kallangur, this bill is a consequence of the introduction of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the health professions effective from 1 July 2010. The Council of Australian Governments process decided that the scheme would provide for the registration of certain health professions based on criteria as already mentioned by the member for Kallangur.

Currently the operations of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, AHPRA, are governed by the health practitioner regulation national law, as in force in each state or territory. This law means that for the first time in Australia 14 health professions are regulated by nationally consistent legislation under the scheme. The 14 national boards are: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia, the Chinese Medicine Board of Australia, the Chiropractic Board of Australia, the Dental Board of Australia; the Medical Board of Australia, the Medical Radiation Practice Board of Australia, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia; the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, the Optometry Board of Australia, the Osteopathy Board of Australia, the Pharmacy Board of Australia, the Physiotherapy Board of Australia, the Podiatry Board of Australia and the Psychology Board of Australia.

As is evident in this legislation, prior to the national scheme being introduced, Queensland had, in addition, registered speech pathologists and dental technicians. Because clearly they could not transfer to the new scheme, their registration has been retained locally within the state of Queensland, and this legislation now seeks to bring Queensland into line with practice in the rest of Australia.

From a perspective of a health practitioner of some 35 years activity, I wish to offer my thoughts in terms of the potential impact particularly on speech pathologists who I have had the privilege of working with for very many years. Speech pathologists clearly provide an extremely valuable role particularly in the contexts of patients who have experienced cerebrovascular accidents—otherwise known as strokes—that can lead particularly to, in relation to speech pathologists, difficulties with speech, either the formulation of speech or the articulation of speech, and also a related matter being the ability to swallow safely.

In these contexts, speech pathologists are usually working as part of a healthcare team in a hospital setting with input from a number of other health practitioners including medical practitioners and nurses. This is really a team based approach as to what the appropriate investigations and therapeutic interventions might look like. So, from that point of view, the speech pathologist is certainly not practising in isolation. In the community setting, where the ongoing rehabilitation of strokes may be occurring, this is often still in association with relevant specialists such as neurologists in the case of strokes and general practitioners and is very much an issue where the patient of course is critically involved with the treatment program.

So when it gets to the all-important issue of patient safety and quality of care, we really do have an important number of checks and balances that will go a long way to maintaining the very high profile of speech pathologists in the treating team but also the ability to ensure that quality is there. This of course is all being achieved with a reduction in red tape, as the honourable minister has already referred to. So that area certainly seems to be covered off.

As the member for Kallangur has already mentioned, the national association for speech pathologists has now the responsibility for continuing professional development. But of course professional associations in health have had a longstanding interest in the standard of care and the maintenance of professional development as that is one of the prime requirements not only for serving patients and families effectively but also for maintaining the standing of the profession. And, again, arguably the major stakeholder in that is the professional association rather than the government regulatory body. If there is a need for an independent complaints process, and sometimes there is, although again I stress that issues of concern regarding quality of care are often much better addressed as close to the actual patient care interface as possible—in other words, dealing directly with the local hospital board—then clearly the health quality complaints process is available, as the minister has already referred to.

In terms of the professional standing of speech pathologists, clearly that is derived already from the valuable work they do and, whilst one can debate as to whether not being registered with a national body in any way diminishes that, in my experience I do not believe that is a very significant factor. The issue of course also arises as to, when we see a particular profession no longer being registered, where does that leave us in terms of our thinking regarding other professions such as paramedics who provide a lot of front-line services, as we know, in emergency settings and elsewhere? Again, it is noteworthy that they are not registered through AHPRA.

In discussion with my colleagues in the AMA, the view from doctors working very closely with paramedics is that the nature of the work there is also very much a team based approach where the models of care are derived from an excellent degree of training so that the paramedics really have an appropriate intervention for every context and that appropriate intervention is one that is determined, in conjunction with a team, by registered practitioners. So, as we are seeing with both the case of speech pathologists and dental technicians, we have an arrangement where paramedics and groups such as physicians' assistants are working as part of a team where the responsibility is very much shouldered by the registered practitioner who is in that team.

The other group that has been mentioned from time to time in relation to whether they should be registered are social workers involved with the medical team. Again, I think the argument has been that they do not fulfil the criteria, as mentioned by the member for Kallangur, and therefore the justification does not currently exist.

I think the very important issue in all these matters is one of an ongoing evolution. We should be continuously reviewing the evidence regarding quality, regarding the standards of the relevant practitioners, regarding their access to continuing professional development. Should any of the circumstances that we have been talking about in terms of not having national registration for speech pathologists and dental technicians change, then clearly that is a matter, as has already been mentioned, that AHPRA can at its discretion review. Again, I think the key issue of quality and safety is addressed with the provisions before the House today. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (11.50 am): I rise in the House to make a short contribution to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. Firstly, I commend the contribution of the member for Stafford. He obviously comes with a lot of real world experience from the medical fraternity and I think he made a very thoughtful contribution to the debate. As of 13 March this year, there were 1,686 speech pathologists and 950 dental technicians registered in Queensland. These Queensland registrants comprise around 20 per cent of the Australian speech

pathologists and around 35 per cent of Australian dental technicians. Approximately 376 speech pathologists work in Queensland Health, and it is estimated that 146 are employed by Education Queensland. Speech pathologists and dental technicians play a vital role in the integrated delivery of health care.

The abolition of the Queensland registration scheme removes the regulatory burden for Queensland practitioners and brings Queensland into line with all other Australian jurisdictions. Abolishing the registration requirements does not impact or minimise the role of speech pathologists or dental technicians within our health system. Historically, health practitioners were inconsistently and individually regulated by individual states and territories. Accreditation was primarily undertaken nationally, but there were over 20 bodies undertaking these functions often with very different approaches.

In 2005 the Australian government asked the Productivity Commission to undertake a study to examine the issues impacting on the health workforce. The Productivity Commission's January 2006 report found that the fragmented approach to regulation and accreditation resulted in inconsistent standards of registration and accreditation, duplication and high administration costs, and a hindrance to workforce mobility. That was highlighted to the committee when practitioners from the Tweed said there was a real conflict with them coming across to work in Queensland. There was a lot of big issues there and they were mentioned in many of the submissions.

The key recommendation of the commission was to introduce a single national registration and accreditation scheme. In July 2006 the Council of Australian Governments, COAG, agreed to implement a national scheme for the registration and accreditation of health practitioners. On 26 March 2008 the Council of Australian Governments signed the Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions, known as the IGA—much simpler—which provides for a single national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions.

The IGA resulted in the passage in Queensland of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 and the subsequent adoption of the national law by all states and territories. On 1 July 2010 the following health professions transitioned from state based registration schemes to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme: chiropractors; dental practitioners including dentists and dental hygienists; medical practitioners; nurses; midwives; optometrists; osteopaths; pharmacists; physiotherapists; podiatrists; and psychologists.

On 1 July 2012 four additional partially registered—that is, registered in only some jurisdictions—professions transitioned to the NRAS. These are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation practitioners and occupational therapists. This group represents the last of the professions that have been approved by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council for inclusion into the NRAS.

Speech pathologists have been registered in Queensland since 1979 and dental technicians since 1987. Both professions applied for the national registration and were assessed against criteria for determining whether to regulate unregulated professions—criteria developed by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council in 1995 and utilised by the ministerial council to determine suitability for national registration. Neither profession was considered suitable for registration primarily due to the ministerial council's consideration that they both represent either a very low or no risk to the public and that the cost of regulation therefore outweighed any possible benefits to the public.

The continued registration of these professions in Queensland is inconsistent with the principles of national registration and is out of step with other jurisdictions. The abolition of the registration scheme for speech pathologists and dental technicians will also remove the current mechanisms for managing complaints and disciplinary action under the registration scheme. Importantly, however, there are existing alternative oversight mechanisms for ensuring appropriate professional behaviour by speech pathologists and dental technicians.

The Health Quality and Complaints Commission, the HQCC, already has authority to consider relevant complaints in respect of the professions and will continue to have the same capacity after the cessation of registration. The HQCC can investigate complaints and undertake mediation and conciliation processes to develop suitable remedial actions. Dental technicians and speech pathologists working in the public sector are bound by relevant legislation including Public Service directives and codes of conduct. Professional misconduct can be investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Dental technology and speech pathology are the only remaining professions registered under the original Queensland Health Practitioner Registration Scheme. All other health professions previously registered in Queensland have now transitioned to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professionals. These two professions have not met the criteria for national registration. This bill is consistent with the government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden and red tape.

Both speech pathologists and dental technicians play a vital role in integrated delivery of health care to Queenslanders. The termination of the registry system merely removes the regulatory burden placed on these professions. It does not impact on their role or importance within the health services community but simply streamlines and harmonises their role throughout the nation. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr DRISCOLL** (Redcliffe—LNP) (11.58 am): I rise today to make a short contribution to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. I make a brief contribution because it has been my privilege to recently join the committee that has been charged with overseeing the review of the legislation. The actions being taken here today, as outlined by other speakers, are in line with best practice and will mean less red tape, less bureaucracy and less cumbersome burdens on people operating in Queensland professions, particularly dental technology and speech pathology.

The primary objective of the bill is to abolish the state registration scheme, which was peculiar to Queensland, except for a brief period in relation to the Northern Territory, but that is no longer the case. So Queensland remains the last place to be brought into line nationally.

On 26 March 2008 the Council of Australian Governments, COAG, signed the Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professionals, which provides for a national registration and accreditation scheme—the national scheme—to replace state and territory based schemes. I think any move that is going to make it easier and simpler, whilst still maintaining the checks and balances for these professionals, to carry out their work and to get on with looking after the people of Queensland is a good thing.

In keeping with my opening comments that I would be brief, I simply say that I think the work of the committee, of which I am now pleased to be a member, prior to my joining them, as well as that of the secretariat and the minister, should certainly be supported. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (12.00 pm): I rise today as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak in support of the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The primary objective of this bill, as we have heard today, is to abolish the state registration scheme for dental technology and speech pathology professionals. Currently, these health professionals are the last requiring registration in Queensland when practising in our state. As we have heard, the bill will impact almost 1,700 speech pathologists and just under a thousand dental techs who are currently registered in Queensland. As I mentioned, they are also the last registered professionals to transition from a state based registration system under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professions.

The House will recall our committee report into previous amendment legislation last year, which this House then passed. That legislation moved four professions from Queensland registration to the national scheme. Those professions were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners, medical radiation technologists and occupational therapists. I would also like to note that the changes to the registration of these professionals does not downplay their important contribution to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders, will not impact the confidence of Queenslanders in the capacity of these professionals or place at risk the level of service quality that no doubt we will continue to enjoy.

Members of both of these professions covered by this legislation work in Queensland across the public and private sectors. Speech pathologists assess, diagnose, treat and provide management services to people of all ages with communication and/or swallowing impairments. They are employed across health, education and not-for-profit community and disability service sectors.

Dental technicians construct and repair dentures and other dental appliances, including crowns and bridges, and prosthetic appliances and mouthguards. They, too, are employed across the private and public sectors and work in a variety of settings such as clinics, hospitals, laboratories and even in the Australian Defence Force. Therefore, dental technicians and speech pathologists are the only remaining health professionals registered under the original Queensland registration scheme.

The need to bring in these changes is ostensibly to ensure that Queensland is in step with all other jurisdictions in Australia. Additionally, it accords fully with our government's principle of reducing the regulatory burden on community and business. The continuation of state registration is inconsistent with other states and territories. It comes at a financial cost to those practitioners and it is another form of regulatory burden. The abolition of that regulatory burden will help to reduce red tape, which is a key part of the Newman government's principles. There are a number of advantages of abolishing this extra layer of red tape that will reduce the overhead cost to practitioners. The abolition of registration will also allow a smooth transition for these health professionals when moving from interstate to Queensland.

I should point out that both the dental technology and speech pathologist professions did seek approval for national registration. However, the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council did not approve that application as it deemed that these two health professions did not meet the criteria for national registration as they were assessed as having a very low or non-existent risk to the public. I should, however, point out that speech pathologists will need to ensure that they have practising membership with Speech Pathology Australia to be eligible to register for Medicare. Likewise, aside from a three-month transition period if they were previously registered, speech pathologists will need to secure a blue and yellow card should they wish to work with or provide service to children or adults with a disability.

During the committee's consideration, it received 10 submissions from a broad cross-section representing both professions. We heard from two witnesses as well. From the dental technicians' perspective, a number of submissions to the committee did not support the ending of state registration. They were clearly identifying that they thought there was some risk to treating patients. The Australian Dental Prosthetists Association of Queensland stated that dental techs should be registered in some form because of a direct connection between the making of the prosthesis and the patients. However, Queensland Health also advised the committee that dental technicians do not operate as individual practitioners but, instead, work in a practice under supervision from a dentist, which provides a high degree of clinical supervision. The committee also noted that the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council established that both dental techs and speech pathologists, as I have mentioned, present very low risk to the public and that the cost of registration would outweigh any potential benefit to the public.

A number of submissions on behalf of speech pathologists also raised concern with the ending of their state registration. Speech Pathology Australia stated that it will result in less protection of the public while the Speech Pathologists Board of Queensland raised concerns that it will affect the maintenance of a consistent level of professional standards.

The committee also received an opposite viewpoint from those who work on the ground. Two health professionals, Katherine Osborne and Yvette Dempsey, made a submission on behalf of 15 speech pathologists from the Gold Coast. Their group expressed strong support for the abolition of the state registration scheme for speech pathology. The group noted that Queensland is the only state in Australia still requiring state registration and that they have heard of no evidence that those in non-registered states have been at more risk of harm than those in Queensland.

This group of 15 speech pathologists also raised issues they face in working so close to the New South Wales border. Some have chosen to work in New South Wales to save the additional cost of registration in Queensland and, as a result, the Gold Coast has lost a valuable number of health professionals to another state. Their submission also raised issues faced by those choosing to work part-time and having to find the money to pay for two lots of fees, both the membership fee to Speech Pathology Australia and their Queensland registration. Another issue raised was that, in the past, the Queensland registration board had not permitted them to suspend registration for a year for things like maternity leave. This results in them having to choose to either maintain registration at a cost or face the re-entry red tape. It is quite clear that there is a number of reasons given by the health professionals who work at the grassroots level as to why Queensland registration scheme should be abolished.

The decision on this legislation is quite simple. Some of these principles may appear to be anathema to those opposite such as removing regulation, reducing cost to both practitioners and the state—and ultimately to Queenslanders—reducing red tape and permitting professional mobility. However, all the while we are still ensuring the protection of Queenslanders is maintained through

such means as: the Health Quality and Complaints Commission; professional associations including the Australian Dental Association, the Australian Dental Industry Association and Speech Pathology Australia; the blue and yellow card systems; the Therapeutic Goods Administration; Public Service directives and code of conduct; and referral to the Crime and Misconduct Commission, where applicable, for those practitioners working in the public sector.

I would like to take the opportunity to note for the record my thanks and gratitude to my committee colleagues, the committee secretariat, submitters to the inquiry, witnesses appearing at the public hearing and the departmental staff for all their input and effort in the consideration of this amendment legislation. I thank the members of the House for their forbearance this morning in listening to my speech in support of the bill today. I readily commend the bill to honourable members for support.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (12.09 pm): This is fairly simple legislation that primarily affects dental technicians and speech pathologists, otherwise known as speech therapists. It is an attempt to mirror federal legislation, the aim being to allow for a single national registration system. I was a participant in the health committee which conducted a public inquiry into the matter. There were compelling arguments submitted by the practitioner groups. It is quite understandable that each of the groups would want to defend their own craft groups in the manner and with the intellectual passion they did. Sadly, these are the final two of all the original groups registered under the now legacy health practitioner registration scheme. All others have been transitioned to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. Sadly, the dental technology registered association will not be transitioning to the national scheme as other jurisdictions had predetermined it would not occur. The state argument is essentially that with the national template legislation the registration management scheme in Queensland has ended and it will be cheaper for practitioners, as was eloquently stated by the member for Townsville. This is effectively a removal of an unfair regulatory burden, which is appropriate.

One would like to see that the national registration scheme was affordable for a lot of these people and not double, like it was for medical registration—and then with another 30 per cent added the following year. There seems to be an admission in the minister's speech that the government appreciates the good work done by these groups as they were structured for many years. They served the state very well, but the time has come to end it.

It would be unfair to dismiss the arguments put forward against the change on the grounds of inevitability. That said, the submissions from both groups represented at the hearing I attended were very worthy and I clearly understand why they presented the arguments as they did. I have great sympathy for the speech therapists, as they were formerly called, now speech pathologists here in Queensland. They have a great history of care in this area of paramedical subspecialty patient care. The history of their profession is somewhat different in Queensland than elsewhere in Australia. Despite somewhat different historical paths, the speech pathologists, as they are now called, are really one group. At the hearing their representative was strongly of the belief that they had inherently somewhat of a different path which had led to possibly a different set of skills. It would be hard to argue that.

Essentially, the time has come to mark a central change. This broadly can be applied to all those professionals who were not covered. The state really has no role in this area, both in practical terms and in philosophical terms. As practical people we must acknowledge this change but be humble and gracious enough to thank those two major groups, as they really are—we should not call them minor groups; they are certainly a major group—for their fine service to their patients and our state. I, too, thank them and wish them both a better future in the transition to the structure they have gone into.

I thank my fellow committee members and the staff of the committee for assisting me in getting up to speed with where the committee was at. It was a little bit ahead and I came in later. I thank all of the submitters, both in person and in writing. I did hear and take on board what they said in their submissions. I will keep a watching brief on the concerns they raised. I think that was one of the points they would have liked us to consider. The federal system has some failings. Whilst it is more difficult to review, I personally will undertake my best efforts to do this. At the end of the day, it is patient care that is critical and that is the most important thing that should come out of this.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferry Grove—LNP) (12.12 pm): I rise as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak in support of the Health Practitioner and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The primary objective of this bill is to abolish a state based regulation scheme;

namely, through the three statutory bodies—the Dental Technicians Board, the Speech Pathologists Board and the Office of Health Practitioner Registration Boards—which brings Queensland into line with all other Australian jurisdictions. It is important to acknowledge that the abolition of these registrations in no way diminishes the role of speech pathologists or dental technicians within our health system.

In March 2008 the Council of Australian Governments reached an agreement committing the states to establish a single national registration and accreditation scheme which will be supported by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. In considering inclusion of a profession into the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme there is an assessment undertaken against six criteria. The health occupation must satisfy all six criteria, focusing on the level of public interest. The department advised that the professions of dental technology and speech pathology have failed a number of times to achieve national registration, most recently in 2009. The Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council assessed the two professions as having a very low or non-existent risk to the public.

The professions of dental technicians and speech pathologists are not registered in any other jurisdiction in Australia. On 6 August last year our government decided to end the state based regulation of these professions, in line with our commitment to reduce red tape and compliance difficulties that have a burdensome effect on the state's practitioners who may wish to practise across state boundaries or on those professionals operating in other jurisdictions who wish to also operate within Queensland. It is important to note that the capacity of the public to make a complaint against either of these professions will remain through the Health Quality and Complaints Commission.

The role of speech pathologists in respect of their interface with the public is quite different from that of the dental technician. It is therefore a requirement that the speech pathologists who work with children or adults with a disability obtain a blue card and/or yellow card to continue to provide these services. To be eligible to register for Medicare payments, speech pathologists will also need to ensure they have membership of the peak body, Speech Pathology Australia. This requirement will bring Queensland into line again with other jurisdictions.

The Queensland government has set a target to reduce the red-tape and regulatory burden by 20 per cent by 2018. To facilitate this outcome, the Office of Best Practice Regulation has been established within the Queensland Competition Authority. In undertaking the review it was found that the abolition of the registration schemes of these two professions was consistent with our commitment to reduce the red-tape and regulatory burden.

As all other registered professions have migrated to a national scheme, the registration of dental technicians and speech pathologists through the existing registration scheme will become financially unviable. As the scheme was to be self-funded, the result would be either significant increases in the registration fees or the need for government funding. Neither is a palatable outcome, given that we remain the only jurisdiction that currently has these professions registered.

In closing, I congratulate the minister for continuing to seek out efficiency gains within Queensland Health and for the reductions in the red-tape and regulatory burden that this bill delivers. I would also like to thank the secretariat and my fellow committee members for their input into the review of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (12.17 pm): Today I rise to contribute to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In just a few days our LNP team will mark the first anniversary of our historic election to government. In that year, with a rapid pace and a focused approach, our government has been rectifying the years of neglect, waste and outdated practices left behind by the former government. Evidence is seen in the efforts to clean up the disaster of titanic proportions left by the Labor government in the Queensland health system. Spearheaded by the Minister for Health and member for Southern Downs, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, our health system is being rebuilt and reorganised to get it back on track and service the great people of Queensland.

**Mrs Frecklington:** He is doing a great job for the regions.

**Mr PUCCI:** He is doing a great job. These achievements, as the minister outlined during a ministerial statement on 19 March in this chamber, highlight how our government is solidifying our health sector through strategic policies and measures that stand front-line services and their respective regulatory practice in good stead to continue caring for our communities.

This legislative amendment is in line with our government's tenacious commitment to reduce the red-tape and regulatory burden by 20 per cent and will ease operating costs and help drive down expenses. I am thankful to have the opportunity to speak on this bill as not too long ago, whilst holding one of my several mobile offices in the Logan area—on this occasion in Browns Plains—a local business owner and dental technician pulled over to express his hardened concerns over the current regulations and bureaucratic entanglement that both the former state government and soon-to-be-former federal government have imposed on the dental industry.

This business owner spoke of entitlement duplication, regulatory restraints and increasing running costs. This bill will enable our small practices in the health sector greater opportunities by removing the unnecessary burden that is strangling their industry. This amendment will set out to repeal the current Health Practitioner Registration Boards (Administration) Act. Currently, the role of the OHPRB is to assess the adequacy of proposed regulation using the regulatory impact statement system, communicate with government agencies and provide advice on how to ensure the regulatory approaches minimise the burden of regulation, and finally undertake reviews of policies and regulation that create a burden for business, governments and the community. The abolishment of these boards will have a specific application to the professions of dental technicians and speech pathologists.

This bill will see these two career fields transition to and come in line with other health sector roles under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. The current registration scheme for these practices has become financially unviable. Continuing the registration scheme would require either ongoing government funding, which is inconsistent with the purpose of the self-funding scheme, or a significant increase in the registration fees for registrants. Both speech pathologists and dental technicians play vital roles in the integrated delivery of health care. The abolition of the state based registration scheme will bring our state in line with the single track function managed at a national level. Ceasing state based registration will therefore decrease the regulatory and registration burden on dental technicians and speech pathologists and will ultimately lead to decreased costs for them to practise their professions.

The cessation of registration in Queensland will also result in increased workforce mobility, as the barrier for practitioners from other states moving to Queensland will be removed—more jobs. This deregulation will not impede or impose risks to patients or the community. Consumer protection will continue to be overseen through existing mechanisms including such bodies as the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and professional associations including the Australian Dental Association, the Australian Dental Industry Association and Speech Pathology Australia. It will also maintain the requirement for practitioners of speech pathology, where an estimated 146 out of 376 in Queensland are employed by Education Queensland, to hold a blue or yellow card.

This repeal will also bring to the front the ability for professional associations to play an active role in ensuring members of their respected professions meet the best practice and professional conduct requirements, for example, through developing codes of conduct where appropriate for a practitioner working in the public sector. The abolition of the registration scheme for speech pathologists and dental technicians will also remove the current mechanism for managing complaints and disciplinary action under the registration scheme. However, there are existing alternative oversight mechanisms for ensuring appropriate professional behaviour by speech pathologists and dental technicians. Professionals working in the public sector are bound by the code of conduct, with professional misconduct being investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission.

I want to acknowledge the efforts of the Minister for Health, Mr Lawrence Springborg, the Health and Community Services Committee members, their support staff and the countless ministerial and departmental staff who, over the past 12 months, have moved heaven and earth to get Queensland back on track. I am proud of our government's achievements with regard to health and all other portfolios across our great state. I look forward to the work that lay ahead and the benefits that will have for the next generation of Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.23 pm): In speaking to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, the explanatory notes state that the primary objective of the bill is to abolish the state registration scheme for the dental technology and speech pathology professions. The explanatory notes go on to say that on 26 March the Council of Australian Governments, COAG, signed the Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions, which provides for a single national registration and accreditation scheme for health professions—the national scheme—to replace state and territory based schemes.

I have a letter from a speech pathologist in my electorate which I want to read into the record and table in which she expresses her concerns with regard to where speech pathologists are coming from. I ask the minister to address some of the issues raised in his summation of the debate. The letter states—

I am writing to express my concern regarding the recent government announcement regarding the discontinuation of State-based registration of speech pathologists in Queensland ...

Speech pathology was one of the professions left out of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health professionals but has continued to be regulated in Queensland by the State-based registration board (which was in place prior to the National Scheme). The national peak body for our profession, Speech Pathology Australia, has continued lobbying for inclusion in the National Scheme since its inception but without success.

I have been working as a speech pathologist at the Charters Towers Hospital since January 2005. In that time, I have been involved in the recruitment of no less than five speech pathologists to fill the joint Queensland Health/Education Queensland position based in Charters Towers. Having State-based regulation of our profession has provided peace of mind that the person we hire has been assessed as being a competent and appropriately qualified speech pathologist.

As speech pathologists, we work with people that are often some of the most vulnerable in our society—those who are not able to communicate effectively. Without adequate communication skills, our clients may not be able to voice any concerns they may have regarding the quality of care they receive.

The decision to remove registration of speech pathologists in Queensland is of major concern to Speech Pathology Australia for a number of reasons, including:

- There was no consultation with Speech Pathology Australia (as the profession's peak body) at either the state or national level.
- There was no consultation with the speech pathology profession across Queensland, employer groups, nor more widely with the general public and other stakeholders.
- There was no consultation with the Speech Pathologists Board with respect to the reasons and implications of the decision and required processes to prepare for transitional arrangements.

Specific concerns if this decision remains include:

- A high number of registered speech pathologists are not members of Speech Pathology Australia and therefore will be left practising without any regulatory framework—Speech Pathology Australia can only assure the public of the ethical and professional competency standards of members and not non-members.
- Some registered speech pathologists do so under a conditional registration, with limitations imposed on the areas or scope of practice—this cannot be regulated under Speech Pathology Australia's membership eligibility and these practitioners may not meet these eligibility criteria.
- The Registration Board has powers to assess and monitor medical conditions of practitioners that may impact adversely on their ability to practise safely and competently—Speech Pathology Australia does not have powers or mechanisms to deal with 'impaired practitioners'.
- There has been no consultation around transitional arrangements; with it not determined how practitioners under ethical investigations or breaches will be dealt with.
- There is no information around whether current health, competence or ethical concerns of certain registrants will be disclosed to Speech Pathology Australia or a relevant government body.
- There may not be sufficient time allowed to obtain appropriate certification including a 'Blue Card' and 'Yellow Card'.
- Some speech pathologists currently practising in Queensland may not be able to obtain provider status with Medicare, Private Health Insurance Funds ... if they cannot successfully apply for practising membership of Speech Pathology Australia.

I believe removing registration of the profession in Queensland will result in less protection of the public and reduced assurance of receiving a safe and competent speech pathology service.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider supporting and advocating for further consultation with the speech pathology profession, our employers, Speech Pathology Australia and the general public regarding the State Government's decision to discontinue State-based registration of speech pathologists in Queensland.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Petersen

This letter comes from a passionate speech pathologist, and I do not think that there is any need to condemn her because of her passion. It would be good for the minister in his summation of the bill to alleviate this person's concerns. I bring that issue to the attention of the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.29 pm): I rise to speak to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As we have made the sensible move towards a national registration regime for our health practitioners, the continued registration of speech pathologists and dental technicians in our state makes little sense. This bill removes the regulatory burden for those practitioners in line with our broader goal of removing unnecessary red tape throughout the government.

As a registered nurse of some 30 years, it was a long time coming that we had harmonisation across the states for the registration of nurses. I well recall coming to Queensland to work at the Tweed Heads Hospital at New South Wales. I not only had to get up an hour earlier to get to work an hour later but also had to register in two states even though I lived within 10 kilometres of the boundary of both states. So it is great that we have this harmonisation to cut down on red tape.

Regulatory burdens on business, individuals and organisations draw resources from their core business and it leads to increased costs, which are inevitably passed on to those who seek to take advantage of the services provided. We need to continue on this path in the interests of employment, economic growth and providing relief in regard to cost-of-living pressures. Of course, with the budgetary pressures that this state faces—the legacy of the previous Labor government—we need to reduce the cost of government. Unnecessary regulation inevitably costs government more to administer.

However, this bill will not affect the ability of patients to make complaints against their practitioners. This bill will not reduce the high standards that we expect of our medical professionals. The Health Quality and Complaints Commission will consider complaints regarding dental technicians and speech pathologists and will maintain its capacity following the passage of this bill. As a former member of the Health and Disabilities Committee, which the Health Quality and Complaints Commission reported to, I know that when Minister McArdle was also on the Health and Disabilities Committee with me we certainly made sure that the Health Quality and Complaints Commission was accountable to the government as well.

This is also an area where the national harmonisation of regulation makes a lot of sense. The increased mobility between the states of these health professionals is a welcome benefit of this change. As I mentioned before, as a registered nurse, at one stage I was registered in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. I am sure many other health professionals had to put up with that onerous red-tape burden.

Queenslanders should be thankful that health policy in Queensland has returned to a position of common sense. We should not forget the extraordinary list of failures in the health area under the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments. Yesterday's sentencing of the fake Tahitian prince should be a reminder of what can happen when a tired, incompetent and arrogant government takes its eye off the ball. The \$16.6 million in spoils purchased at a cost to Queensland taxpayers represents a government that really did not know what was going on. It was either unable or unwilling to deliver the oversight that was required. It took an IT auditor 10 minutes on a Sunday to discover the fraud that had gone on right back to 2008. It was right under the nose of former Queensland Health staffers. It could have been picked up back in 2008. Obviously, in 2008 he dabbled for a while, got about \$110,000, and got away with it because no-one went back to check. In 2009, he took somewhere in the vicinity of \$200,000 and kept going.

**Mr Minnikin:** Proof of how hopeless they are.

**Ms BATES:** Exactly. I take that interjection. I thank our new Minister for Health, who has made sure that he has tightened up all of those issues so that the Tahitian prince incident cannot happen again. Every one of those luxury items that was sold at the recent auction of his belongings represents a failure of the Bligh government. Considering the cost to the government of these items, they could also represent a medical procedure that could have taken place sooner rather than later.

The previous government was so ashamed of its record that the waiting list to get on the waiting list for surgery—a process that could add years to a patient's time in the health system queue—was a deep, dark secret. We have put that list on the public record. It makes it clear that there is still much more work to do and we are committed to getting it done. Who could forget the Queensland Health payroll debacle—a complete disaster that cost Queenslanders over \$1.2 billion. That is an extraordinary amount of money to simply misplace. With a health system that was clearly failing to deliver the outcomes that Queenslanders rightly expect, \$1.2 billion could have made a significant difference to patients throughout the state. More than 50,000 staff were affected. Of course, this figure does not take into account the families who relied on Queensland Health for their income.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the fantastic nurses and doctors who we have working for Queensland Health, even without the assistance of the Queensland Nurses Union. We all know that our minister is battling the QNU at the moment. It would be great if the QNU put on record that at least one per cent of the union dues that nurses pay—and nurses only join a union for malpractice insurance—goes to fund the Australian Labor Party's campaigns here in Queensland. I think it is

\$86,000 every year that goes from hardworking nurses into the coffers of the unions to then be reallocated to the Labor Party for its campaigns. It is disgusting and it needs to stop. Almost 400 speech pathologists who work for Queensland Health were also among those affected by this payroll disaster. We are still looking for answers as to how it all happened. I look forward to the outcome of the inquiry into the Health payroll.

Both speech pathologists and dental technicians make significant impacts on the quality of life of Queenslanders. Our dental technicians repair dentures and other dental appliances, including bridges, crowns and mouthguards. The importance of dental health to one's overall health should never be underestimated. I recall well before the election that I had many dental technicians from the Gold Coast coming to speak to me about the bullying and intimidation that was occurring at the Gold Coast Hospital. I passed that on to the minister to look at. We need to encourage these people to stay in the system, not bully them out of the system.

The ability to communicate is one of those abilities that many of us also take for granted. We should not forget the impact that losing or never developing the ability to communicate effectively can have on someone—on their relationships, their career prospects and their overall development. Additionally, speech pathologists assist people in our community who have difficulties swallowing food and drink, particularly after strokes. In addition to those working for Queensland Health, almost 150 speech pathologists are also employed by Education Queensland. So we should never forget that people of all ages are assisted by a speech pathologist in our state.

I am very pleased to now be on the backbench committee for health with Minister Springborg. I look forward to bringing my health and medical expertise, and particularly my nursing expertise, to assist him in making this great state much better than what it is. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (12.36 pm): I rise today to give a short contribution to the debate on the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012, which was referred to the Health and Community Services Committee some time ago and introduced by the Minister for Health, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg. Dental technology and speech pathology are the only remaining professions that are registered under the original Queensland health practitioners registration scheme. All others have now been transitioned to the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the health professions. These two professions have not met the criteria for national registration. Indeed, Queensland is the only state that continues to register them. It is deemed that dental technicians and speech pathologists have a very low or no risk to the public and the cost of regulation, therefore, outweighs the possible benefits to the public.

The scheme adds a regulatory burden to dental technicians and speech pathologists—in other words, red tape—and this bill is all about red-tape reduction. As well, abolishing registration will improve workforce mobility, allowing interstate practitioners to practise their professions in this state. As the minister said in his original speech, the bill is consistent with the government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden and red tape. Both speech pathologists and dental technicians play vital roles in the integrated delivery of health care in Queensland. I can speak from personal experience as to the skills of dental technicians in particular. For many years I had a partial dental plate, taking care of a couple of teeth that used to—

**Mr Rickuss** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** Methinks Mr Langbroek is doing okay.

I used to take great delight in scaring the living daylights out of my children, and now my grandchildren, by dropping them down and making it look like I was a vampire. They all thoroughly enjoyed that. My nieces and nephews, however, did not enjoy the fact that I would take the teeth out and put them in their hand when they were not expecting it. I cannot do that anymore. It was great fun at the time. It was a learning experience for my children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces. They all still remember it to this day. They thoroughly enjoyed the fun with me and my dental plate.

**Mr Rickuss:** Why can't you take them out now?

**Mr CRANDON:** I am about to tell you. I moved on to implants and crowns a few years ago.

**A government member:** Oh, did you?

**Mr CRANDON:** I will take the interjection because I did not hear what it was and I want to see what it was in the *Hansard*.

**Mr Rickuss:** Did you go to a dentist for that though?

**Mr CRANDON:** I did go to a dentist.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** No, I did not go down to the Gold Coast. In fact, I went to a young fellow by the name of Alex Bratic in Beenleigh—a fantastic guy. If anyone in the Logan area is looking for a dentist, Alex Bratic in the middle of Beenleigh is the man to go to. He does a terrific job. He certainly made a few dollars out of me, I can tell you, because I am about to point out to you that I moved on to implants and crowns. Coming back to the point I want to make, dental technicians are truly skilled individuals. It is not just about knocking a tooth together, making it the right shape and what have you; it is also very important that it is not too white or too cream. It needs to match the rest of the teeth in one's mouth. Colour matching is absolutely paramount and, of course, shape and comfort in the mouth is also very important.

There is no doubt about the skills and professionalism of these specialist practitioners. They have the confidence of other professionals that they work with each and every day. It is good that we can reduce the costs of administration and red tape for these groups. With that, I commend the bill to the House.



**Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.42 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to make a very short contribution to the Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012.

**Dr Flegg:** That is a very hard act to follow.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection. The member for Coomera is a very hard act to follow. Unlike the member for Coomera, I still have all of my teeth. Back to the very important bill at hand, I would like to congratulate the minister, the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, for the great work he is doing in this very important area of health. He is doing a great job. This is just one small piece in the puzzle that this LNP government is having to put back together after the diabolical years and mismanagement of the previous Labor government.

This bill goes towards reducing the regulatory burden across the state for dental technicians and speech pathologists. Abolishing the registration scheme for these wonderful people is consistent with the government's commitment to reduce regulatory burden by 20 per cent. This bill helps businesspeople get on with the job that they are trained to do; it relieves a bit of financial pressure for them; and, because it harmonises the laws across the states, it gives them greater mobility so that they can practice in Queensland as well as New South Wales and other states without onerous extra registration fees. It is very important for all areas, in particular the Nanango electorate, as we have some wonderful speech pathologists and dental technicians in our area.

**Mr Crandon:** How do you know?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I know because we have Rohan and Myolene Voller. Their dental practice is new to our area. Rohan is a dental practitioner. It is a wonderful profession and he is doing a great job to bring such a good private service to the Kingaroy and South Burnett area. Ceasing the state based registration decreases the regulatory and registration burden on dental technicians and speech pathologists which will ultimately lead to decreased costs for them to practise. As I said, it increases workforce mobility, which is extremely important, and allows harmonisation of the laws.

The Office of Best Practice Regulation, set up as an election commitment under the QCA, has just released its reducing regulatory burden final report. One of its immediate goals is to address harmonisation of laws across the state. This is extremely important for us here in Queensland because we need to cut back on the onerous regulation and burden on many professionals. The bill at hand is particularly important and will be very well received by these amazing dental technicians and speech pathologists. I thank the minister for the hard work he has done in contributing to this bill before the House. It will certainly go a long way to reduce the regulatory burden across the state.



**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.46 pm), in reply: Can I start by thanking all members for their contribution to what is very important reform legislation which we are hopefully going to pass through the parliament today. Can I start in reverse order and thank the honourable member for Nanango for her contribution and contrasting her very good dental

health to that of the member for Coomera and also indicating her very strong support for the reduction in regulation. I also commend the honourable member for the role that she undertakes as assistant minister to the Treasurer in Queensland and particularly the role she has in the reduction of regulation, ensuring that we have harmonised laws in Queensland and that we have an environment in this state that is good for business. We are certainly getting some great guidance under her stewardship in that regard. The honourable member did mention the importance of harmonisation and making sure that we can work appropriately across state boundaries. I think we have to make sure that we lift ourselves to the highest common denominator, not lower ourselves to the lowest common denominator.

The honourable member for Coomera, who probably provided us with a little bit too much information in his normal colourful way, spoke very passionately about the cost of regulation on business and the need to reduce regulation and red tape. The honourable member for Mudgeeraba gave a very good overview of where we have come from with regard to health reform in Queensland. She spoke of the challenges that this government has faced, including the problems with the Health payroll which we have an ongoing obligation to meet. It is a \$500 million to \$600 million dog tied up, unfunded, that is going to gobble its way through our health system over the next three to four years until we can finally wash it through. We have taken some very appropriate steps to stabilise that, but the unfortunate implication this year is \$150 million unfunded left by the previous government—that is their own figures—which has unfortunately had an impact on positions, even some front-line positions, but not necessarily front-line services. The honourable member also talked about the need for harmonisation. As someone who has been very much involved in the health profession, she understands the importance of recognising mobility across the various jurisdictions in Australia. This bill is very much about that.

The honourable member for Dalrymple read to the House a letter from a speech pathologist who had expressed some concerns to him. Whilst I can understand the very genuine and heartfelt concerns of speech pathologists and, indeed, dental technicians, I assure the honourable member for Dalrymple that we have considered those issues properly, that there has been enormous consultation going back to 2008 and that there has been ongoing processes of consultation. Sometimes people who do not get the outcome they want will turn around and say that there has not been a consultation process. That does not mean we have not had a consultation process. We have and this is the conclusion of that consultation process. For processes of professional oversight of professional organisations, the ongoing ability to complain to the Health Quality and Complaints Commission will ensure the safety of consumers in Queensland.

The honourable member for Logan talked about the importance of this business reform in his normal passionate way and I very much commend him for that. The honourable member for Ferny Grove, as always, went through a forensic analysis of the bill and talked about the objectives of the bill. Clearly, he understands it and reflected upon possible regulation reduction.

The honourable member for Gaven talked about competing interests and how the professions that were not going to be part of a regulatory environment had some concerns. Obviously, he reflected on and had some empathy for those concerns, but on balance he indicated the importance of the reform that we are putting through the parliament. He did indicate that we need to make sure that there is affordability in the registration process under AHPRA. I agree with his proposition. We have to ensure that the professionals who transition to this arrangement have affordable registration. I know that ministers in other jurisdictions are keen to ensure that as well. That will mean that AHPRA will have to undertake a process whereby it always looks at its own costs, which could have an impact on professionals as well.

The honourable member for Townsville talked about the importance of the professions that will no longer be subject to legislation in Queensland and the maintenance of standards, which we will be guaranteeing, and also cross-border issues. The honourable member for Redcliffe talked about the need for uniformity, which was a common theme that was reflected on by members in this parliament. He also talked about the importance of regulation simplification, which is a core value of the LNP. We make absolutely no apologies whatsoever for that. We need to ensure that the regulation that we impose in Queensland is in the public interest and is not an encumbrance to doing business, but provides the appropriate protection for businesses, properly balanced with the public interest as well.

I thank the honourable member for Capalaba for his contribution. He talked about consistency of regulation, the need to reduce duplication and the need to reduce some of the confusion that we see with regards to regulation. That is a problem with regulatory environments. Often you have a multifaceted overlay that compounds the issues for people who are just trying to get on and run a profession.

I thank the honourable member for Stafford for his professional contribution and for his support and friendship in his role as assistant minister for health. He talked about and very much understood the team support environment that surrounds professions such as speech pathologists. They are not working in isolation. When they have to undertake an invasive procedure, they are in a clinical environment with professional support. Any of the risks that some people might identify as potentials around speech pathology are appropriately addressed if you look at the high-tech clinical environments and the supports that surround speech pathologists. The honourable member summed that up very well. Indeed, if you look at the role of dental technicians in reporting and referrals, it is important to reflect upon the fact that those safeguards are there as well.

Quality oversight is an important thing, as is red-tape reduction. It is important to have a process that is about outcomes and not inputs. Labor is about inputs, we are about outcomes. There is a huge difference. If you judge on inputs, the amount of money is absolutely extraordinary, but that does not deliver outcomes. It is outcomes that really matter.

I thank the honourable member for Kallangur for his stewardship of the committee. He does an absolutely wonderful job. He summarised what the legislation is all about. He summarised the fact that there was no dissent within the committee when it came to recommending the passing of this legislation in the parliament. He talked about the importance of uniformity. He talked about the intergovernmental agreement of 2008, which is where this started. The previous Queensland Labor government signed up to that agreement. The issues that they raised in the parliament today they did not raise at that particular time. The honourable member explained the history of that very well. The honourable member for Kallangur also talked very aptly about what is public interest versus professional interest. Sometimes professions have a professional interest in having a regulatory environment, but no public interest necessarily comes from that. That is the test that we have undertaken and it has been undertaken as part of the national reform.

I turn to the comments of the honourable member for Mulgrave. I understand that the opposition will not be opposing this bill before the parliament. If it did, it would be in contravention to the journey that it has undertaken to get here today. I reinforce the point that the government is about outcomes; it is not about inputs. It is about looking at what we get for the dollars that we spend. Contrary to what is said, I am not attacking nurses. Certainly I will attack the union bosses who go out there and say they represent nurses. They are the same union bosses who said virtually nothing as their members were being emoliated by a payroll dysfunction in Queensland. As we sat over there questioning the government, they said it was fixed. As we were talking about the human misery of people who were not being paid, the nurses' union bosses said it was all being fixed. Those same nurses' union bosses did not stand up when we wanted the Health payroll legal advice released. Those same union bosses did not want us to have a commission of inquiry into the Health payroll bungle. And isn't that turning out to be interesting? Those same union bosses failed to stand up as \$103 million is being ripped out of Health funding in Queensland. Yes, we will stand up for the employees, but not for the union bosses in Queensland.

With regards to the scope under AHPRA, of course there is an opportunity for those professions to be considered for regulation at some future time, but it will not be until after 2015. They have been previously considered and they do not meet the criteria. I think we understand that.

This is not about cost cutting. It is about making sure we have an appropriate regulatory environment. It was not cost cutting when they were considering it, so it is not cost cutting today. This is about proper and appropriate regulatory environments. By and large, this legislation is good legislation. It is about having an appropriate regulatory environment. It makes a balance between the interests of the patient and the interests of the profession. It will ensure that Queensland has a consistent and uniform approach with the rest of Australia for the health professionals and practitioners that are regulated. 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 54, as read, agreed to.

Clause 55—



**Mr SPRINGBORG** (12.58 pm): I move the following amendments—

**1. Clause 55 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**

Page 32, line 17—

*omit.*

**2. Clause 55 (Amendment of schedule (Dictionary))**

Page 32, line 28, 'section 406A'—

*omit, insert—*

'section 406'.

I table the explanatory notes to the amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Health Practitioner Registration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012: Explanatory notes to Hon. Springborg's amendments [2316].

These amendments correct minor typographical and cross-referencing errors in the definitions of the terms 'repealed act' and 'commencement'. Again, I thank the committee for its diligence in picking up those typographical issues. That shows the beauty of the committee system and it is why I very much support it, as it can make corrections and suggestions that can improve legislation. As I said, these errors were identified by the committee. We thank it for its advice and guidance. I commend the amendments to the House.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 56 to 113, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading

**Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.59 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. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (12.59 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 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

## CRIMINAL CODE (LOOTING IN DECLARED AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—Ind) (2.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code for a particular purpose. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2013 [2317].

*Tabled paper:* Criminal code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes [2318].

The primary objective of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code at section 398, punishment of stealing, to insert new section 13A—stealing by looting in a declared area. In short, the bill is to insert a more serious punishment for stealing by looting in a declared area, as defined under the Disaster Management Act 2003. In such circumstances, the offender will be liable to imprisonment for 14 years.

At present, the Criminal Code at section 398(13) increases the punishment for stealing from five years to 10 years imprisonment if the offence is committed during a natural disaster, civil unrest or an industrial dispute or the thing stolen is left unattended by the death or incapacity of the person in possession of the property. As mentioned, new section 13A will distinguish the offence of stealing by looting in a declared area and take a tougher stance by increasing imprisonment to 14 years. Importantly, it is intended to underpin the significance of declared areas under the Disaster Management Act 2003. The increased punishment is believed to be more aligned with community expectations as well as contributing towards protecting citizens.

In the aftermath of the flood and cyclone related disasters of January 2011 and January-February 2013, police commenced proceedings against a number of individuals for their roles in the looting of flood affected dwellings, premises and vessels. During the 2011 floods a 200-strong police antilooting squad, established under Operation Safeguard, arrested 81 people on 225 charges and ordered 99 people to move on while making no fewer than 3,688 checks on flood affected streets in Brisbane and Ipswich.

According to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry interim report, 14,100 Brisbane properties were affected during the flood peak in 2011, with 1,203 houses suffering inundation. Additionally, 1,879 businesses were partially inundated and 557 were completely inundated. Looting is a serious matter. It affected Bundaberg and Gympie recently and affected my electorate of Yeerongpilly in the 2011 floods. That is why I brought this bill forward. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I highlight that my electorate of Yeerongpilly was one of the communities heavily impacted by the January 2011 floods.

During the aftermath of the 2011 floods, over 30 people were charged under section 398, subsection 13 of the *Criminal Code* ('stealing by looting').

During the more recent 2013 floods which heavily impacted Bundaberg and the surrounding area, the Queensland Police Commissioner, Mr Ian Stewart, told the media that 'sadly' there had again been instances of looting—not only in Bundaberg but also in Gympie.

Such crimes are committed by opportunistic and callous criminals and our communities including the Police Minister's own community of Bundaberg expects the punishment to fit the crime.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice often talks about being tough on crime and that is exactly what this Bill is intended to do.

In respect of the declaration of disaster situations and, more specifically, offences of 'Stealing by looting in a disaster area', it is held that a stronger penalty of 14 years imprisonment is more aligned with community expectations.

It is held that increased punishment should be distinguished from the punishment for other stealing offences under existing section 398(13)(a) & (b) of the Criminal Code.

Accordingly, the new punishment for 'Stealing by looting in a disaster area', imposing a maximum 14 years imprisonment, is deemed necessary for three main reasons:

- It underpins the significance of 'declared areas' under the Disaster Management Act 2003;
- It provides a punishment that is more aligned with community expectations in such circumstances; and
- It will serve as a deterrent and contribute toward protecting citizens from opportunistic offenders in disaster areas, thereby facilitating community safety and the functioning of the criminal justice system.

Regarding proportionality and consistency of penalties, periods of imprisonment under section 398 (Punishment of stealing) already range from 5 years to 14 years imprisonment. Stealing offences that may incur 14 years imprisonment include:

- Stealing wills
- Stealing of a vehicle
- Stealing firearm for use in another indictable offence offences.

In addition to this being consistent with the punishment for other more serious stealing offences, it is also consistent with the punishment for the types of offences likely to be committed in the aftermath of natural disasters including:

Criminal Code, section 419 provides for the offence of 'burglary', applicable when the offender enters the dwelling of another with the intention of committing an indictable offence—attracting a penalty of 14 years of imprisonment.

Criminal Code, section 421 provides for the crime of 'entering or being in premises' with the intention of committing an indictable offence—attracting a penalty of 10 years imprisonment. However, if an indictable offence (e.g. stealing) is committed within, the offender is liable to a penalty of 14 years imprisonment.

Therefore, recognising that section 398(13) 'Stealing by looting' increases the punishment for stealing from 5 years to 10 years imprisonment including if the offence is committed during a natural disaster, the new section 13A 'Stealing by looting in a declared area' logically and reasonably attracts a more serious penalty of imprisonment for 14 years.

In closing, this is proportionate and consistent with the other serious stealing offences above mentioned and it is not only justified but expected by Queenslanders.

### First Reading

**Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—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 Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Noosa, Local Government

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (2.34 pm): On 9 March, just 12 days ago, an historic vote took place in my community that allowed Noosa residents to determine the future of their own local government. It is a vote that should never have taken place had the Labor government of the time had any respect for the rights of individuals and communities.

The arrogance of the Beattie Labor government and the Bligh Labor government that forced communities like mine into amalgamating councils will never be forgotten or forgiven. When we talk about arrogance, the person who best fits that bill is the former Treasurer, Andrew Fraser, who used the process to build his profile with his Labor colleagues and, in so doing, tried to destroy the overwhelming community spirit that exists in Noosa.

From that date in 2007 we did not lie down and simply take it. Some 18,747 residents on one day signed a petition opposing forced amalgamations. Around 80 per cent of residents made their feelings known in a postal plebiscite. Some 8,000 Noosa residents and their supporters marched on Parliament House and in between we sold raffle tickets, held community forums, bought stickers and T-shirts to fund our campaign and to keep the community's dream alive.

On 9 March, 81.36 per cent of residents voted yes for our independence day. It is was a stunning result and was celebrated on that Saturday night by hundreds of people outside the old Noosa shire chambers and many more at a gathering on Main Beach and hundreds more at the Noosa Rugby Club.

The Bible tells us a story about David and Goliath. The moral of this story can be applied to our little community. Determined to punch well above our weight against all the odds, against all the criticism, against all the dodgy deals, false hopes and bent promises, we have maintained our pride in our home and our belief in ourselves.

I will be eternally grateful to my colleagues Jeff Seeneey, Lawrence Springborg and John-Paul Langbroek who, when leaders of the opposition, created, refined and maintained the policy of self-determination over the last six years which kept our dream alive. I would also like to thank the honourable member for Warrego for his help to my community. Premier Campbell Newman maintained that promise because less than 12 months after attaining government, and keeping true to our election commitment, I as the local member have been able to deliver on the promised vote for the people of Noosa.

All in this place are proud of their home, and I am very proud of Noosa. We live in our environment as best we can. We have protected it and nurtured it so that our footprint on it is barely seen. Overwhelmingly people choose to live in Noosa. New residents quickly adapt to our deeply held values and our shared sense of community. We have put the dead hand of Labor behind us and we have now reclaimed our future.

### Party Houses

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.36 pm): I rise today to update the House on the government action on the party house issue, which is one of the most disturbing activities causing our usually peaceful communities to experience unruly and unacceptable behaviour on a regular basis. Today I can say that this is a start of the party being over for good for these unapproved, backdoor accommodation operators. We now have a plan to eradicate and stop for good unapproved short-term holiday letting businesses in residential areas.

On Friday, 8 March I met with the CEO of the Gold Coast City Council, along with my colleagues the new Assistant Minister for Planning Reform, the member for Southport, and Councillor Betts. Along with council representatives we came to the conclusion that affirmative and swift action has to happen with this issue. For five years the Gold Coast City Council has failed to act strongly enough to eradicate these abhorrent and antisocial party houses and it is a local government planning problem.

*A Current Affair* has recently done another story on party houses on the Gold Coast, with party goers in the story and pictures that were more risqué and offensive than ever before. The community has had enough. In the words of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, the party is over and the people of the Gold Coast are relieved that action is finally being taken and finally something is being done.

The volume of complaints to my office have increased over the years and residents are outraged from watching the *A Current Affair* program that shows appalling behaviour happening in our residential communities time and time again, week after week. Drunken and unruly behaviour, including party goers vomiting and urinating in backyards, is totally unacceptable. This is in full view of neighbours and their families. These parties go on for days and music is blaring day and night.

The state government, the Deputy Premier and the Assistant Minister for Planning Reform, in conjunction with the Minister for Local Government, will give councils the power with statutory instruments to regulate and shut down short-term holiday letting in residential areas. I have fresh eyes that have arrived in the shape of the new director of planning for the Gold Coast City Council, Ms Gail Connolly. She is already making the right noises about making the effects of this material change of use on these properties as impact assessable.

We will give councils, through state laws and regulations, the power and authority to control these party houses. State planning officers will work together with local planning officers to ensure these laws are enforced for the safety and security of our communities and to restore the peace and tranquillity in our communities. I implore the officers and councillors of the Gold Coast City Council to understand the nightmare that neighbours of these houses are suffering and to be unstinting in their pursuit of a resolution to this party house problem once and for all.

*(Time expired)*

### Newman Government, Performance

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): Normally when anyone approaches an anniversary or reaches a special milestone it is a time for celebration, a time for reflecting on achievement. As we reach the first anniversary of the Newman LNP government next week, it will indeed be a time of deep reflection for all Queenslanders and, dare I say, all members of the government.

For Queenslanders, 24 March will present an opportunity to reflect on a government that in record time came to personify betrayals and to represent underhandedness and took no shame in brutally letting us know it could not be trusted. For each and every member sitting on that side of the House, 24 March should and will mark the time when they will be wondering where it all went so horribly wrong and probably none more so than the member for Redcliffe, who on this auspicious occasion has won himself a place as the face of the LNP. At what should be a milestone, the member for Redcliffe has provided this government a millstone. The scandal that continues to swirl about this

member is typical of this government—a government that has nothing to celebrate come 24 March and should hang its head in shame, not the least because its sole achievement has been to feather its own nest with its sole project, a brand-new executive building across the road.

Nobody will be celebrating on 24 March, not the 14,000 workers who were sacked after being promised they had nothing to fear, not the hundreds of people from non-government organisations who shut up shop after their funding was axed, not the thousands of public housing tenants who had been left callously hanging in limbo worrying about their future, not the thousands of hospital patients forced to wait for treatment because this government will not fund such basic medical fundamentals as bandages and pathology services, not the environmental warriors who look on aghast as this government clears Cape York of natural habitat and opens up Queensland to uranium mining, and least of all this government itself which knows it has betrayed Queensland and knows that it is incapable of governing itself. It will be looking back at those who were dumped—the police minister, the housing minister and the minister for arts and IT—and those other members who walked away from the LNP because they were themselves deceived by their own, which brings me back to the member for Redcliffe.

As this government marks its first year, it would be wise to take a long, hard look at its disgraceful head-in-the-sand approach over the past fortnight in relation to this particular member. The member for Redcliffe's efforts will be the benchmark on which this government is rightfully judged on 24 March, because Queenslanders understand that, just like the member for Redcliffe, this government is more about arrogance and unanswered questions than owning up to wrongs and doing the right thing.

*(Time expired)*

### Redcliffe Electorate

 **Mr DRISCOLL** (Redcliffe—LNP) (2.43 pm): I thank my colleagues for kindly suggesting that perhaps I go next, moving up the list a little. I would like to reflect a little on the last year and what we have been doing in Redcliffe as part of the LNP government. Certainly it is very appropriate for me to follow the babble, I suppose, that just occurred from the Leader of the Opposition in slandering me. But let's face it, that seems to have been the mark of the last few weeks. If that is the level at which they want to deal, then we will let that be the spot they choose. I would prefer to deal with the positive things that we are doing in the electorate of Redcliffe as part of an LNP government.

We have seen serious amounts of money, hundreds of thousands of dollars in fact, put into local schools—schools that were neglected for years and years by the previous Labor government.

**Mr Ruthenberg:** Under Labor.

**Mr DRISCOLL:** Under the Labor government. Serious maintenance backlogs have been dealt with, and I am proud to say that each one of the state schools in my electorate received a substantial sum. In fact, I think the majority of them received the maximum amount, all bar one.

**Mr Ruthenberg:** Fixing up Labor's problems.

**Mr DRISCOLL:** Yes, fixing up Labor's problems. I take the interjection of the member for Kallangur. There has also been a raft of other cash injections into the Redcliffe electorate, but I want to raise something which seems to be an ongoing problem and something which another member of parliament in my part of the world seems to want to shift blame on. I am talking of the GP superclinic, the GP superclinic that the federal member for Petrie lauded as a federal Labor government project that they were going to be putting forward. At every single opportunity for a photograph we saw the current Labor member for Petrie jumping up in front of the camera. The problem is that the photos were great but it is a little bit like the Monty Python skit because the building is there but there is nobody in it.

The new metro north health board is now working hard to get that project back on track for the people of our region, but we are working against years and years and years of neglect from the current federal Labor member for Petrie, who I am now told is running around with a couple of former Labor senior colleagues in her office who used to sit in this place. I do not hold much hope for the federal member for Petrie if they are the sort of people she is relying on to get across the line in a few months' time, when whomever happens to be the Prime Minister after today is going to have to stand next to this federal member in front of that unopened building and realise they have failed.

### Samford Valley

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (2.46 pm): I rise to speak about an event I attended on 15 March—a public forum at the Samford Community Hall, where the Samford Futures report that has been compiled over the last three years by the progress association was officially launched and presented to the community of the Samford Valley. Within the report's introduction, a comment is made that the vision is future making, not future waiting. This indicates an engagement model to ensure that the future is influenced by proactive measures undertaken by a number of groups and individuals who strive collaboratively toward a common goal.

This fine example of an engaged community, building and sharing a common vision for our future, is exactly what my forum on 20 April aims to achieve also. The Our Community, Your Voice community forum will be the first event in a line of community events we will be undertaking throughout the year where we will be collating the results of a survey, which I have distributed, and beginning to plan the community approach to the Queensland Plan event in Mackay on 10 May.

As well as encouraging participation of my constituents in the Queensland Plan, I also encourage them to undertake actions that can influence outcomes throughout our area. I encourage them to make their voices and opinions heard by making submissions to the TransLink bus network review, which remains open until 7 April, and we have recently presented a petition to the parliament for greater access to go card top-up machines in our local area, which received over 800 signatories. These examples show through real and proactive measures that our government is actively engaging with our communities, giving people a real voice and a real capacity to influence outcomes.

In my remaining time today, I again seek the input of all my constituents by their completion of the recently distributed survey that will see us develop a vision for both the electorate of Ferny Grove and the state of Queensland. I will be selecting and announcing the delegates for the 10 May event in Mackay in coming days, and my electorate will note that the delegates represent a broad cross-section of our community and will, through their life experiences, have the capacity to represent a wide range of opinions and interest groups at the forum.

I cannot sit down with 28 seconds remaining and not pass comment on the member for Inala's speech previously where she inquired as to whether we would be celebrating on 24 March. I have absolutely no doubt that Queenslanders will be celebrating but I feel they may well bring their celebration forward to this afternoon, when no doubt we will have another leader of this country. I would suspect that we will begin to see a brighter future which may unravel in the months to come.

*(Time expired)*

### Newman Government, Achievements

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (2.49 pm): As we approach the 12-month mark of the Newman government, it is my pleasure to reflect on a few of the achievements and results delivered in the Southport electorate. I have had an absolute ball. I love getting out on weekends and meeting with constituents at listening posts and in coffee shops around the electorate where I set up mobile offices. It has been an incredible pleasure and privilege to work with many of the community groups and provide letters of support and help them raise the necessary funds to get on with their work.

What a great pleasure it was this week to hear the announcement by the Minister for Sport of the Get Going grants. I am so pleased that the Southport Junior Australian Football Club, the Gold Coast Rugby Union Football Club, the Musgrave Sports Club, the Gold Coast Victory Athletics Club at Griffith University, the Mike Hatcher Junior Motorcycle Club and the Super Performance Centre have all been recipients of these new grants. I know from speaking with them this week that all of them have been absolutely delighted.

Last week I held a principals forum with the education minister, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, at Southport State High School. There were some great contributions from local principals. It is incredible to see the fantastic job that Principal Steve McLuckie is doing at Southport State High School. Other good news in Southport is that with community support we have re-established the community consultative committee for law and order. We meet regularly with local police. The police are delighted because over the last 12 months we have seen a 27 per cent increase in the number of police assigned to the Southport Police Station. We as a government are delivering on our promise of more police and front-line services.

One of the sadder moments but also one of the special moments of last year was at Musgrave Hill State School last December when my wife and I stood with our four sons and sung for the last time the school song. After some 17 years the last of our four sons graduated from that fantastic school. It was a great pleasure last night to have my young leaders group here—25 young go-getters from the electorate all committed to a mentoring program and all of whom participated in helping raise much-needed funds for the Red Cross appeal, nearly \$15,000 from a minigolf night.

This year the Southport Forum was established. We have had great speakers come and visit us including Nigel Chamier; the Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls; the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games; and Chris Davis, the Assistant Minister for Health. There is just so much going on in the electorate.

*(Time expired)*

### Insurance Premiums

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (2.52 pm): The scourge of insurance companies once again has hit the town of Emerald. As a result of the 2008 flood, we saw it all. After the 2010-11 flood, we witnessed the rest. Since then companies like Suncorp have again dropped the axe on constituents of mine in Emerald, this week increasing their insurance premium from \$2,000 to \$10,500. Here is a large company—a Queensland company, too, of all things—really driving the slipper into the people of Emerald. I know it has also happened in Roma, but here we are on the eve of Anzac Day 2013 and this is not the Australian way. When somebody is down, you do not give them another boot in the head or in the guts, and that is exactly what is happening to these people in Emerald.

We have seen a downturn in the coalmining industry. We have seen the state government, along with other operators, contribute \$5 million towards flood mitigation for rehabilitation work on the railway bridge on the Nogoia River at Emerald. The government, the council and other players are showing leadership on this issue to try to get some fairness into the equation of insurance premiums so these companies might give my constituents a fair go. Not everybody in Emerald is on coalmining wages or the high wages paid to people who live in a professional environment. Whilst we need those professional people and we know that high-wage structure is there, the average wage is about \$60,000 a year. But, if you are going to be paying \$10,000 for your insurance premium, that is a cost that no family can endure.

Next Monday, 25 March, we have flood mitigation meetings in Emerald at 9.30 am and another one at 6.30 pm for those who cannot make the first meeting. I hope that the Suncorp insurance people and other insurance people have the intestinal fortitude to come along next Monday. I will be at both meetings and I hope they turn up to both meetings. This is about fronting up. This is about being fair-minded and giving people a fair go, not driving the slipper in when they are down. This is not Australian. As I say, we are on the eve of Anzac Day. That is why we have this proud tradition that we have in this country, because we look out for each other. I say to Suncorp and to other insurance companies: show some compassion and understanding and stop driving the slipper in at the eleventh hour.

### Lytton Electorate

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (2.55 pm): Queensland is a great state with great opportunities since the Newman government was elected in 2012, from Currumbin to Cook and from Logan to Lytton. As I am a stats man myself, I would like to inform the House of a few numbers which show my commitment to the Lytton electorate and the people I represent.

Since March 2012 I have doorknocked 4,194 homes, which is 21 per cent of the electorate. I have doorknocked 193 small businesses and attended 584 community events ranging from a gala dinner for the Wynnum Chamber of Commerce with the Premier to a National Seniors Association event and, even more recently, Manly State School's 'Say No to Bullying' parade. I have actively engaged with my community through my can-do mobile office at 132 locations throughout the electorate.

Since coming to office, I have been very busy engaging with my constituency and getting real solutions. Some highlights include \$900,000 for school maintenance backlog, an increased police force in Wynnum of 14 new police officers on the streets, \$4.1 million to improve boat ramps in Manly harbour and reopening Hemmant State School, which was shut down by Labor. The old school will be utilised for flexible learning for disadvantaged youth. Last week I announced—

**Mr Ruthenberg:** I think you need to come and lobby for me.

**Mr SYMES:** I am only too happy to. Last week I announced that the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit will be up for public tender for a public-private partnership to upgrade the facility, which was left to rot under the Labor Bligh government. I have secured funding of \$100,000 for the Wynnum Croquet Club, and I went to its opening on the weekend. I also opened with the Minister for Transport the \$385 million Port of Brisbane Motorway, which was on time and on budget, to ease congestion in the suburbs. While I may be the youngest MP in this House, the job is nowhere near complete. I have the vision to build a better Lytton, as Labor neglected the area for too long. Queensland is a great state and under the Newman government Queenslanders will be given great opportunities.

### Queensland Traffic Offenders Program

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (2.58 pm): I rise to talk about an organisation called QTOP, Queensland Traffic Offenders Program. The Queensland Traffic Offenders Program is headed up by the director, Lara Hickling, who is a volunteer. I have attended two sessions of this program to see what it is about. The first was a police and law session headed by a volunteer, Brooke Winter, a solicitor based on the Gold Coast and the second was a trauma session headed by one of our fire officers, Vic Canton. There are three other sessions—a fatigue session, a grief session and an effects on health session—which people who take on this program have to complete.

Participants attend the program for offences such as drink driving, drug driving, unlicensed or disqualified driving, hooning, evading police plus numerous other offences. QTOP is a diversion program designed to reduce the rate of recidivism in drink drivers by focusing on the drivers of unsafe driving. QTOP is currently working closely with legal representatives to establish an effective referral process for Brisbane based offenders.

The program is held at two locations at the moment: the Life Development Centre in Nerang and the Carson Room, which is at the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club on Logan Road, Mount Gravatt. The cost per participant is \$165. As I mentioned earlier, the presenters are volunteers. Participants listen to these expert lecturers who also include driver safety trainers, emergency services officers, drug and alcohol counsellors, police officers and lawyers. The objective is to use a variety of shock and impact methods to encourage drivers to change their dangerous behaviour and, therefore, reduce the risk of offending. Magistrates may consider completion of the program as a mitigating factor when sentencing offenders.

In my remaining few seconds I will reflect on one particular young fellow who was completing the program on the first day that I was there. He overheard me talking to a solicitor about the \$5,000 fine for people who evade police. We were trying to work out when it started, and he was able to tell us. He could advise us the date the program started because he had been a repeat offender. He had offended twice before this program came in. He received two fines for those offences, each of \$150 and the last time around he received a \$5,000 fine and lost his licence for two years. I asked him if he was going to tell his mates about it. He said that they already know; he has let them know loud and clear. That is about this government bringing down—

*(Time expired)*

### Government Services

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (3.01 pm): As the Newman government draws closer to celebrating its one-year anniversary I am pleased to be part of this government and to recognise many of the achievements of this government. I am pleased that our commitment to revitalising front-line services continues to be a priority and that this government is part of our plan in getting Queensland back on track.

In my electorate of Mount Ommaney that I am so proud to represent we have seen the next wave of new recruits graduate from the police academy, and we have welcomed seven new recruits to our district. Honourable members may recall that last sitting I highlighted the fantastic work that our ambos do. Today I draw their attention to another profession, that of our Corrective Services officers. Last week I had the privilege of representing our police and community safety minister, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, at the graduation ceremony at the Queensland Corrective Services Academy. Twenty-four outstanding officers graduated and will now serve and protect our community. I can tell honourable members that we are in safe hands. The role of a Queensland correctional officer should never be

underestimated. It is an important, valuable role that deserves great respect. It truly is a front-line role. People who choose this profession are of a high calibre and are committed and dedicated to community safety.

I also had the honour of presenting long service medals to officers who had completed 15, 25 and a whopping 35 years of dedicated service to Queensland Corrective Services. Special mention must be made to Bill Deichshell, who received his long service badge of 35 years with QCS. He first commenced as an officer working at Pentridge Prison in Victoria in 1961. He has certainly seen some changes. It is also great to see our partnership with PNG being enhanced, with recruits from PNG undergoing further training with our academy.

I am proud to be part of a government that continues to deliver on our promises. We continue to deliver on investing and revitalising our vital front-line services. As I said, I am proud to be part of a government that looks to celebrate its one-year anniversary and its achievements. In Mount Ommaney we have seen some great changes, including palliative care beds being reinstated which the Labor government took away from us. Well done, LNP.

### International Women's Day

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (3.04 pm): On 12 March I invited a number of hardworking and community-minded women to my electorate office for a small celebration. I am privileged to know these women. Let me speak about why I respect them so much. Coral Palmer from Kallangur runs Gnadenfrei, a dedicated team of professional psychologists who work tirelessly to provide critical assistance to youth, adolescents, adults, families and couples who are struggling with mental health, family struggles and addiction issues. Coral is a blessing to our community.

Gemma Gale from Dakabin Station Action Group is an activist in my community who works diligently to have the Dakabin Railway Station upgraded. This station in my electorate was neglected for 20 years under previous Labor members. The recent announcement that we will spend \$250,000 to make improvements to the platform at Dakabin is testament to her work.

Darlene Brown is a truly inspirational woman. She is an ex-servicewoman who organises a group of other people to create care packages for our troops serving overseas. She does this out of the goodness of her heart and does not look for recognition.

I have known Susan Fulton for a number of years. What hasn't Susan been involved with? If it is not her involvement with schools or local community groups, it is charities. Susan is one of those salt of the earth women who contributes so much but never asks for anything in return.

Olwyn Connolly is one of the most hardworking women I have ever met. She is not only a pioneer in our community but also a close friend of mine. I trust her and thank her for her strong community spirit and support.

Michelle Mitchell was my nomination for the Speaker's Inspirational Women's Award. The work Michelle does with Youth Excel is remarkable and I cannot begin to thank her enough. I will continue to fight hard to help Michelle and Youth Excel secure funding for their invaluable work with kids of our community.

Jewel Chant runs We Can Make a Difference Friday in Narangba. She is a real local champion who brings disadvantaged people together on Fridays to give them a voice and make sure they know we care for them. I have been lucky enough to visit Jewel and see firsthand the great work she does.

Finally, there is Jodie Guerrero, who may be well known to some members of this House. She recently attended one of our regular Christian fellowship breakfasts. Jodie survived a serious bout of cancer and has been using her experience to write a book and become a motivational speaker.

Imagine all those people in one electorate! It is fantastic, and their contribution to our electorate is often unseen because they deal with people who are not well known. All I can say is: thank you. I say thank you to them for the work they do in our community.

There are many other women in our electorate who I have not named here or who did not come and celebrate with me who tirelessly and day after day contribute to our community in their own way. I speak of the ladies in the sporting clubs and the service groups. I thank each one of these women for their contribution to our community and I look forward to their continued friendship.

### BrisBricks Lego Exhibition

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (3.07 pm): I was introduced at a very young age to the fascinating world of little plastic interconnecting building blocks. Throughout primary school and even during high school many of my afternoons, evenings and weekends were regularly spent around a table filled with Lego creations.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr HOLSWICH:** I will not take that interjection. As a parent of young boys now, it has given me great joy to pass on that love of Lego to them and to see them developing their imagination, creativity and problem-solving skills whilst building Lego creations large and small. Late last year, my family and I attended the inaugural BrisBricks Lego Exhibition at Mount Gravatt. We were blown away by the displays and also to learn that nearly 8,000 people attend the exhibition over three days. After attending that exhibition, I approached the organisers of the BrisBricks Lego Exhibition with a proposal to hold a Lego exhibition in Pine Rivers. Following on from that, it has given me great pleasure in recent weeks to be able to announce and promote the BrisBricks Pine Rivers Lego Exhibition that will be held at the Strathpine Community Centre on 15 and 16 June. Whilst I am unashamedly still a Lego fan, in truth this exhibition is not about some lifelong desire to have a major Lego exhibition on my doorstep

**Mr Ruthenberg:** Yes, it is!

**Mr HOLSWICH:** At least not entirely. As many in this House would know, I am a passionate advocate for developing the tourism potential of the Pine Rivers region and am committed to bringing more jobs into Pine Rivers. We are anticipating that over the two days of this exhibition we will see somewhere around 5,000 people walk through the doors in Strathpine. This exhibition will be a fantastic opportunity to attract visitors to our region and an opportunity for local businesses to capitalise on several thousand people visiting the Pine Rivers region over that weekend.

We have given local businesses the opportunity to sponsor the exhibition. All the available sponsorship opportunities were snapped up by local businesses in just a couple of days. Our whole region will have the chance to capitalise on the extra visitors to Pine Rivers over that weekend. I look forward to seeing many people come for the exhibition and then stay to shop at our local shops, eat at our local restaurants and visit our local attractions while they are in the area.

This exhibition will be a significant event for our region and is quite deliberately part of my strategy to build a better Pine Rivers through fostering a stronger local tourism industry and a stronger local economy overall. Queensland is certainly a great state with great opportunities and Pine Rivers sits poised to play a major role in the great future that lies ahead for our state. For at least one weekend this June, we will be using those small plastic interconnecting building blocks to help boost the Pine Rivers economy and to spark the imaginations of our next generation.

### Youth Crime

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.09 pm): I rise with a heavy heart to speak about the tragic consequences of youth crime in our community following the recent death of a 15-year-old girl whilst travelling in a stolen car at Walkamin on the Atherton Tableland. My condolences go out to all the families affected by this unnecessary loss of life. The lives of these kids, their friends and their families have been changed forever. I will never condone the theft of property and I am confident that the justice system will ultimately deal with this tragedy. I want it to be clear that my remaining remarks express my concerns about youth justice more generally.

My fear is that some of the LNP members, particularly in Far North Queensland and other regional centres, are whipping up fear in the community over youth justice issues. I think they need to start acting responsibly as members of parliament. No doubt crime is an issue in many areas of Queensland, but to have elected politicians calling marginalised youth 'little grubs' to grab a headline does little to improve the situation. Media grabs are all the LNP has left because they do not have the solution they promised at the election. If anything, the problem is only getting worse. In October last year, then police commissioner Bob Atkinson said that 'this is the first time in perhaps even slightly over a decade—perhaps 12 years—where we have seen a jump and a spike like this'.

The Labor Party funded many successful programs to reduce crime which have all been cut since the LNP was elected—cuts to community and NGO groups focused on cutting youth crime; cuts to Skilling Queenslanders for Work; cuts to youth justice staff and cuts to youth justice conferencing. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative was one concrete way young people could receive

training or other support leading to a job, and encouraging and equipping people to take up employment is one definite way to address offending behaviour. It is no secret that the Labor opposition holds a preference for youth justice conferencing as an early intervention tool and an alternative to punishing young offenders in court.

So what have these cuts been replaced with? One boot camp with five young people in it and another boot camp that finally has a location but as yet has no participants. This government is so focused on cutting good programs that it struggles to deliver its questionable ones. On 15 November 2012 the Attorney General said in parliament—

My department will now work closely with the service providers to ensure that the youth boot camps are up and running by early January 2013.

The Attorney now hopes the Cairns boot camp will be operational nearly three months late. On Tuesday the Minister for Police surprised us all when he proclaimed—

The Government's boot camp trials are also up and running.

He then went further and stated—

If these trials continue to be a success, it is the government's intention to expand them.

Then finally today the Attorney-General announced the Cairns location for a maximum of five youths. Perhaps one saving grace is that it seems, despite the military style boot camp that was paraded about by the LNP before the last election, many aspects of the former government's early intervention approach have been incorporated into the LNP's proposal, which has previously been presented by the LNP as the get-tough alternative. It is clear the LNP are focused on hype and spin rather than reducing crime by supporting disadvantaged youth. I call on LNP members to properly represent their communities and focus on successful programs rather than untested programs they cannot even deliver.

### **North Queensland Cowboys; Learn Earn Legend! Program**

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (3.12 pm): I rise to speak on a very important matter, but I fear we have probably lost most of our streaming broadcast audience to the chook lotto that is going on down in Canberra! It is interesting that the member for Bundamba is not around, because I saw her staffer escorting four or five ETU officials as they placed their tips into the barrel.

I wish to speak about the North Queensland students who are part of the Cowboys' Learn Earn Legend! program. I have spoken about this program before. Largely, its aim is to provide support to Indigenous students in years 11 and 12 and assist these students to move on after high school into employment, further study or training. Last Saturday I attended a barbecue for graduating 2012 Learn Earn Legend! students. Of the 204 students, 98 per cent satisfactorily completed year 12. That is an improvement on the result from 2011 of 96 per cent. Of that number, 87 per cent have gone on to either employment or further education.

Each year a number of students are rewarded for their outstanding achievements by being chosen to participate in the All Stars Youth Summit. Nine local students were chosen to attend the 2013 All Stars Youth Summit, held in Brisbane last month. These teenagers achieved outstanding results during year 11 including maintaining good grades and maintaining an excellent attendance record.

I will acknowledge some of the students. From Townsville were Tristan Nelliman-Adams from Ignatius Park College; Storm Pedro from Thuringowa State High School; James Matthew from Shalom Christian College; and Tallara Watson, who I can proudly say goes to St Patrick's College in my electorate of Townsville. Other students included Lumbee Pablo from Western Cape College, Weipa; Donovan George from Cloncurry State School; Elijay Youse from Bowen State High School; and Reece Wallace and Seiarne Reid from Blackheath and Thornburgh College, Charters Towers.

During the week-long summit they took part in a range of activities including life skills workshops, career advice training and job interview sessions, and a job expo. To top off that amazing week, they attended the Indigenous All Stars football match. Those who attended—I was fortunate to attend, along with Mayor Alf Lacey from Palm Island—witnessed a fantastic contest, with the Indigenous All Stars running out clear winners 32-6 in the season-opening clash. Despite the drubbing, the game was very positive and entertaining. But these kids were not just part of the crowd; they also played a role in the prematch entertainment. For the nine students from across the north it was a trip of a lifetime—to not only learn new skills and life lessons during the summit but also have an opportunity to learn from their peers the Indigenous All Stars.

The Cowboys' Learn Earn Legend! program continues to go from strength to strength, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the students who take part, the people who run the program, the schools and the industry partners.

### **Heart of Gold International Film Festival; Gympie Music Muster**

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (3.15 pm): I am very grateful to the Premier for the support the Newman government has provided to the Gympie community announced today.

I wish to touch on two great events that occur within the Gympie region, both having an international profile. Every other year Gympie hosts the Heart of Gold International Film Festival. That event attracts over 700 entries from film-makers from around the world as they put together their submissions of short films that are positive, inspiring and uplifting to our community. This Heart of Gold International Film Festival relies on the sponsorship of local businesses. It is a great event that attracts patrons from around not only the Gympie and Sunshine Coast areas; people have the festival on their agendas as they travel to film festivals around Australia. This year that event will be placed at risk. The capacity of Gympie businesses to provide the usual sponsorship support is severely limited because of the economic aftershocks as a result of the floods. I commend this great event to all members of this House and to all Queenslanders. People should make the time to come to Gympie to experience it.

Another event that is placed at risk because of the effects of the floods is the Gympie Music Muster. Many in this House have heard me speak about that great event and the great times that are had by many out there. There was over \$400,000 worth of damage to their site as a result of the Australia Day floods and the February floods. The community is rallying together to provide the manpower to undertake the repairs, but they are significant and there will be a huge impact on the ongoing viability of this significant country music event which benefits not only Gympie but also Queensland and Australia.

These two events are examples of the quality and diversity of the arts and community experiences within my electorate. They are events that have not relied upon government funding but have occurred because of the grassroots desire to see something spring up and benefit those in our area. We know from the Gympie Music Muster that millions of dollars are given back, not only to local groups such as small P&Cs but also to major charities and events across Australia. They have done that over many, many years.

As was pointed out by the Premier this morning, Gympie has the reputation of being the town that saved Queensland with the discovery of gold in 1867. Gympie now calls upon Queensland to help save it from the economic aftershocks of these floods.

### **Fairview Heights State School**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.18 pm): I wish to bring to the attention of the House a visit I recently made to one of the 11 primary schools in the electorate of Toowoomba North. I had the pleasure of going to the Fairview Heights State School to hand out their leadership badges for the year. Principal Julie Raitelli was ably assisted by Mrs Chetty and Mr Aston. It was a great honour for me to meet some of the future leaders of Toowoomba: incoming school captains Isobel Dew, Annica Matachioni, Nicola Redman, Kody Wake and Brittany Werder.

These outstanding students all presented a speech following their introduction and badge presentation. It was a great privilege to be there with them. The kids were very excited. A couple were nervous, but they did a fantastic job. Mr Aston presented the sports captains with their badges after telling them the various responsibilities they had. There are three houses at the school—Border House, Freeman House and Perkins House. Mady Atfield, Elise Bowen, Adam Langton, Kris Maynard, and Dylan Thompson were all for Border House; Bradley Groves, Harry Lucas, Jadyne McIntyre, Lachlan Mohr and Chloe Thies were all for Freeman House; and Lucy Bielby, Mackenzie Bradley, Kelsey Koeford, Carter Mogg and Steffi Wilson were all for Perkins House. Each of the sports captains were all convinced that their house was going to win, so I look forward very much to heading back to the school at various sporting events to see just how the leader table is going.

Music captains were also presented with their badges on that day. Mrs Chetty presented those badges and again outlined their responsibilities. Riley Naumann, Tom Panitz, Clinton Payton and Courtney Rixon were all presented with their badges. On that particular day there were other school leaders, and the school has a great program. It is a large primary school—and growing—in Toowoomba and it has many leaders who take responsibility throughout the school and spend time

showing the younger children the various things that it takes to be a leader. I had the privilege to talk to them briefly about what it means to be a servant leader and that they should not think that getting up in front of people and telling them what to do is how to show leadership. Rather, they should listen to other students at the school and find out what they can do for them, because servant leadership is something that I believe in greatly and is something that I think will serve the school very well. P&C Association President Tim Panitz was there. I thank him very much for the invitation to attend and I look forward to being able to attend a P&C meeting at some time in the future. I congratulate all of the children on a job well done for leading the school.

### **Burnett Electorate, Agriculture**

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.21 pm): In January 2013 hundreds of farms were devastated by the impact of flooding and families lost their homes and businesses. For the second time in less than three years, people were faced with the overwhelming task of rebuilding their lives. Whilst crops have been left destroyed and infrastructure damaged, our local farmers are fighting hard to clean up the mess and get back to work. Produce or livestock that was spared still needs to be sold and farmers will be doing everything they can to get it to market. They need to keep running in order to fund the clean-up and get back on their feet. We need people to help support Queensland farmers by buying their products. We are highlighting local brands and labels on my website so that they can look for them in their local grocer or supermarket. We want to get the message out that we still have plenty of products available and it is more important than ever to buy Queensland grown.

Many individual farms in the Burnett region have been affected by the floods, but overall our farm industries need to keep going—and they will with our support. We need to support families like the Attard family in Bundaberg, which has three generations of farmers. They produce melons in the winter months but their main line is cherry tomatoes. Unfortunately, their location between Bundaberg and Bargara meant that their farm was hit by the tornadoes which swept through and damaged 100,000 plants. Despite the huge loss, they still have the next crop of cherry tomatoes to pick and they were able to pack some on Saturday. Please support the Attards by buying their local product. We need to support companies like Austchilli, the largest chilli company in Australia and a leader in food manufacturing. With a unique processing and business approach, its fresh chilli varieties and puree products are now supplied and in demand in Australia. We need to support growers like Windhum Farms, which is well known for its label of Bundaberg Gold. The enterprise specialises in the production of premium grade sweet potatoes. We need to support growers like KC's Fresh, a primary producer of herbs supplying a large range of quality herbs to local, Queensland and interstate fruit and vegetable markets. KC's Fresh is currently producing 14 herb lines focusing on year-round quality and consistency. I am heartened to hear the pledge from Woolworths not to turn to imported products, but we need to continue to stock Queensland-grown products. I have called on Coles and other supermarket chains to follow suit and for consumers to look for, buy and support Queensland-grown products. This really is a time for consumers to buy quality Bundy and Burnett products and I call on supermarkets and other retailers to do their bit.

I take this opportunity in the time remaining to mention the most significant reforms to agricultural production introduced in the House last night—almost the biggest reforms in 20 years. I welcome the package of reforms which promises to boost food production and deliver jobs and economic benefits for the rural sector and regional communities across Queensland. The amendments proposed in the new legislation introduced will allow sustainable vegetation management activities into the future. We are closing a chapter after 20 years of Labor and poor representation in my area enforced by radical green policies upon landholders that threatened their ability and efficiency to manage their businesses and maintain productivity. We are creating an opportunity for farming businesses to expand cropping operations without the burden of unnecessary regulation.

### **Nanango Electorate, Sports Grants**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (3.24 pm): I rise to talk about the wonderful announcement of the Get in the Game and Get Going sporting grants for the Nanango electorate. Firstly, congratulations to the Acting Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the Hon. Tracy Davis, and her department for implementing this excellent initiative. However, I want to wish Minister Steve Dickson a fast and swift recovery.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take all of those interjections. All of our thoughts are with the minister.

Grassroots sporting and recreation clubs are the backbone of our local communities, and the Get in the Game funding program is definitely helping more children and young people in my electorate to get more involved in sport and recreation activities. In particular, I want to congratulate all of the clubs that were successful in achieving the recently announced Get Going grants. These include the Nanango and District Netball Association, and I must congratulate the Nanango netball association because my daughters actually play for Kingaroy netball and we are currently sharing its courts. They are amazing courts and I thank it for that. Other clubs were the Esk Country Golf Club, the Kilcoy Recreation and Sporting Association, the Kilcoy Motorcycle Club, the Range Runners Orienteering Club, the Burnett Softball Association, the Kingaroy Junior Soccer Club, the Kingaroy Swimming Club, the Kingaroy Netball Association, the Kingaroy Touch Association and the South Burnett All Saints AFL team. Grants for these clubs were for less than \$10,000.

In particular, I want to mention the South Burnett All Saints. This is a newly formed AFL club in the South Burnett which aims to bring the wonderful sport of AFL to young people in our region. It has been extremely proactive during its establishment, and through this Get Going grant it was successful in receiving \$9,610 in funding for the accreditation of 10 volunteers and also to purchase much needed equipment. The club was also lucky enough to get a grant of \$3,000 from the Department of Communities to hold a special event for the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in May this year. I met with the president of All Saints, Daniel Clacy, who said that the club will be hosting a breakfast and a home game on 4 May with the goal of awareness within the AFL and wider community of domestic violence, as this is a real issue within our region. It is partnering with the various community support groups on the day and players will also be wearing special jerseys. I am really impressed with the commitment and the positive action taken by the wonderful All Saints AFL club. I look forward to attending some of the home games in the great space that is the Kingaroy AFL club.

### Health System

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.27 pm): Over the past five years state and federal Labor governments have pursued a national health reform agenda to address the blame game in our health system. These reforms have been based on an agreed division of responsibilities for financing and delivery of health services between the states and the Commonwealth. This LNP government and other tory governments have effectively torn up these national agreements through savage budget cuts and resulting mass sackings and the closure of essential health services. This LNP government is in denial about the \$3 billion in cuts over the next four years that it has imposed on our hospitals and health services. Dressed up as efficiency requirements and devolution of decision making, these cuts have gutted community based health services and our hospitals are now today closing beds and hospital theatres. Yes, the blame game is back—brought back to you by a privatisation focused government that values profit making in health care over the needs of patients and communities. This government has waltzed away—it has walked off—from aged care, saying it is not a responsibility of the state government. This LNP government has axed home and community care services that keep people out of hospital. The progressive closure of Eventide aged care facilities across the state and the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit at Wynnum demonstrates this government's lack of commitment to the frail and elderly in our community. These policies—

**Ms MILLARD:** I rise to a point of order. The member for Bundamba is telling the House untruths. She is misleading the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Order! No, it is not a point of order.

**Mrs MILLER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you for your protection. These policies also demonstrate the total incompetence of this government in managing the complexity of health care and aged-care services. The minister has a viable expression of interest from a respected aged-care provider in the bayside area who is willing to take on the care of residents at the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit. But what does he do? Nothing. He stands there like a scarecrow. Good grief! How has the minister managed the adjustment—

**Mr SYMES:** I rise to a point of order. The member for Bundamba is saying untruths.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is not a point of order. You will take your seat.

**Mrs MILLER:** Nice try again. Mr Deputy Speaker, thank you again for your protection. How has the minister managed the adjustment to federal funding for our public hospitals? Has he negotiated a longer time frame for these adjustments with the overall increase in federal funding? No, he has jumped up and down blaming Canberra, which is like the old Joh days. This is what the minister calls reforming the health system. It is about cuts, it is about closure, it is about privatisation.

The minister has spent the last year blaming anyone he can for the real impact of his government's fiscal repair budget cuts. He has blamed IBM, he has blamed the fake Tahitian prince, he has blamed the federal Treasurer—he has blamed anyone except himself. But I tell you what, it is the minister's fault.

**Mr Symes** interjected.

**Mrs MILLER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, will someone put a dummy in that member's mouth?

*(Time expired)*

### Federal Labor Government

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.31 pm): It is interesting to get up after the member for Bundamba has talked about what has happened over the last five years. I understand that it is five years ago that the faceless men of the Labor Party moved on a Prime Minister in this country and replaced him with what has ultimately been an absolute failure in Julia Gillard. This morning it was very interesting to watch the TV and the process that is taking place today. Similar to what the member for Townsville said, there is a bit of a chook raffle happening down there today. This morning on TV it was interesting to watch Simon Crean. About 12 months ago he said that Kevin Rudd could not be the Prime Minister of this country ever again. This morning, he stands up in that place and says, 'It's time for Julia Gillard to go and it's time for Kevin Rudd to come back.' How hypocritical it is for this man to stand up down there when 12 months ago he stood there and he said that this man could never be Prime Minister of this country again.

Simon Crean also said that Labor had fallen into the trap of changing leaders. Then he went on to say, 'It's time we changed leaders again.' First he tells us that that is something that they should not be doing and then he goes on to tell us that that is something that they should do. It is just completely hypocritical.

It is now past half past three and those members will be filing in to make a decision on who should be the Prime Minister of this great country. I say to those people who are voting today that the only people who can make a decision on who should be the leader of this country are the people of Australia. So regardless of what happens over the next couple of hours in Canberra, regardless of who ends up being the prime minister, I call on whoever that is to call an election. The people of Queensland got it right on 24 March 2012 and they will get it right this time for Australia.

*(Time expired)*

### Royalties for the Regions

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (3.34 pm): The government has a strong role to play in ensuring that there is a net sovereign benefit from any growth in the mining industry—not just monetary benefits from royalties but also benefits in terms of reinvigorating communities, particularly in remote areas. Sadly, continuous neglect in this area has seen mining development in Queensland with very limited benefit at all going to many of our remote towns. In many cases any benefits coming from new mining developments can be offset by the deterioration in the social fabric in the same community. I refer to a case in point. Last week in Cloncurry I visited the owner of the only coffee shop in town, located in modern premises and in a good location. Sadly, the owner reported to me that she has started staring down the barrel of closing the doors in the next four or five weeks. Cloncurry is a booming town with two new major mines on the verge of becoming operational. Cloncurry should expect to be booming. This coffee shop owner also indicated that in the last couple of months the only fish-and-chips shop in town a few doors up has closed and the gift shop next door has just closed.

Members might ask how business in Cloncurry could be going backwards despite there being a boom. How could this happen? More significant than taxes or red tape, it is the numbers through the door of this coffee shop. Why are there not numbers through the door? Because the majority of the workforce in Cloncurry are now FIFO and sitting in work camps. Why is the majority of the workforce FIFO? The first answer to that question is the lack of leadership from government over an extended

period in no longer placing adequate conditions on mining leases for percentages of a permanent, locally based workforce. The second answer is that more tax incentives for permanent resident workers are required from the federal government. The third answer is to reinvigorate local communities through the government subsidising the cost of development for local infrastructure. This should be the basis for a true royalties to regions program, not the mickey mouse regional vote-stealing program that is currently in place.

The Western Australian Royalties for Regions program delivers 25 per cent of royalties back to where they are derived. The existing government program in Queensland contributes a paltry estimated four per cent over four years.

**Mr Cox:** They haven't got a \$60 billion debt.

**Mr KATTER:** It should also be noted that the Western Australian government, which is also heavily debt burdened, realises that it is imperative that, for the development of the state, the regions that produce the wealth get a leg-up. The member for Thuringowa better check out the debt levels for Western Australia.

Royalties need to be returned to the region where they are produced. Accordingly, Cloncurry should have assistance to build a decent water supply and to build the last 30 kilometres of bitumen road to the Incitec mine. It should have the money to facilitate more housing. Under the existing program, that area is lumped in with 14 other regions to win a contest in report writing and it could end up not getting one red cent from the program.

The Cloncurry shire is the third largest contributor of royalties from resources in this state, contributing approximately \$118 million for 2011-12. That area did not get a dime from the last rollout. In many cases the development of mining in remote areas such as the Cloncurry area represents the one shot that such towns and communities ever have of getting ahead. I firmly believe that the role of government is to ensure that these towns are better off for the mining boom having occurred in their region.

*(Time expired)*

### Get in the Game

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (3.37 pm): I rise today to commend the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, the Hon. Steve Dickson MP, for the innovative, highly regarded and well-targeted Get in the Game program. I also wish the minister a speedy recovery and I thank Minister Davis for looking after his portfolio in his absence.

Last month the minister and advisers from his department visited around 40 sporting clubs and school representatives in my electorate for a Get in the Game information session at the Brighton Bulldogs clubhouse. At the outset it was clear that one of the winning features of the program—now worth \$18 million a year and \$2 million more than the government's original election commitment—is its flexibility. Our sporting groups and schools are not unaccustomed to grant programs with stringent criteria that are not designed to be friendly, so our government not only assured that Get in the Game can subsidise families on government support up to \$150 per child for sports clubs joining and registration fees but also remembered families in need that fall somewhere in the cracks. I ask members to picture a single working mother or father trying to manage their spare cash for sport. So through a referee system this family can still access subsidisation so that their kids can join a local sporting program as long as hardship can be demonstrated. This government is thoughtful, creative and deals with real people and offers real solutions to problems.

The second song of praise I want to sing for the government's Get in the Game program relates to a concept largely foreign to our opposition, which is good targeting. This initiative is solidly focused on using taxpayers' money to increase the health and community benefits of sports participation by our children, 25 per cent of whom will be obese by adulthood without intervention. Get in the Game assists clubs to upgrade infrastructure and equipment and promote programs to attract participation, and I welcome this week's announcement that provides my local tennis club, the Sandgate and District Youth Tennis Association, with just over \$4,500 in funding for these purposes.

The public benefits of the Get in the Game program are to lower some of the long-term pressures on our health system that we have seen oozing out of the festering store that has now become Queensland's failed health system under Labor. Paying to reduce obesity now will save taxpayers in the future. In short, this is a targeted program, a holistic program and a long-sighted program. For those doubters of the program, what is the alternative? A methodology that we are all

too familiar with after years of failed Labor solutions? Theirs is a methodology that starts with questions like, 'How much does a vote cost?', and, 'How much taxpayer money can we throw around before some of it actually lands on fertile soil?' It is a methodology of cash handouts and policy vacuums. As for us, we raise questions like, 'What do we want to achieve before we spend the taxpayers money?', and, 'What do we spend to get results?' Again and again this is a government that shows it cares about the average Queensland family, not just for now, not just for votes, but for long-lasting positive effects well into the future.

### Murrumba Electorate

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to talk about a good place: Murrumba. Wednesday, 13 March was the day that the teddy bears had their picnic—for the sake of *Hansard*, that was delivered to the well-known tune. The under-5s teddy bear picnic, hosted by the D Bay Child and Family Alliance and the DBCYP provides a highly effective outreach to local families. Hundreds of kids attended bringing their teddies. As for me, I do not have a teddy bear anymore but instead hung out with Rover the dog from 96.5 and later offered shade to Ditto, the safe adventure cat from Bravehearts. The House will be happy to know that the dog and the cat got along well. There are countless people deserving acknowledgement, but I only have time to praise the ability and hard work of Brooke Reynolds who I know has a great heart for her community.

Not only is Murrumba a good place but now also a safer place. I had the privilege of launching a child restraint safety check service on 14 March which is provided by Kidsafe Queensland. Susan Teerds from Kidsafe Queensland brought to my attention that up to 93 per cent of child restraints are installed incorrectly, potentially exposing our children to risk and harm. I would like also to point out the generosity of Keith and Catriona Fackrell from KCF Rallysport who have kindly offered their workshop facilities.

I had the privilege of watching the very first seniors game of the new rugby league club, the mighty North Lakes Kangaroos, on Saturday, 16 March. Costo would enjoy this: after being down 10-6 and still trailing at half time, they put on three tries late in the game to win 28-20. Inaugural coach Richard Waldon has contagious positive energy, along with his wife Erica, Stephen Somerfield, Lance Burnie, Peter Lewis and countless others in the club. It has a great future. I am sure that Tyson Weir's Kangaroos team song bounces along.

Our society has many great charities. One of them is the Multiple Sclerosis Society. On 8 March I participated in the MS Swimathon at Redcliffe Dolphins pool helping to raise over \$10,000. I was invited to join the Red Hooligans Heroes and swam in relay with a great bunch of community minded swimmers including Matt Roue, Zoe Russell, Brian Finney, Michelle Lember, Rohan von Hoyer-Davies, Steve Zaplin, Luke Howarth, the great LNP candidate for Petrie, Kat Moss, Casey Taylor and Steve Baker.

**Mrs France:** You are a great swimmer, Michelle said.

**Mr GULLEY:** I put 40 laps in. I was pretty sore on Sunday. Not as good as the 240 laps that Matt Roue put in. They swam 1,499 laps over 12 hours which I think is a good effort. Murrumba—a great place!

### Respite Care

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (3.43 pm): I rise to speak about Mary Sellers and the care that she has given her daughter Loren for 34 years. Mary's partner is Bob. They are both over 65 years of age. Their daughter Loren has a fairly sad list of conditions. She was born with disabilities. She has never had cognitive abilities past approximately a very young child, has difficulty in walking and in more recent times has suffered from brain tumours and tumours that grow down the spine. These tumours in due course, Mary says, will cause her to become paralysed.

As members will appreciate, caring for someone with those sorts of conditions over that length of time is very trying. Mary has approached my office many, many times. The stress in her voice is something to behold. Her speech has been frantic and she has been at wit's end as she has tried to find help from the government to provide respite care. Her surgeon in fact has told her that she needs to have two knee replacements, as her husband has done in recent times and has been off his feet for months. She is in pain and she has not been able to have that operation because no-one else is there to bathe or care for Loren her daughter.

You can appreciate the stress that I experienced when I found that she had been assessed and she ticked every box to qualify for respite care but then has been told repeatedly that that does not mean that she will be guaranteed money. She went off to Minister Davis. Minister Davis knows what it is like to find that the bucket of funds is empty in such a situation as this. I must speak of the past. If you do a simple calculation of the amount of money going out of our economy every day it is in the order \$12 million because of the legacy that Labor has left us. This is the interest on our debt. This is the legacy that Labor's lousy looting of the state Treasury has left us in. The challenge that the LNP faces is to fix a situation like this so that we can at least care for families like Mary's.

I am pleased to announce that money has been found and that Anglicare is now able to bring help into Mary's home. They will come in four mornings a week to provide health and hygiene care for Loren. I am just sadly disappointed that it has had to go through this level of stress because of the level of debt that this state has been left in.

### Tablelands Regional Council

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.46 pm): This morning I tabled a petition of 162 residents from Walsh River, Irvinebank, Bakerville and Watsonville in the newly reconstituted Mareeba Shire Council. The petition requests the state government allow these communities to remain with the Tablelands Regional Council. Residents of these communities conduct their business in Herberton, are employed in the Southern Tablelands and their children go to school in Herberton, which is only 20 kilometres away. As part of the Tablelands Regional Council, all local government services were coordinated from the Herberton service centre as this is logistically the easiest and most cost-effective way of providing an efficient service to the area. Residents believe that since amalgamation their communities have received a higher level of service delivery simply because services can be provided cheaper and quicker from Herberton.

In the poll held to deamalgamate the Mareeba shire from the Tablelands Regional Council, 87 per cent of these communities voted against splitting from the Tablelands Regional Council. The three townships are over an hour away on an unsealed road from the closest town in the Mareeba shire and over an hour and a half from Mareeba itself. It will be a burden on the Mareeba shire to get machinery, services and garbage collection to these communities. I believe that any inflexibility is counterproductive and condemns communities to years of rearranging boundaries to accurately reflect the logistical and geographical proximity of Irvinebank, Walsh River, Bakerville and Watsonville to the Tablelands Regional Shire service centres.

The deamalgamation process is the perfect opportunity to address the cost burden and inefficient service delivery issues created by having these communities included in the Mareeba shire. As ratepayers are responsible for bearing the cost of deamalgamation, the capacity of the shire to service these areas will be even further diminished. The minister has said time and time again that he supports the autonomy of local government and will defend their right to have a say in what happens in their communities. It is the responsibility of the state to provide a mechanism in the deamalgamation process which will allow local governments to renegotiate council boundaries with the state government and the Boundaries Commissioner.

It makes economic, social, logistical and geographical sense to allow the Walsh River, Irvinebank, Bakerville and Watsonville communities to remain with the Tablelands Regional Council. Communities need time to heal and recover from the disruption caused by amalgamation and these issues need to be included and addressed in the process. There is no good reason why this cannot be a part of the process rather than stir things up again with a boundary realignment after the dust has settled over deamalgamation. I call on the minister to allow councils to redraw boundaries during reconstitution in order to achieve cost-effective and efficient service delivery to these communities.

### Katter Sr, Mr R

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (3.48 pm): The Native Title Act 1993 is a federal act of parliament in response to the common law rights arising out of the High Court decision in Mabo. The Mabo decision is now 20 years old and to say it was a landmark case that is enshrined in the law of our land is an understatement. As I recall it, the decision even rated a mention in the iconic movie *The Castle*: 'It's the vibe ... it's Mabo.'

Therefore, it beggars belief that Bob Katter, the federal member for Kennedy, one of the largest rural electorates in Queensland, with some 30 years experience in politics and the founder of the de facto party over there, has never heard of the Mabo decision or the Native Title Act. I quote from a letter to the Hon. Jenny Macklin, federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs, from the Hon. Bob Katter. He states—

Dear Minister

Re Land Tenure upgrade

The State Government claims that they cannot do a tenure upgrade because of Federal Government legislation and restrictions. I am not aware of any such restrictions that would be constitutionally valid since the State Government have power over Lands.

Could you confirm in writing that if the State Government requires an ILUA before any land tenure upgrades can take place, could you therefore advise how we would go about obtaining permission from your Department to enable the State Government to issue upgraded title deed. If not we will ask you to process a number of such applications as obviously your Department is handling tenure upgrades in Queensland.

I do not believe this is the case and request that you confirm this position in writing or otherwise process the applications that we will forward.

Yours sincerely

Hon Bob Katter

Member for Kennedy

As I said, it beggars belief that the Hon. Bob Katter, the founder of the Katter party and the member representing one of Queensland's largest rural electorates, does not even have a basic understanding of the native title process as it affects pastoral leases in Queensland.

### **Maryborough, Scout Jamboree**



**Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (3.51 pm): It was an awe-inspiring sight: standing on a slight rise, I was able to see the 8,500 scouts and their 3,000 leaders and helpers, all gathered together in front of an outdoor stage to celebrate the 11 days that they had spent together and then to say goodbye, before returning to their homes all over Australia and overseas. For 11 days prior to that, starting with an opening concert attended by the Queensland Governor, scouts lived in a tent city constructed at the Maryborough Showgrounds. The tent city had all the facilities of a normal city. There were banking facilities, a medical centre, a police centre, rural fire services, a communication centre, their very own radio station, a post office and fast-food outlets, with chip vans provided by the local Lions and Rotary clubs. Boy, didn't they have fun!

The logistics of this event were massive. With a budget of millions to cover infrastructure, food, accommodation and safety, the event took three years in the planning. Construction of the tent city commenced a full month prior to the first scouts arriving and required additional infrastructure at the Maryborough Showgrounds to meet the ablution needs of 11,500 people. A single meal of sausages on bread required 24,000 sausages. Breakfast for the 11 days required 114,000 eggs, 22,500 loaves of bread and 48,900 litres of juice.

Each day the scouts were rostered to various activities, some on site and some off site. This meant 80 buses arrived daily to take the scouts to water activities at Hervey Bay, into the CBD of Maryborough for a visit to the war museum, a 'Where's Wally?' hunt and other activities, down to Australia Zoo and the beaches at the Sunshine Coast. Back at the camp, site activities included a giant water slide, flying fox, rock-wall climbing, an obstacle course, plate breaking, car smashing, wheelchair games, picnic table construction and many other activities.

The real heroes of this event are the scout leaders and the organisers. Those people are all volunteers and gave up their time freely to make an event which 8,500 scouts and the whole community of Maryborough and the Fraser Coast will remember for a lifetime. Our community benefited socially and economically from being able to host this event, but the real winners are the scouts who had a wonderful time learning new skills, making new friends, seeing a different part of the world, understanding how communities work and developing a social conscience. This was demonstrated most clearly when some of the scouts returned to assist in the clean-up after the flood in early February.

One of the final comments made to me at that closing concert was that the Maryborough venue was the best in Australia, both in terms of the actual facility of the Maryborough Showgrounds and also the close proximity of so many interesting activities for the scouts. Our community will be issuing an invitation for the scouts to make Maryborough their permanent jamboree headquarters.

### Ayr, Community Cabinet

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.53 pm): What exciting news today for the Burdekin electorate—

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs MENKENS:** Thank you. Today Premier Campbell Newman announced that the next community cabinet meeting will be held in Ayr, in the electorate of Burdekin.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs MENKENS:** Thank you. I take those wonderful interjections. Firstly, I must say what an honour it is for the Burdekin to host the community cabinet. As Minister Cripps mentioned to me this morning, what about Home Hill? I remind the House that the twin towns of Home Hill and Ayr will be hosting the community cabinet. As I live in Home Hill, I must make mention of it.

**A government member:** Don't forget Inkerman, Clare—

**Mrs MENKENS:** Inkerman, Brandon—yes, the Burdekin is a wonderful area. Separating Ayr and Home Hill is the mighty Burdekin River. The deputations will be held in Home Hill. I would like to share a little bit of history. In 2001 in the Burdekin a community cabinet was held, but to date perhaps the most interesting cabinet meeting held in the Burdekin was in 1983. It was held by the Bjelke-Petersen government. In 1983 they were there to announce the building of the mighty Burdekin Dam, which began in 1984. Therefore, it is going to be really exciting to welcome this government's cabinet.

The Burdekin electorate is pivotal in driving Queensland's economy forward. It is not just an agriculture sector. Of course, we have farmers currently gearing up for the 2013 sugar, fruit and vegetable harvest. The Burdekin's outlook is also buoyed by positive movements in the mining sector and developments in the Port of Abbot Point. In showcasing the Burdekin, I mention that it is the largest sugar-growing area in Australia and we also have industries value adding to that sugar industry. We have industries such as Blue Ribbon Rice and many others.

The recent announcement that GVK Hancock and Aurizon will work together to develop the rail and port infrastructure from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point is welcome news indeed. Projects such as those have the potential to create thousands of jobs and provide billions of dollars in export revenue and royalties, which will flow on to regions such as the Burdekin. Also set to open shortly is Evolution Mining's Mount Carlton project, which has good deposits of gold, copper and silver and is located 50 kilometres west of Gumlu, which is also part of the Burdekin area. That will be an added boon to the region. Of course, there are exciting developments occurring at the Collinsville power station, which is owned by RATCH-Australia, which has decommissioned the coal fired power station and is investigating options to develop the site.

### Algeester Electorate

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algeester—LNP) (3.56 pm): As we have heard this week, we are coming up to the first anniversary of the election of the Newman government. I would like to reflect on the past year, during which I have had the privilege and honour to be the member for Algeester. The LNP was elected with what I understand to be the largest electoral victory in the history of Australia. Given what we are seeing this afternoon from Canberra and the rabble that is the Labor Party, it shows that we have a stable and solid government led by an individual who knows where he wants to take the state of Queensland and who knows where he wants to lead the people of Queensland, which will develop into the greatest state in the nation once again.

I reflect upon the year in which I have had the privilege to be the member for Algeester. It has been a great honour to be the member for Algeester. I want to reflect on the wonderful things that we have achieved in the past year. I advocated for extra police; we now have extra police at the Browns Plains station. They are full. They are at their quota. I am very happy to announce that the Hillcrest Neighbourhood Watch, which I have supported from day one, is up and running. Their crime rate has dropped dramatically through this local initiative. An interstate rail line runs through my electorate. For

years, the only thing that stopped people from getting on to that corridor was a rusty old three-strand barbed wire fence. I got onto the ARTC and now it is a six-foot chain wire fence. That has had great affects for the area. It has stopped the illegal dumping of rubbish. It has stopped bike riders illegally using the corridor to access others parts of the electorate.

I have continued to support my local schools and my local community groups. I love my schools and my community groups. As I am sure all members do, I enjoy going to meetings of my P&Cs and Neighbourhood Watch groups.

What I have achieved in Algester over the last year on behalf of the Newman government could not have been achieved unless I had the support of my electorate staff. They work very hard. The comments I get when I move around in my community is that my office is a wonderful office, a caring office, an office that delivers on what we promise. I give my thanks to my electorate staff—Esther, Tracey and Denica. They deserve the credit. I might be the face of Algester, but they are the engine room of Algester. Without this government's commitment we would not get anything done. I commend the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the members of the government for their work.

*(Time expired)*

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! The time for members' statements has expired.

## **CRIMINAL LAW (CHILD EXPLOITATION AND DANGEROUS DRUGS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Resumed from 29 November 2012 (see p. 2971).

### **Second Reading**



**Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (4.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee for its consideration of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I note that the committee tabled its report on the bill on 7 March 2013. I now have the pleasure of tabling a copy of the Queensland government's response to that report.

*Tabled paper:* Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 23—Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012, government response [2319].

In its report the committee made three recommendations about the bill. The committee's first recommendation, that the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012 be passed, is welcomed. Recommendation 2 is that the definition of 'dangerous drug' be amended to capture synthetic drugs that are intended to have the same pharmacological effect as a scheduled dangerous drug in accordance with the government's stated policy intention. The government supports this recommendation.

In its July to December 2012 six-month action plan, the Queensland government pledged to amend laws to address synthetic drugs. Clause 40 of the bill amends section 4 of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, in particular the definition of 'dangerous drug' contained in paragraph (c). The bill amends the definition of 'dangerous drug' to provide that a dangerous drug is a thing that has a chemical structure that is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a scheduled drug or that has a substantially similar pharmacological effect. This means that only one of the two limbs needs to be satisfied to come within the section 4(c) definition. This changes the current position where both limbs have to be proven.

Subsequent to the introduction of the bill, it became apparent that the amendment contained in clause 40 was inadequate in fully achieving the government's stated policy intention. Therefore, during consideration in detail of the bill I intend to move amendments to further extend the definition of 'dangerous drug'. I will discuss this in more detail shortly. The government notes and supports the committee's observation at page 26 that the proposed changes will be utilised as a stopgap measure to enable the police and other authorities to keep pace with emerging developments in the manufacture and supply of dangerous drugs.

Recommendation 3 of the report is that the fee for applications made under the blue and yellow card systems, which will be automatically withdrawn as a result of changes to the Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000 and the Disability Services Act 2006, be refunded within three months of parts 2 and 4 of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012 commencing. The government supports recommendation 3 of the report.

I would now like to foreshadow that I intend to propose a number of amendments to the bill during the consideration in detail stage of the bill. These amendments, to the Criminal Code and the Drugs Misuse Act have been circulated in my name. The amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act will amend section 4 paragraph (c) to extend the definition of 'dangerous drug' to circumstances in which the offender intends a thing to have a substantially similar pharmacological effect. This further amendment will ensure that offenders who package, market and supply substances, intending that the substance has a substantially similar pharmacological effect on the user, will be caught within the offences of the Drugs Misuse Act. This will ensure that the government's policy intention with regard to dangerous drugs and, in particular, synthetic drugs is realised. The purpose of the amendment to the Criminal Code is simply to correct a drafting anomaly.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of others who have made submissions on this bill to the committee. The Queensland government is committed to addressing activity that threatens vulnerable individuals and drug related crime in Queensland. This bill fulfils the government's pledge in its six-month action plan to amend laws to address the penalties for child pornography and child sex offences, create a new offence of grooming a child and address the issue of synthetic drugs. I look forward to the debate that will now ensue, and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.05 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill. Most of the proposals contained in this bill were contained in the Criminal and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 introduced by the former Attorney-General. The bill lapsed when the 53rd Parliament was prorogued.

This bill increases penalties for the child exploitation offences contained in the Criminal Code. It is appropriate to periodically review criminal offences in Queensland and the penalties that apply to ensure that they keep up with community expectations. The community is rightly appalled by these offences. It is incumbent on governments to take action to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens receive the fullest protection that the law can provide.

That is why when in government we proposed to increase these penalties. Currently the penalty for involving a child in the making of child exploitation material, making child exploitation or distributing child exploitation material is 10 years. This bill increases that penalty to 14 years. The current penalty for possession of such material is five years. There will be a significant increase of this penalty to 14 years, bringing it into line with the other offences.

Another significant change in the bill is to include animated, virtual or fictitious images in the definition of child exploitation material. It has been said that such material is victimless, and because no actual children are involved there should be no offence. In fact, in the United States in 2002 the Supreme Court, in the case of *Ashcroft v Free Speech Coalition*, found that a law making such material an offence was in breach of the first amendment right to freedom of speech.

This is not the right argument. In 2008 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography warned that, although this kind of photography does not involve the direct abuse of a child, its power to normalise images of child sexual abuse and incite sexual exploitation of children should not be underestimated and must be adequately addressed.

If possession of virtual images is legal, this can create real evidentiary problems for prosecutors in child exploitation material cases. The accused person may claim that the images are virtual and do not involve real children. The prosecutor's job, in disproving this, can be virtually impossible. The Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of the United Nations supported the proposal to criminalise the possession, supply and making of child exploitation material involving computer generated images.

The Special Rapporteur also recommended an absolute prohibition on pseudo-child pornography, including the morphing of child and adult bodies to create virtual child pornographic images. In addition, the UN Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime 2011 and the EU Council framework decision on combatting the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography all include provisions

criminalising various offences involving virtual photographs. There is also clear evidence of the fact that photographs of children engaged in sexual activity are used as tools for grooming children into pornography and sexual activity and it makes no real difference whether real photographs or virtual photographs are used for this purpose.

No arguments about the freedom of speech of individuals can be entertained in this context. These laws, first proposed by the Labor government, rightly place the duty of government to protect children above the rights of individuals to make virtual, animated or fictitious child exploitation material. In the United Kingdom, the Williams committee, headed by Professor Bernard Williams, found in its report—

Few people would be prepared to take the risk where children are concerned and just as the law recognises that children should be protected against sexual behaviour which they are too young to properly consent to, it is almost universally agreed that this should apply to participation in pornography.

This brings us to the inclusion in this bill of a new 'grooming' offence, which carries a maximum penalty of five years. This increases to 10 years where the child is under 12. As the explanatory notes provide, this offence is designed to 'target adults who engage in any conduct in relation to a child under 16 years (or a person the adult believes is under the age of 16 years), with the intent to facilitate the procurement of a child to engage in a sexual act or expose the child to any indecent matter'.

The purpose of this new offence is to allow police to intervene before a sexual act or a sex related activity has actually taken place. It was suggested by the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties in its submission to the committee that 'it may be simpler to leave such conduct to the law of attempt by charging grooming as an attempt to commit the more serious offences'. This new offence captures conduct which is preparatory to the commission of an offence. It goes beyond what would be captured by the law of attempt, and this is why a new offence has been included. It is also in line with the existing offence of using the internet to procure children under 16.

The bill also increases the maximum penalty for this offence. At present the penalty for using the internet to procure a child under 16 to engage in a sexual act is five years. This will be increased to 10 years. Where the child is under 12 years, the maximum penalty is increased from 10 years to 14 years. There is also a further circumstance of aggravation included in this bill, where the conduct referred to procuring conduct involves the adult meeting or travelling to meet the child. Once again, the penalty will be increased to 14 years in this situation.

I note that the submission received from the Queensland Law Society raised a concern about what it describes as the broad wording of the provision. In the view of the society, a Facebook posting which was not directed to any child in particular might be caught by the provision. The department has given its opinion that, because such a posting would not be directed to any particular child, it would not satisfy the wording of the offence which relates to 'intent to procure a child'.

The approved forms under the Criminal Practice Rules 1999 require an indictment to particularise who the alleged victim is. This could not be achieved where the conduct is to the world at large, so I am satisfied the provision will not have the effect that the Queensland Law Society has asserted. But I do ask the Attorney-General to keep an eye on how this provision is used in practice to ensure their concerns do not indeed become reality. These provisions were all included in the previous government's bill, and the opposition fully supports their inclusion in the criminal law of this state.

The bill contains a provision not contained in the previous bill relating to the defence of incest. This is in response to a recent Court of Appeal decision which has exposed a loophole in the code. At present, section 222 of the code includes certain relationships within the definition for this offence, including half, adoptive or step relationships. A defence is included where the parties are married or lawfully entitled to be married. There are circumstances where an adult might be lawfully entitled to marry the child of their de facto partner who is under the age of 18 according to the rather broad interpretation given to this phrase by the Court of Appeal. This was the situation in the case of *Crown v Rose*. The judgement of Justice Atkinson in *Rose* referred to section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution. This section provides that, when a law of a state is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth law should prevail and the state law should, to the extent of this inconsistency, be invalid.

The Queensland Law Society questions whether the proposed amendment might be inconsistent with the Commonwealth legislation and thereby constitutionally invalid. The department has sought advice from crown law on this point and is satisfied that the provision is indeed constitutional. Crown law has provided advice in relation to the constitutionality of various provisions in legislation over recent years, including the Criminal Organisations Bill and the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act, that have been upheld in the High Court when similar legislation from other jurisdictions has been struck down. I am comfortable with the advice from crown law on this matter.

Another provision in this bill that was contained in the previous government's bill was that relating to joinder of multiple offences. The bill expands the circumstances where several charges might be joined on the one indictment for child exploitation material offences. This is a provision which will, in most cases, be used for guilty pleas, although it is not restricted to these.

The High Court has considered the issue of joinder and, in a rather conservative decision in *Phillips v The Queen*, the court found that Mr Phillips should have been tried separately on sexual assault charges relating to six separate victims. The reason this provision was included in the bill was that, without it, the date that must be relied upon in the indictment is the date of seizure of the material. This means that the indictment will not reflect the true criminality of the offending when the material is collected over a long time frame. Where a person pleads not guilty, the practice is to charge a separate count for each separate instance on the indictment. Where a person wishes to plead guilty, this provision will most frequently be used.

As I said before, it is incumbent on government to enact legislation that indeed protects our most vulnerable citizens. Children come within this ambit. But even more vulnerable are children with an impairment of mind and they deserve the best protection that we as a parliament can provide. That is why the previous government sought to create a circumstance of aggravation for offences of sodomy, indecent treatment of a child under 16 and unlawful carnal knowledge where the victim is a child with an impairment of mind. For indecent treatment of a child under 16, the penalty will increase from 14 to 20 years. For sodomy and unlawful carnal knowledge, the penalty will increase to life imprisonment.

This bill also includes a number of amendments to the Drugs Misuse Act. The most significant is the creation of an offence of trafficking in precursor chemicals. The act presently contains offences of unlawful possession, unlawful supply or unlawful production of precursors. There may be circumstances where the supply of these chemicals reaches such a level that the current charges do not reflect the seriousness of the offending. This is in a similar vein to trafficking in dangerous drugs.

The penalty for this new offence will be the same as for trafficking in dangerous drugs, from 20 to 25 years depending on the type of drug and its quantity. A charge of trafficking in precursor chemicals will now be available in the arsenal of prosecutors to attack what is an increasing problem. These provisions were included in the bill introduced by the previous government. The Queensland Law Society expressed some concerns in its submission to the committee that the new provision as it is drafted does not contain a defence of reasonable excuse, which is contained in the new provision, which I will discuss next, relating to the possession of certain substances. This is because the provision requires, as an element of the offence, that the trafficking be 'for use in connection with the commission of an offence'. This eliminates the risk that legitimate offences will be caught by the provision. Legitimate businesses will not be trafficking chemicals 'for use in connection with the commission of an offence'. A defence of reasonable excuse is provided and the onus is on the defendant to show this. The Law Society expressed some concern about this matter. They questioned—

Does it extend to the chemistry teacher demonstrating distillation? To the same teacher later on holidays who has kept the glassware in the boot of their car? To the student experimenting at home? To the home hobbyist?

The reverse onus is in line with the common law principle that, where an accused person wishes to rely on a defence such as exception, exemption or proviso, they must raise the exception which they only need to prove to the civil standard on the balance of probabilities. The opposition has no problem with this approach.

The bill also amends the definition of 'dangerous drug'. In 2007 the government amended the Drugs Misuse Act to include analogue drugs. The definition required the prosecution to prove that the substance had a substantially similar chemical structure to a scheduled dangerous drug and had a

substantially similar pharmacological effect. This was necessary because analogue drugs were being produced so quickly that it was difficult for legislation and regulation to keep up with the changes. The amendment allowed the new drugs to be captured until they could be scheduled under the act. The two limbs of the definition were causing some problems. This amendment now means that the prosecution need now only establish that the substance has a similar structure or a similar effect intending to have a similar effect to a scheduled drug.

These are the most substantive provisions in the bill. Although there are other amendments included, most of the matters in the bill were of concern to the previous government, as evidenced by their inclusion in the lapsed 2011 bill. I thank the Attorney-General for implementing the government's policy objectives in such a bipartisan way. The opposition will be supporting this bill, and I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (4.21 pm): I stand to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I support the bill for a number of reasons. I initially want to thank the submitters who gave us their thoughts in writing on a number of the bill's provisions. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the consequences of these legislative amendments and creation of new offences is far reaching. However, there is a number of reasons why that has occurred and there is a number of reasons why both the government and the opposition are supporting the passing of this legislation. I thank, in particular, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. I think what it did in its submission was to challenge some of the ideas put forward in the bill. While it may not be accepted by the government, it certainly was thought provoking. I refer, for instance, to virtual images.

At first glance when hearing about virtual images I thought it abhorrent to suggest that we would find child pornography images in cartoon form acceptable. While I cannot necessarily agree with the reasoning of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, effectively what it is saying is that there is no evidence. The reason we ban child exploitation material is simply that it will involve children and the exploitation of children. The more images we have, the more children will be involved. The reasoning of the council is that it does not necessarily involve abusing children if we are creating virtual images.

In reading a few studies—and I thank the Parliamentary Library for providing me with a plethora of material; it is a very complex issue—I noted that the argument which most of the academics were making about the issue is that we have computer games, and in computer games people murder people and yet somehow our society accepts that as being reasonable. We can divorce murder on a computer game from being out in society and knowing that murder is wrong. So the issue is that, if we have child exploitation material on a computer game, why is it not treated the same in that we can divorce ourselves from that and take that away? It is an interesting academic argument.

When moving throughout my electorate I raised this issue with a number of people from various walks of life, from blue-collar workers to a dentist friend of mine. I said, 'If I put a notion to you of child exploitation material in the form of a virtual image or video, why would you consider that to be offensive?' He said—and I think this is the nub of it—the reality is that we as a society find that child exploitation is against our conventions. It is taboo. It is something that we as a society will not tolerate and we find abhorrent, yet that does not necessarily mean that same view is in other cultures. I understand that in Japan they see it differently.

I take the point of the opposition leader about the Supreme Court case in America. I do not rely heavily on that as being any argument on reasoned grounds for accepting whether exploitation material is abhorrent or not, simply for the reason that that decision was based on civil rights. The case simply turned on the fact that they considered it was freedom of speech to be able to produce those images, and of course it is up to the legislature if it wishes to change that. On balance, based on our culture and what we consider to be the norm and reasonable and what we deem to be abhorrent, clearly virtual images are something that our society does not accept.

I might touch on a matter that is of some personal interest to me in my involvement as a solicitor and being involved in intellectually disabled services in Ipswich. I once acted for a woman whose daughter was particularly attractive. She was aged 12 or so but she was intellectually impaired to a substantial extent. The mother was particularly concerned—and we eventually applied for a sterilisation order—that her daughter might be interfered with or raped or ultimately have a child

which, in her circumstances, would be something that she could not possibly understand. I fully support, and believe it is a progressive step, to create a new provision of aggravation where an offence is committed against children with an impairment. Society expects for that to carry a more severe penalty.

The bill transgresses a number of matters not only in relation to children. Both the Attorney-General and the Leader of the Opposition have canvassed those areas succinctly. I want to comment on a few things in relation to trafficking in precursors. In our society today for one reason or another methamphetamines are in steady supply for those who imbibe those materials. It is difficult for law enforcement agencies to substantially stem the trade in those substances. The reason for that is that these substances do not necessarily now need to be imported into Australia. I will not mention bikie gangs per se because it can be done by anybody. Once you have the precursors and you have a pill press, you are able to manufacture whatever amount you like.

I had a personal experience where I acted for a landlord, and a bikie gang wanted to hire his premises. Ultimately, they wanted me to witness their signatures. It took me about 25 minutes to have the leadership of that bikie gang produce their licences. Ultimately we got the drivers' licences and we photocopied them. I could not quite make the licence facial recognition with the person I was seeing, but ultimately we were able to be satisfied that they were the proper lessees and able to sign the lease.

After about 12 months the landlord came back and said, 'The bikie gang has left. What are you going to do about it?' I said to him, 'Mate, I don't know about you, but I'm not doing anything at all.' The net effect of it was that the bikie gang had set up on his premises. They had security cameras and they had reinforced the fencing. It was quite clear that they were manufacturing drugs, and that was certainly my opinion.

That is how basic it is to manufacture drugs in our society today. It is prevalent and difficult to detect. The only way in which we are really going to make an impact on this sort of behaviour is to make it more difficult for people to be able to trade in these precursors. Effectively, they can have these precursors in all different forms—not in a pill—coming from different directions. They can accumulate them and the pill press goes its merry way and produces these illegal substances. It is very difficult for law enforcement officers to be able to pin down the precursors and trace them back to a place where they are being made into amphetamines or methamphetamines. We know of some of the substances such as Sudafed and so forth. We can deal with that at least in part through requiring chemists to now provide their inventories in relation to what drugs they deal with. However, this new offence of dealing in precursors will make it easier for our law enforcement officers to establish a trail, because they do leave a trail. It will at least be another measure in curtailing the rate of drug offences.

I will comment upon the proof of identity provisions. I will say that, as a practising lawyer—and I was probably on the opposite side to law enforcement in past years—it seems a common-sense provision to have identity by a certificate. It was often a problem that you could not identify somebody without necessarily calling witnesses from four or five years ago. Clearly, it is a drain on court resources, police resources and prosecutorial resources to have people subpoenaed when somebody pleads guilty to one offence and then says, 'Well, I am so sorry. Those other offences—I am not the person.' So what do you do? More times than not you would look at the economics of such a position and probably err on the side of a pecuniary position and you would probably not proceed. Of course, the judge can only deal with the evidence before him. Quite clearly, if you are before the judge for sentencing and you have a history of committing that offence, your penalty is going to be much higher. I have never used it myself, of course, but that might have been a tactic used in the past. Effectively, we are closing off one of those loopholes, as the Leader of the Opposition calls them, to ensure the person before the court is the person who committed the previous offences and will feel the full wrath of the law against him if he is identified with that past history.

A particular concern to me is the new offence of aggravation, proposed new section 218A, when a child is procured using the internet. The penalty is to be increased from 10 years to 14 years. That is a sensible approach for the reason that we as a society have developed and these are new features of our society where adults do procure, do groom younger people. I know of instances in which it has happened. Even though in my generation and in my children's generation we try to preach as much as we can about stranger danger, the reality of life is it is so very difficult to put it into reality. It is difficult for our children to comprehend that there are people out there who will do injury or harm to their innocent and young lives.

This bill allows law enforcement and penalties to keep pace with technology. The reality of life is that the internet is now an integral part of our society. It is the reality that in homes throughout Queensland, if not Australia, our children are on the internet and are not necessarily being supervised or adequately supervised. This is really one of the very few deterrent methods that legislators have. We do need to show to perpetrators who harm our young children the penalty that they can expect if they start to troll the internet looking for the minds of young people. It is abhorrent. The members of our community say it is abhorrent and it is upon us to act, and this bill does that. It now creates an offence. It now increases the penalty for this sort of behaviour. It is a strong message to those people that, if they are pondering the thought of trolling the internet to procure young people then they will be dealt with. I know that the legislation has been worded in such a way that if you are caught out displaying such behaviour you will be swiftly dealt with.

The Leader of the Opposition did mention the matter of the *Crown v Rose* and called it a loophole. I do not necessarily agree that it is a loophole, but it is certainly something that shows a change in the attitude of society. Today it is not uncommon, in fact blended families are probably the norm, if I might not be too outspoken. The reality of life is that there are people living together who have children not of their own. The reality of life is that we consider that a step-parent having a sexual relationship with a stepchild is against the conventions of our society, is abhorrent and is taboo. As a result, this is a common-sense approach, one which clearly says to society that if people want to live in a household and if that household involves children not theirs, then the law is saying of those people that they must treat them as their children, whether they are related by blood or otherwise. That is the reality of it.

I certainly congratulate all involved in the making of this bill. I thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and I thank his department for the progression of the matter and the answering of questions on behalf of the committee. I also thank the Parliamentary Library for assisting me in gaining an understanding of the academic discussion throughout the world on things such as child exploitation. It is certainly a very difficult area. I also thank the members of the committee. We do hold a fairly robust conversation and one in which we discuss the recommendations, and I do thank them for their contribution.

I do thank again the submitters to the bill: the Queensland Law Society and the Council for Civil Liberties and those others involved. They made some provocative comments. I believe that we need this diverse discussion about these issues in order for us to be fully informed and to be able to justify our positions, which I believe we have adequately done. It is a bill that really will take us into the future with some solace—not so much with comfort but at least knowing that we take seriously the lives and protection of our children. It progresses our position as legislators to be able to say to the community, 'We are listening to you, not just hearing but listening. This is what you want and it has been delivered.' I certainly commend the bill to the House.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.40 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. This important bill addresses the commitment made by our government in our six-month plan, and it is pleasing to see this bill before the House. I congratulate the honourable the Attorney-General for bringing this bill so promptly before the House. I also thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, chaired by the member for Ipswich, Mr Ian Berry. I congratulate my colleague on his thorough understanding of the law and this bill and how it stands behind our children. I congratulate the member for Ipswich for his contribution to this debate. Like the member for Ipswich, I have practised in this area of law and have dealt with cases which exemplify how this bill will make the lives of children better and the lives of predators harder, hopefully.

The outcomes of this bill will be extensive. Importantly, they are also necessary. I note the submissions made to the committee by key stakeholders—the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Beryl Spencer of the Queensland Child Safety Legislation Action Network and Protect All Children Today—which were generally supportive of the proposed amendments contained in this bill.

I wish to comment on only some of the amendments contained in this thoroughly important bill. First, I mention the removal of the ambiguity that provides a defence in cases where an adult engages in consensual sex with their de facto partner's child who is over the age of consent—aged 16 or 17 years—but not yet an adult, being 18 years. This loophole in the current legislation was highlighted by Beryl Spencer of the Queensland Child Safety Legislation Action Network. This lady comes from my

area and has been pursuing this change to legislation for the past four years. In July last year, after so many years of struggling for this change, she established her group to fight for stronger, more effective protection of children. I met Beryl at the Queensland rural women's network function in Wooroolin last year and I listened to her talk at length about the reasons she is so passionate about making this change. She told me that the current defect in the legislation means there is a failure to protect children from sexual abuse by step-parents and others in positions of trust. This is a dreadful, abhorrent situation. In a recent case, convictions for incest were set aside on the basis that the offender was lawfully entitled to be married to the 17-year-old daughter of his long-term de facto wife when he commenced a sexual relationship with the girl. This bill will amend this defence to ensure it is only available if the parties are actually married or, if not married, both parties are adults and entitled to be lawfully married—therefore, over 18 years.

Beryl Spencer was also extremely pleased to hear that we are creating a new offence of grooming. This is a vitally important aspect of the bill. The offence of grooming targets an adult who engages in conduct in relation to a child with the intention of facilitating the later procurement of the child for sexual activity or to expose the child in any indecent manner. The member for Ipswich covered this issue very well. Our children are potentially exposed via the internet minute by minute and hour by hour. Whilst we might try with Net Nanny and other tools, it is impossible for parents to monitor every second what children are seeing and receiving on the internet. There are people out there who deserve the stronger sentences that will be passed down to them as a result of the passage of this bill if they are convicted of the offence of grooming. I do hope they are all caught.

This new offence will capture wide-ranging behaviour. It also provides the potential for police to intervene before a sexual act or a sex related activity takes place. This is so important, because in the past they had to wait to find evidence of a sex related activity. Children do not have the mind of an adult in order to understand when activity of a grooming nature is occurring or to comprehend the potential consequences of being asked to put photographs on the internet.

Unfortunately, Beryl Spencer is currently in hospital and cannot be here to see the passage of this important bill. I wish her a speedy recovery. I am glad that she continued her fight to see legislation changed. I am so pleased to be a part of this LNP government, which will make these important changes to enhance our ability to protect our children from further harm and to give harsher sentences to people brought before our courts. This will be appreciated by people, like me, who have been in the legal profession and have been put in the position of defending these people. I certainly congratulate the Attorney-General for bringing this bill before the House. It is so desperately needed and important.

Importantly, this bill seeks to amend the definition of child exploitation material to clarify that it includes animated or virtual images of children. Most importantly, it also seeks to increase the maximum penalty that can be imposed on people found guilty under this part of the act—from five years imprisonment to 14 years imprisonment. I congratulate the Attorney-General for having the common sense to bring about decent sentencing for these offenders. If I continue I will probably say something unparliamentary, so I will stop there.

I refer to the increase to the maximum penalty for the offence of using the internet to procure children under the age of 16 years to engage in a sexual act from five years imprisonment to 10 years imprisonment. This is just so important. If we do not provide a deterrence, we just will not prevent these offences occurring. I congratulate the committee for its thorough investigation of this bill and the Attorney-General for bringing this bill before the House to protect our children. I strongly commend this bill to the House.

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (4.48 pm): Today I rise to speak to the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I must commend the Attorney-General and his team on preparing and presenting this legislation—legislation that will honour this government's commitment but more importantly legislation that will further protect our children. Only two weeks ago here in this chamber we all heard the Attorney-General say that he would not apologise for introducing the nation's toughest laws with regard to child protection. As the Attorney-General pointed out, he was proud to deliver these tough laws and was proud to be part of a government that continued to advocate for tougher child exploitation laws. As the Assistant Minister for Child Safety, this legislation will work in conjunction with the important ongoing work being done by the department to further make Queensland the safest place in Australia for children with the

toughest laws for those who choose to go after our most precious asset—our children. This legislation provides the framework that will allow this state and the relevant authorities and agencies working in these fields the support and, more importantly, the confidence that this government values their work and is prepared to back them up with the tools they need. As a mother I am left speechless that anyone would find it distasteful that Queensland will continue to deliver the toughest laws in Australia for child sex and exploitation acts. I, too, do not apologise for being part of a government that has delivered the toughest laws in Australia regarding child protection. It is a badge of honour that I will wear proudly.

Let us examine this bill a little more closely. The bill will amend the Criminal Code and the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 to insert new offences, amend definitions and increase penalties for those who step out of bounds with our kids. An amendment will be made to the Criminal Code to introduce the new offence of grooming. For those of us who are sound, responsible, reasonable and normal, grooming is the thing that we do to keep our personal appearance up or make reference to in terms of our pets—that is, 'I took my dog to the dog groomers.' Unfortunately, those terminologies are being replaced with a much more sinister and disgusting form of grooming. The Oxford dictionary states that grooming is the process in which an adult develops a friendship with a child, particularly through the internet, with the intention of having a sexual relationship. Sadly, this occurs in our society across Australia and here in Queensland. This bill seeks to intervene in this dreadful, despicable practice. The insertion of the offence of grooming will assist in allowing law enforcement agencies to make arrests prior to the current requirement of procurement of a child. In effect, this means that our police can potentially intervene before a sexual act or sex related activity takes place. Isn't this what should be occurring? If we empower our authorities to protect our children before any harm comes to them, we are doing nothing more than being responsible members, citizens and parents.

Section 217 of the Criminal Code relates to the offence of procuring a child or a person with an impairment to engage in carnal knowledge and section 218A of the Criminal Code relates to the offence of an adult using electronic communications with intent to procure a child under 16 or a person an adult believes is under the age of 16 to engage in a sex act or expose without legitimate reason to any indecent matter. These two sections of the Criminal Code are in relation to procurement after the act has happened. The insertion of grooming is vital and ethically required to stop these hideous people committing these crimes listed in these two sections. It can and will stop perverts who wish to prey on our children before active betrayal of these innocents can be perpetrated.

As the explanatory notes to this bill clearly state, child exploitation offences are not a victimless crime. The abuse, both mentally and physically, that is imposed upon children exploited for the production of this material can be life threatening in some cases, but the long-term effects are the scars that these little people whose innocence has been taken away have to bear, often not revealed for many years. This is absolutely devastating. It is absolutely unacceptable that the penalties for these crimes are set out at five years imprisonment. In line with this state's already tough laws that we will not apologise for, this bill will see the increase of maximum penalties for involvement in the production and possession of this material—that is, from five years to 14 years imprisonment for the offence of possession and from 10 years to 14 years imprisonment for the offence of involving a child in production of child exploitation material. The bill will also increase the maximum penalty for the offence of using the internet to procure children under the age of 16 to engage in a sexual act from five to 10 years imprisonment and increase the maximum penalty for the aggregated form of the offence from 10 years to 14 years.

I again applaud the fact that the Attorney-General takes great pride in having the toughest laws in Australia for the protection of our Queensland kids. This is our clear message to predators, perverts and paedophiles: be warned, be told; break the law in Queensland and you will pay the price. I take great heart from the fact that I am amongst colleagues who continue to put the belief of our children's safety as a priority. I commend this bill wholeheartedly to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.56 pm): Today I rise in support of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. This government has made a commitment to Queensland families and children: we want Queensland to be the safest place in Australia to raise a child. This bill increases maximum penalties for child exploitation offences and affords further protection for Queensland children. I am proud to be part of a government that continues to recognise the importance of protecting our children's innocence. We have already introduced tougher penalties for sex offenders and established the Carmody inquiry into the Queensland child protection system.

This bill introduces new maximum penalties for child exploitation offences, including further protection for vulnerable children with an impairment of the mind. The legislation also introduces a new offence of grooming a child, placing significance on the intervention and charging of offenders before a sexual act or offence can occur. This bill also removes the distinction in penalties between possessing and making child exploitation material, increasing all maximum penalties to 14 years imprisonment. This is an important part of the legislation recognising the influence that market demand has on the production of child exploitation material.

As the internet has allowed predators and offenders to access child exploitation material with increasing ease, it becomes crucial that the legislation reflects the social link between child pornography and child sexual offences. What this bill acknowledges is the clear links between the viewing of pornography and sexual offending against children. Bravehearts research and policy development manager Carol Ronkin has been gathering years of evidence on this subject and has taken on an important advocacy role in the child protection space. According to Carol and fellow researcher McCarthy, pornography influences sexual offending against children in a number of ways. It sexually arouses the offender. The role of sexual fantasies is important. The offending cycle illustrates the place of sexual fantasies about children in sexual offending. No offender molests or grooms a child without some level of inappropriate sexual fantasy having preceded their offending. Not all of those who sexually fantasise about children actually go on to offend, but many, especially over time, find that this unfortunate habit increases the likelihood. The viewing of inappropriate material may also be used by offenders to groom potential victims by apparently normalising sexual contact or conversations between adults and children. Offenders can often gauge the likelihood of their success by the child's reaction to exposure to inappropriate material.

The use of inappropriate material, as referred to, may also often be used by offenders to blackmail children by threatening them against informing their parents or others about their viewing of pornography. Offenders may often take photographs of victims and post or trade these on the internet. Offenders often view, and in some cases digitally manipulate, adult pornographic images or otherwise normal pictures of children to create sexually explicit images of children. While there is no proven causal link between the viewing of pornography and sexual offending, there is evidence to suggest that the viewing of pornography negatively impacts upon the attitudes of the viewer. Viewing child pornography reduces the inhibitions of child sex offenders by normalising sexual activity with children and by feeding the cognitive distortions about the children's sexuality, such as 'She started it,' 'He wanted it,' 'She came on to me.' Clearly, the links between child pornography and offences against children are clear. They are abhorrent and highlight just why this legislation and the tougher penalties proposed are so important in dealing with and acknowledging the heinous nature of the offences against our children and young people.

Also in the research notes provided to me by Carol from Bravehearts the issue of sexualisation of children is examined. The context for children and young people's exposure to pornography includes a highly sexualised cultural environment. The frequency and explicitness of sexual content in mainstream media has increased steadily. More widely, there has been a pornographication of popular culture. In tandem with these trends, shifting information and communication technologies have allowed for new forms of pornography production and exchange. A porn aesthetic pervades culture—in fashion, music, entertainment and behaviour. This is evident in billboards, music videos and designer stores that shape the desires and imaginations of a younger and younger demographic.

It is not just that culture has become more sexualised; it is the imagery of the pornographic erotic that has shaped the sexualisation of culture. There are certain porn insignia now that are more and more commonplace within mainstream culture, like the use of porn labels and messages on clothing. The pervasiveness of this porn insignia throughout popular culture provides a kind of legitimacy to porn itself. If you grow up seeing Playboy bunnies on T-shirts, pencil cases and car windows, then these symbols are likely to seem familiar and inoffensive. This is very effective branding for both the particular companies concerned and for the pornography industry more generally.

Another example of the exploitation and normalisation of inappropriate attitudes to sex and sexual behaviours is the ongoing series of Sexpo conventions being more and more popular in Australian culture. Well-known researcher Melinda Tankard Reist has investigated the effects of the three-day festival. She notes—

According to its website, 'this show will increase your attractiveness and sexual drive. It contains beautiful women, hunky men, nudity and crankin' entertainment.'

In her words—

Call me fussy. Say I'm hard to please. But if I what I witnessed is supposed to promote a healthy, happy sex life, then I think I just saw the death of sex.

Tankard Reist sums up Sexpo—and all forms of pornography—as—

A celebration of the vandalism of the human body and the objectification and subordination of women.

In the end, Sexpo is anti-intimacy, anti-connection, anti-warmth. It just leaves you feeling cold.

In this society where we are seeing more and more boundaries lifted, where we are seeing more and more inappropriate behaviours legitimised by a society that in many respects has lost its way, it is important that we stand up in this House and that we support this legislation to ensure that there are tougher penalties, tougher laws and a higher regard for the protection of our children.

Recently, I had the privilege of meeting with some of my colleagues at Logan City Council with Mayor Pam Parker. The member for Logan was there, the member for Springwood, Michael Latter, was there and the member for Stretton, Freya Ostapovitch, was there. We were there to talk about the need for greater education in our community. Hetty Johnston, who has been a longstanding friend and a great advocate in Australia for our children, highlighted the need to start educating, empowering and protecting our children. On this occasion she presented us with a particular curriculum. Although that is a great thing, I think it is such a sad reflection on where our society has reached that we now have to run education programs to protect the innocence of our children, that we now need to introduce laws in the name of decency simply to look after our children and ensure that every child has the opportunity to grow up with a degree of innocence.

It also saddens me that recently the federal government has had to announce a royal commission to look into the issue of institutional abuse. Although I wholeheartedly support the need for such a commission, it saddens me that this commission will fundamentally look at about five per cent to 10 per cent of the problem, because most abuse in Australia occurs in the home, in a neighbourhood or in a club of some kind. In fact, about 92 per cent of abuse will happen anywhere but in an institution. So the challenges before us are great.

I note also that this legislation looks at new penalties in regard to drug offences. I note that it also makes some important amendments to our blue card system, which is designed to provide greater protection for our children. As the former assistant minister for child safety and the former president of Bravehearts and now the member for Southport, I am very proud to stand here today and speak in support of this bill. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.06 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise this evening to speak to the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill. It gives me even greater pleasure to follow my colleague and neighbour to the south, the honourable member for Southport. Mr Deputy Speaker, at the outset I acknowledge and thank my hardworking colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, which you chair, and the always and ever hardworking members of the secretariat staff. I am sure my colleagues in this House would appreciate that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has worked particularly hard this year. I think it is a great acknowledgement of the hard work that the Attorney-General is doing in this legal affairs space that the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee has worked so judiciously.

I will, like all members of the government and like all members of the opposition, be supporting this bill. It amends the definition of 'child exploitation material' so that we can include animated or digitally enhanced and virtual images. The bill inserts a new circumstance of aggravation in sections 208, 210 and 215 of the Criminal Code where the offence is committed against a child with an impairment of the mind. The bill provides a new offence of grooming, which will carry a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment or 10 years imprisonment if the child is under 12 years of age. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you illustrated, this amendment targets adults who engage in any conduct in relation to a child who is under 16 years of age or a person who the adult believes is under the age of 16 with the intent to facilitate the procurement of the child to engage in a sexual act or expose the child to any indecent matter.

There will also be an increase in the maximum penalties for the child exploitation material offences from five years to 14 years. There is also an increase in the maximum penalty for the offence of using the internet to procure children under the age of 16 years to engage in a sexual act from 10 years to 14 years. The bill also closes a loophole in section 222 with regard to incest, which provides a defence to incest in cases where an adult engages in consensual sex with their de facto partner's child. The bill also amends section 568 to allow the joinder of multiple offences.

With regard to the Drugs Misuse Act, the bill will create a new offence of trafficking in precursors. The bill amends the definition of a 'dangerous drug' to overcome the evidentiary difficulties in proving that an analogue has a substantially similar chemical structure. The bill provides the District Court with increased powers with regard to forfeiture orders. The bill also clarifies the meaning of section 10(4), which creates the offence of failure to take reasonable care and precaution with a hypodermic syringe or needle.

This is the government continuing to honour its six-month plan. We made clear when we were elected nearly 12 months ago this Sunday that we would put out there to the people of Queensland what our plans are; we would give them a yardstick against which they could measure us to ensure that we were meeting the obligations and commitments that we made to the people of Queensland. As I am sure all members of this House know, in all of the plans that we have released to date—the seven-, 30- and 100-day plans and, of course, our first six-month plan—we have met all of our obligations on time and, in many cases, ahead of time. The Newman government continues to be committed to the current six-month action plan for January through July and we will, of course, honour all of the commitments that we made to the people of Queensland when we released that plan.

It is incredibly important that as members of parliament and as people who are seen as leaders in our community that we stand up for those in our society who are most vulnerable. The reality is that that is the children of our community. I am a very strong and proud supporter of Bravehearts. Indeed, for white balloon day last year I had the pleasure of hosting Ditto, the Bravehearts mascot, for an event at Labrador State School in my electorate of Broadwater. It is important that as makers of laws in this state we send a strong message on behalf of our communities that we will not tolerate any indecent behaviour with children and we will, in particular, not tolerate any indecent behaviour with children who have a mental impairment. It strikes me that not only is it incredibly heinous to act indecently towards a child under the age of 16, I do not think there is a word that could be used in this House without risking censure or expulsion that would adequately describe those acts towards a child with a mental impairment. It is incredibly important that we work together to say to the community that we will stand up for the vulnerable in our community, we will stand up for the children who are most at risk and we will send a strong message to those who seek to perpetrate such abhorrent acts against the vulnerable in our community that they will not be tolerated. We will go at them with the full force of the law and they, in effect, should be watching out

It is not just vulnerable children whom we are seeking to protect in this particular bill. Drugs are, in my opinion, a scourge on society. We have an obligation to send a strong message that we will not tolerate the use of drugs. They are harmful and we must do everything in our power to stop those who use them and to punish those who not only seek to produce them but who also seek to traffic and sell them. That is why I think it is very important that we have taken these steps to ensure that those who are looking to manufacture drugs are stopped. We think it is incredibly important, if you are trafficking substances which can be used for the manufacture of illegal substances, to put a stop early in the game to the drugs being manufactured in the first place. One of the easiest ways that we can stop people ruining their lives through the use of drugs is to stop those drugs being in the marketplace at all.

As I said earlier, this bill will amend the Drugs Misuse Act to effectively stop modern chemistry superseding legislation. Time and time again we see those who seek to manufacture drugs are finding new and innovative ways to create new super drugs. Given that I have said earlier in my contribution to this debate that I think that drugs are the scourge of society, I think that it is also important that we as legislators do everything that we can to make sure that modern chemistry and pharmacology does not supersede legislation that we pass through this House. That is why I think it is very important that we will be amending the definition of a dangerous drug. One of the problems that prosecutors have had in the past is being able to prove that a drug has the same pharmacological effect as one that is listed as a scheduled dangerous drug. I think it is very important that we enable the prosecutors who work so hard in this state to do everything in their power to help those who are under the influence of drugs but also, more importantly I think, to prevent those who are seeking to put drugs onto the market. I think it is very important that we do everything in our power to stop those people. Their actions are incredibly shameful. It is great that this parliament, with the support of the opposition, will be sending an incredibly strong message to such violent abhorrent people.

It is important to note that there was much consultation on this bill. Not only did we speak to various government departments, including the Department of Justice and Attorney-General obviously, but also Treasury, as well as the Department of Communities. We also spoke with the Chief Justice and other senior judges, for example the President of the Court of Appeal, and my understanding is that we also consulted with the Chief Magistrate. As the Deputy Speaker alluded to in his contribution to the debate, we spoke with the Bar Association and the Queensland Law Society. We spoke with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, the Women's Legal Service—which is a great legal service and, of course, in the last budget we increased funding to the Women's Legal Service after it had been cut. We obviously consider them an incredibly important force in the legal fraternity in Queensland and we did indeed consult with them, as well as the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, Bravehearts and other stakeholders.

One of the messages that we continue to send, and it is a message that the Attorney himself repeats very often, is that we are committed to making Queensland the safest place to raise a child. I think that when we consider that Queensland is a great state with great opportunity we have no alternative other than to support this bill and the amendments that the Attorney has proposed in his second reading speech. I urge all of my colleagues in this place to support this bill. If they support this bill they are supporting the most vulnerable in our society, they are supporting our children. I may not yet have children of my own, but it is my hope that if I am ever blessed enough that there are courageous enough people in our society who will stand up to make sure that my children and my potential future grandchildren are not at risk of exploitation. This is a bill that I am very pleased to support. I encourage all of my colleagues to do so, and I commend it to the House.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (5.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I make the point very clearly that when the government came into office it said it was determined to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. This bill is yet another step towards achieving that goal. It changes the definition of child exploitation material to include animated or virtual images of children and increases the maximum penalty for possession of such material from five to 14 years. It also increases the maximum penalty for distributing and making child pornography from 10 to 14 years.

The beauty and strength of our democratic system must be safeguarded by a strong legal system that punishes the evil and serves as a warning to those who attempt to hurt our young. Offences ranging from taking advantage of children with mental disabilities to grooming a child for sex will now have stricter sentencing. The member for Broadwater mentioned that she looks forward to the day that she has children. As somebody who does have two young daughters I can say that it changes the way in which you view the world. In hospital a couple of days after the birth of our first daughter my wife and I saw something reported on the news. It was one of the most disgusting crimes against a child. I will not go into it here in this House. My view of the world had changed so much as a result of that experience. As a former journalist it is sometimes easy to become immune to those sorts of things. You see them all the time. You see the best and worst of society. It changed me in a way that I will never forget.

History and Mother Nature have taught us that a society or species that fails to protect its young is doomed and we must do all we can. The government will work to better protect kids and the vulnerable in society. With the introduction of this bill, the government is helping to build a society where people who want to hurt our children will have no place to hide.

I move onto another great part of this bill, which is something that has not been discussed in a lot of detail in recent times, but it is something that is of great importance to my electorate of Mundingburra. It is the use of synthetic drugs. The legislation will introduce some wonderful changes that will genuinely clamp down on that. During the height of the problem in my home city of Townsville, up to one dozen stores were selling things such as Kronic, or whatever nonsense they are calling it. I will give a bit of history based on research I have done through my local newspaper. It shows that, whilst we were trying to play catch up, we never seemed to get there through the changes to the regulations that we were making.

On 18 October 2011 in the *Townsville Bulletin*, under the headline, 'Kronic concerns: Police crack down on synthetic drug', the journalist has written—

Townsville businesses still selling synthetic cannabis have been warned there are no more loopholes to slip through when it comes to selling the product.

On 16 November 2011—less than a month later—the first paragraph of another article reads—

Townsville businesses are still selling illegal synthetic drugs despite repeated police warnings and changes to Queensland laws.

At the risk of sounding critical, it shows that at times you can tinker at the edges, but you will not get the desired effect unless you make monumental change. I think this is monumental change because the definition of ‘dangerous drug’ will now address synthetic drugs. The current definition encompasses analogues of scheduled substances. Under the definition, a substance is an analogue of a scheduled substance if it has a similar chemical structure and a similar pharmacological effect to the scheduled substance. The second limb is difficult to prove, as most seized substances are new and yet to be tested. The amendment will modify the second limb to enable the prosecution to prove the offender intended the seized substance to have a similar effect. Both limbs still need to be proved.

The article of 16 November goes on to say—

An informal poll ... has found it was still easy to buy the now-illegal ‘fake’ drugs, such as Kronic—

It is spelt with a ‘K’, which I am sure pleases the Attorney-General—

around the city with some shops claiming selling the products wasn’t illegal.

Members should remember that this was written in November 2011. It goes on—

‘Fake pot’ has now been labelled potpourri with warnings recommending the product not be used for human consumption.

If people go into stores and buy it from an esteemed gentleman who is peddling utensils that do not look like poppa’s old pipe, I would suggest they are not going to use it for potpourri. The joy of the changes that the Attorney is putting forward is that it can remove that nonsense. I repeat what I have said: it is what the offender intended, so it is an objective test. The bill will provide the District Court with the power to make forfeiture orders under the DMA in relation to drugs, precursor chemicals, drug paraphernalia and proceeds derived from drugs. This amendment will operate retrospectively to ensure past orders are valid.

There we have it. Is it perfect? Is it the end of the road? I am sure that it is not. There will always be somebody who dreams up something different and we will always need this place to move against such things. However, this is the biggest step we have taken in this journey. I commend the Attorney-General on the work. I commend the resolve of this place for getting on top of two things that mean so much to my electorate, that is, those who seek harm against our youth and those who seek to alter the minds of our youth. It is with great pleasure that I support the bill.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and a member of this government, I am very pleased to do so. This afternoon I have listened to the speeches of honourable members and I do not think there is much left for me to say. The quality of the speeches in this place has been fantastic. It shows that we are a government that is determined to do the right thing. Obviously, my government colleagues and I campaigned on issues such as this. In my electorate of Ipswich West, there is an expectation that I am going to come into this place and support bills just like this, and I am proud to do so.

**Mr Bleijie:** How much potpourri in Ipswich?

**Mr CHOAT:** We do not have any of that nonsense. The only fodder we grow is for cattle and sheep. As members would know, I am the very proud father of three children: one teenager and two younger children. Therefore, I feel a strong sense of personal responsibility to see this bill enacted. I want to protect them, I want to protect their friends and I want to protect all of the children of my community.

I turn to the technical side of the bill. The primary role of the legislation is to address the very serious issues of illegal drugs, child sex offences and other forms of child exploitation in the state. Sadly, the subject matters addressed by this bill are a part of modern society. We must work for the people to do whatever possible to prevent such heinous offences and to punish those convicted with sentences that meet community expectations. What really stands out in this bill is that we are doing something about the punishments. We are making certain that, when people are convicted of the most heinous crimes such as these, they get what they deserve.

Some of the issues that the bill addresses include amending the definition of ‘child exploitation material’ to ensure that animated or virtual images are covered. It amazes and sickens me that some perhaps very talented graphic artists and techno people can spend their time developing filth. It defies belief that someone with any sort of talent could apply it in such a dreadful manner.

The bill seeks to protect from serious abuse our children, particularly those with a disability or impairment. Arguably, there is no cohort in our community that is more vulnerable. The bill addresses the grooming and procurement of children for sex. People may know that, sadly, in my electorate there was quite a famous case where a gentleman was paying parents to use their children. It was absolutely disgraceful and that is exactly why I know my people are pleased to see us doing something about it. Of course, there are also cases of incest where loopholes exist. One finds it quite sad that we have to legislate to close loopholes. It is quite disturbing.

It is very important that the bill deals with those who produce and traffic in illegal drugs. People might look back to the sixties and say they used a bit of marijuana and things such as that. But one thing leads to another and look where we are today. Drug abuse goes on at parties and we have seen in the media in recent days the outcomes of that. In the emergency wards, the doctors' consulting rooms and our hospitals, we see the results of the aftermath of people so-called partying on illegal drugs.

Most importantly, we are ensuring that there are tough and I believe appropriate penalties for those convicted of offences under the legislation. Members of the government know me to be quite a plain-speaking fellow. Sometimes I am perhaps a little less than politically correct. Therefore, I am sure members can imagine the sorts of punishments that I would like to dish out. Being a fellow who is quite partial to the country, I can think of all sorts of things that could be dished out to some of those monsters.

I was very pleased to hear the Leader of the Opposition speak in favour of the bill. We must all cry out in one loud voice—enough! We have had enough. We will not tolerate the scum of our society committing such vile assaults on those in our community who are most vulnerable. We all know just how the scourges of drugs and sexual abuse affect people in our society. It is great to see that modern society encourages victims to speak out about such matters. The media has played and continues to play a very important role in that regard.

On a personal note, recently my eldest daughter and I watched the movie *Taken* that stars Liam Neeson. I am sure honourable members would know of that film. There is now a sequel to it. My daughter was shocked and amazed by the story. She asked me about it. I said to her that that is obviously a Hollywood movie but unfortunately there are young people in our society here in Queensland who are potentially subject to a similar fate that the girl suffered in that movie. The media can play a vital role in the education and promotion of a community understanding of the scourges and dangers of these sorts of crimes.

Speaking out is the biggest step a society can take. It is for sure often a brave step for the individuals. As the legislature we must ensure that we provide for dealing with such matters so as to show the community that we will do everything possible to prosecute and punish those found to have perpetrated such activities.

The address by the member for Mount Ommaney was absolutely brilliant. I very much enjoyed listening to her, as serious as it was. So eloquently and so appropriately she illustrated exactly what we are up against and what we are trying to deal with. I cannot think of any person in the government who would be more suited to assist the minister on matters of child safety. I congratulate the member for Mount Ommaney and look forward to what she is going to bring to that portfolio.

It would be naive to think that we could wipe out such things from our society completely—naive, but what a dream. I know we will go some way towards that dream by dealing with matters as they are presented. It is sad that we should have to go into the detail we do with bills such as this to ensure the protection of people in our society who are so vulnerable.

I remember hearing as a young person growing up in 1980s, when he was at the height of his current affairs career, Mr Derryn Hynch's famous quote. I am sure members also remember it. He said, 'Who's looking after the children?' We all know that Derryn Hynch, as controversial as he may be, was a victim himself of child sexual abuse. How brave he was to take some of the stands he did, although some of those may not have helped. We do not want vigilante activities and we do not want people going against our courts and our magistrates. We can certainly understand his motivation.

When we look back at Derryn Hynch's question—'Who's looking after the children?'—we know that in Queensland the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice is looking after the children. The members of the Newman government—

**Mr Bleijie:** And you are.

**Mr CHOAT:** Thank you for, Mr Attorney. I take that interjection. I do hope that members of the crossbenches and opposition will take this up and seek to look after the children.

There are many people like Mr Hynch. The names that spring to mind are names like the Morcombes. What a fantastic couple they are and a fantastic family they are. We cannot begin to imagine being on the end of such a life sentence as they are. They lost their most precious son, a twin boy aged 13, to an animal—I should correct the record; not an animal, a monster. We are doing this for them too and not just the victims.

Together with previous bills passed by this government, such as the two strikes child sex offenders bill 2012, I really believe we are heading in the right direction. I know from discussions that I have had out in the community in Ipswich West that members of the Queensland public feel the same. They want to see justice done. They want to ensure that our children and vulnerable members of the community are protected. They want to see real punishment for those who dare to act in such a despicable way.

I commend the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and his department for the work done in this very important area. I am grateful to the Attorney. I know that I can say that on behalf of the good people in my community of Ipswich West. I also know that the countless victims whose time for justice has come and gone will take comfort in the fact that others may get the justice they themselves may not have got. I pray sincerely that this bill and what it will do to protect future victims will give comfort, solace and closure to those people. I most certainly take pleasure in commending the bill to the House.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (5.35 pm): I rise in the chamber this afternoon to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I congratulate the Attorney-General for introducing this bill that sees the fruition of the Newman government's pledge in our six-month action plan to address synthetic drugs and penalties for child pornography and some child sex offences, including a new child grooming offence. I acknowledge the work of my colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and thank all who were part of the process in the consideration of this bill, including the many submissions.

The bill amends the Queensland Criminal Code, the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, the Disability Services Act 2006, the Drugs Misuse Act 1986, the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1982 and the Evidence Act 1977 and addresses penalties for child pornography and some child sex offences. It also introduces a new child grooming offence.

The Queensland Criminal Code currently provides for offences involving a child in the making of child exploitation material and distributing child exploitation that all carry a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment. It also provides for the offence of possession of child exploitation material, which carries a maximum penalty of five years. This bill will omit the current penalty distinction for the offences of possession and increase the maximum penalty of all the aforementioned offences to 14 years imprisonment.

I agree and fully support the reasoning behind this. Criminal law generally regards distribution of contraband as objectively more serious than possession. However, a simple supply meeting demand analogy demonstrates that it is those who seek to possess such material that fuel the market. Therefore it is vital that the whole of the exploitative market is targeted so the chain can be broken and the evil cycle gone. That is why having equivalent maximum penalties is a great step.

In my opinion, there is no lesser of two evils with possession and distribution of child exploitation material. The Queensland government is serious about sending the message out there—a message that the majority of Queenslanders agree with: this is disgusting behaviour and the practice is unacceptable, it is intolerable and it is inexcusable.

Child exploitation is not a victimless crime. The extent of suffering of the child as a result is something I hope never to be able to comprehend. As a father of three young children, it often keeps me awake at night. Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime.

The bill also provides a new offence for circumstances of aggravation and child sex related offences where the child has an impairment of mind. Indecent treatment of a child and carnal knowledge with or of children with a mental impairment will carry life imprisonment penalties. This change recognises the increased vulnerability of children with a mental impairment which may make them a target for sexual predators.

The amendments to the Criminal Code will also create a new child grooming offence. This allows for police to intervene in a situation before a sexual act or activity has taken place and will allow the opportunity for the threat to a child's welfare to be minimised before any serious harm has occurred. The 'grooming' offence will complement procuring offences where the offender knowingly entices or recruits a child for the purposes of sexual exploitations. The term 'grooming' covers a wide range of behaviours that are designed to facilitate the later procurement of a child for sexual activity. A number of jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth, provide a similar offence. Children should have the right to privacy. They should have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, in body or mind. They have the right to be free from sexual abuse. These tougher penalties will help impede this repugnant criminal activity.

These amendments relating to child sex offences will tighten the current legislation, fill in the gaps and close the loopholes to ensure that there is no defence and to ensure that it is well known that there is zero tolerance in Queensland for these offences. A child psychologist sums it up perfectly: 'Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.' It is our job to protect them. These changes align Queensland with maximum penalties with corresponding Commonwealth offences and similar offences in other Australian jurisdictions.

There are two main changes in relation to the dangerous drugs component of this bill which I wish to discuss—the first being the widening of the definition of 'analogues' of dangerous drugs. Currently analogues of dangerous drugs must have a chemical structure that is substantially similar to the chemical structure of a scheduled dangerous drug or its derivative and have a substantially similar pharmacological effect. The proposed changes mean that analogues can be defined with the proof of only one of these limbs. These changes target underground chemists who make slight changes to the molecular structure of existing illicit drugs to create new drugs that are not specifically identified in the schedules.

These new synthetic drugs, such as amphetamines and synthetic cannabinoids, make it difficult to legislatively keep pace to test and add them to the schedule of analogues. By widening the net to capture synthetic drugs in the definition, Queensland will be able to close the gap between the time a new substance is identified and when it is added to the registered list. As with all aspects of society, progress and improvements are moving at an exponential rate and so are the methods of drug manufacturers. We are seeing underground chemists constantly conjuring new methods to create and distribute forms of illicit substances, designed to simulate the pharmacological effect of other known dangerous drugs. The added danger here is that the full extent of the risks and dangers these new substances pose are unknown.

Just last year alone a new substance was identified every week. This alarming rate is only set to increase if tougher measures are not enforced. These changes are in the best interest of the health of Queenslanders. The cycle of drugs and crime is a dangerous one and prevention and deterrence are key in working towards a holistic solution. If we can save as many people as possible from ever entering the cycle, we will be able to see a decline in ongoing use. This illegal and underground activity has a wider impact on society than is always directly visible and obvious. The measures we take now and enact in legislation can assist in redefining social attitudes and perceptions forcing individuals to rethink the consequences of using substances whether they are scheduled or not, especially drugs taken with the intention of experiencing a similar pharmacological effect as scheduled drugs.

The Newman government is committed to working together to make sure Queensland remains a great place to live, work and raise a family. We want to foster hope and opportunity which is why we are putting our foot down when it comes to illegal activity—in this instance, relating to child exploitation and sex offences and dangerous drugs. I congratulate the Attorney-General once again on introducing the Criminal Law (Child Exploitation and Dangerous Drugs) Amendment Bill 2012. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

## SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (5.44 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 16 April 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (5.44 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

### South East Queensland Bus Network Review

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (5.44 pm): It gives me great pleasure tonight to get up and chalk up a win for the residents of the Brisbane City Council. It gives me great pleasure to come in here tonight to talk about the biggest backdown in Brisbane's bus history. It gives me great pleasure to let the people of Brisbane know that when it comes to follow-through this government and the Minister for Transport just do not have what it takes. The review that promised so much—the review that promised a new era in public transport—only delivered anger and anxiety. That is all it delivered. It was a failure from the start. It failed to consult people. It failed to consult commuters. It failed to consult communities. It was the most spectacular failure from the word go.

The Minister for Transport, the minister who is well known, well versed, in trotting out like a show pony and doing the most spectacular stunts in a controlled environment, comes out on a day when there is a national distraction to admit his failure. He comes out on a day when everybody is looking elsewhere and gives the biggest buck-pass imaginable to his LNP colleagues at a council level. It is incredible. It is incredible when this minister has been out there for almost a year now saying that this bus review is so needed, is so desperate, is so going to revolutionise public transport throughout South-East Queensland. He just does not have what it takes.

This victory belongs to the bus commuters who took grassroots action, spontaneous action—like the 50 elderly Queenslanders who came in yesterday from the Salisbury senior citizens association and from Tangara retirement home—all of those people who came in who have not been so angered and so desperate to take political action, civic action, since Gough Whitlam was sacked. These people decided to come in and make it abundantly clear—people whom the minister refused to meet with, which is outrageous. This victory belongs to them because they stood up for what they wanted. They stood up for what was important to them and the minister buckled.

*(Time expired)*

### Greenslopes Private Hospital

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (5.47 pm): I rise tonight to speak on a fantastic hospital in the Greenslopes electorate. The Greenslopes Private Hospital was founded in 1942. Since that time it has grown to become Australia's largest private teaching hospital. As many in this House would know, it was originally founded as a veterans' affairs hospital before it was purchased by its current operator Ramsay Health Care.

Since privatisation the hospital has certainly grown. The Greenslopes Private Hospital currently has 676 beds and provides services to just under 80,000 people per year. True to its original purpose, some 26 per cent of patients are veterans and war widows. The hospital now provides a comprehensive range of services across all adult specialties including obstetrics, which has just been introduced following their latest \$47 million redevelopment which opens for business this month.

This new development is truly world-class and will ensure that Greenslopes will continue to remain Australia's leading private teaching hospital for years to come. Indeed, the new development brings many expanded services including the expansion of coronary care services and the expansion of surgical services, with the addition of two surgical theatres and two wards providing an extra 64 private rooms.

The most exciting part of the development is the new maternity ward, the newest in Brisbane in 10 years. I am proud to say that, after visiting to inspect the new ward at its official opening on 13 February this year, I am convinced that new and expectant mothers, and of course newborns, will receive a level of care and comfort that is second to none.

This 26-bed ward consists of entirely private rooms, half of which have double beds and feel more like a luxury hotel than a hospital, with 40-inch TVs, coffee machines, Wi-Fi, cable TV, iPod docking stations and more. The development includes four birth suites with the capacity for an additional two in the future, a well-baby nursery and a 10-cot special care nursery for babies born from 32 weeks. They are aiming to deliver 800 babies this year and then expand to 2,000 per year in years to come.

This development will not only serve to bring new Queenslanders into the world in unparalleled comfort, it will also benefit the community and our great state in many ways. For a start, it will create 200 new jobs in addition to the 2,300 staff already employed at Greenslopes Private Hospital. This development will attract people from far and wide wanting to access its excellent services, which I am sure will serve to provide a much needed boost to local businesses around the Greenslopes area. Significantly, this expansion will assist Greenslopes Private Hospital in training even more doctors.

I certainly cannot talk about the Greenslopes Private Hospital without mentioning the team of approximately 300 volunteers who work at the hospital. They are an integral part of the hospital and their work is truly appreciated by patients and their relatives along with all the staff and management. I truly do salute them.

Overall, I am very impressed with Greenslopes Private Hospital. It is a great asset to the Greenslopes community with whom it has shared a proud history. It is great to think that one day thousands of Queenslanders will have Greenslopes as their place of birth. I would certainly encourage any expectant mother to consider giving birth at Greenslopes Private Hospital.

### LNP State Conference

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.50 pm): I have been aware for quite some time of this weekend's LNP state conference to be held in my electorate. I could not be happier to have my community host this event. After all, every tory dollar spent in Rockhampton is a dollar we did not have before. I hope that all those attending really dig deep, eat the best steaks in Queensland and wrap themselves in the best hospitality that regional Queensland can provide. I am so supportive that I would encourage the LNP executive to make it a pay fortnight event. I am happy for them to spend and could not be happier for them to keep spending.

But allow me to reflect on the reality of Queensland's and my city's situation. I hope these tory visitors take the time to talk to the workers and small business owners about how their slash-and-burn policies and unnecessary austerity measures are harming the Rockhampton economy. Small business owners are telling me on a daily basis that these are the worst trading conditions in almost 20 years.

This weekend the Newman government will celebrate its first year of broken promises and disappointments in Rockhampton. In just 12 months, the LNP government has cut 14,000 government jobs and slashed hundreds of front-line services, none of which was mentioned before the election. In less than a year, the Newman government has slowed economic growth in Queensland, destroyed consumer confidence and increased unemployment to levels not seen since the global financial crisis that, of course, was created by the very free-market fundamentalist philosophy represented by ministers in this House on a daily basis. Let us be truthful here. On the back of two years of talking down the Queensland economy in support of an obvious political strategy, the LNP's front-line service and job cuts have done terrible damage to the Queensland economy punctuated by two credit rating downgrades. This is particularly felt in regional economies and directly impacts the state's unemployment rate, which is now at 5.8 per cent as opposed to 5.5 per cent in 2012. This puts the Premier's promise of a four per cent jobless rate further out of reach. In fact, it has always been a ludicrous number. What a measure of spin and economic buffoonery it is. This means the Premier now needs to create 200 jobs a day, every day for the next five years in order to meet his four per cent unemployment target. How are we tracking at the moment? Figures released today show that in the ABS statistical region of Mackay, Fitzroy and Central West the jobless rate was 7.2 per cent, up from 5.6 per cent in February last year. With friends like this government, my city does not need any enemies.

When the LNP took office in 2012 the regional jobless rate was 5.4 per cent. This means that 4,300 people have joined the jobless queue in Central Queensland in the past 12 months thanks to the efforts of this government.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Madam SPEAKER:** The member for Gregory will cease interjecting.

### Leukaemia Foundation

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (5.53 pm): I rise tonight to talk about some fantastic young people in my electorate, students who attend the Burpengary Meadows State School. As I came into this place this week people would have realised that my hair had disappeared. Walking around the parliamentary precinct and having staff not know who I was and asking for my ID was something to be seen. I experienced this with my colleagues as well. The Minister for Water and Energy Supply, Mr Mark McArdle, did not recognise me, either.

The cause is fantastic. These young people from the Burpengary Meadows State School went out of their way to raise some money for the Leukaemia Foundation. Headed by Jane McMillan, who is the president of the Caboolture branch of the Leukaemia Foundation, they went out of their way to raise some cash. Did they raise some cash? Yes, they did. To date, they have raised \$7,125.05 and they still have money coming in. They anticipate that the total could go as high as \$8,000.

I told these young people who have made such a fantastic contribution to the Leukaemia Foundation that I would name some of them in parliament. I intend to do this, so please bear with me. I hope I get these names right. There was Ethan Barbour, Corey Murphy, Ryan Murphy, Rob Staplehurst, Billy Setter, Joel Noyes, Jordan Sheather, Matthew Biekoff, Jordan Hamilton, Sam Coleman, Jayke Holdsworth, Mason Ball, Connor Lee, Brayden Callaghan, Rolan Hilderbrant—and the last person who participated was a young fellow named Cooper English. I saved Cooper for last because Cooper actually raised over \$3,000. For the record I say congratulations to all those who took part. I say thank you to Jane McMillan from the Caboolture branch of the Leukaemia Foundation. They have raised a significant amount of money for those in our region who have leukaemia or are fighting cancer. I put young Cooper's name on record forever in this place. Raising \$3,000 at his age, being a primary school student, is just fantastic. It will go a long way towards helping to fund the services we need for cancer and leukaemia patients in our local area. I say well done, guys, and I thank you for contributing to our local community and the Leukaemia Foundation.

### Lockyer Valley, Floods

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise to inform the parliament about a flood meeting that was held last night in the Laidley area to discuss flood reconstruction work. It was an important meeting.

**A government member:** You got to know where you're going.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is right. This important meeting was held to give us some real direction. The state government has spent millions of dollars funding a number of SKM reports which are all starting to come together now. I think the GHD report was the first report done for the area in 2005. We have now added about three SKM reports. So there have been quite a number of reports. We are working out where the water goes, how it travels and at what speed. These reports are modified each time we experience a flood because, as experienced members in this House would realise, every flood is different; every flood changes a little bit.

**Mr Berry:** You don't need reports. Water goes downhill.

**Mr RICKUSS:** I take that interjection from the member for Ipswich. I am sure he realises, being a member for an area that also suffers quite a lot of inundation, that when you build villages, towns and cities on flood plains, you are bound to have some flood inundation. Unfortunately, many buildings that were built previous to recent floods were built without real concern for appropriate flood heights. I am sure that, even after the 1974 flood, some buildings in Ipswich were built in inappropriate positions and flood heights were ignored. Developers were running roughshod over councils who did not have the ability to stand up and determine where the flood height should be.

That has all changed. We now have appropriate flood heights. We want to see buildings built above those flood heights. We want to put in place provisions to assist people to lift existing houses above the flood height. A very cost-effective way of managing flood inundation—

**Mr Berry:** Build resilience.

**Mr RICKUSS:** That is right, and building resilience into these people. We want them to be able to lift their house. Most people do not want to leave the area. Most people are very happy with the area in which they live, whether it is Laidley, Ipswich or the Lockyer Valley. However, they just do not want water to inundate the living areas of their house. That can be done by lifting a house and ensuring it is sustainable. They can live upstairs and waterproof the under-house area with cement and ensure the foundations are stable. Those things can be done for a relatively small amount of money. We are investigating all these issues to see how we can do it and manage it. As part of that process we will be talking to Queensland Rail about providing better box culverts underneath the railway line so water can dissipate more effectively. The railway line has been there for 140 years, but it still creates some problems. Over the years the track has been built up a bit higher and has been made solid.

*(Time expired)*

### Road Closures; Bulk Suppliers

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.59 pm): I rise in the House to talk firstly about road closure policies and their effect on traffic in the Gulf of Carpentaria. After the Brisbane 2011 floods the law was changed so that roads are now closed, without discretion—the Police Service will monitor these closures—when water across a road reaches a depth of 200 millimetres, which in Normanton and Karumba can result from just a king tide. There does not even have to be rain around for those roads to be closed. That has a very significant effect on traffic and industry in that area. There is a lot of industry in that area such as fishing and cattle. Roads being closed when water reaches a depth of 200 millimetres can really affect their way of life. There is a permit system, but it is onerous and difficult to manage.

Local people are really struggling to manage this issue. I am not prepared to comment on how this might affect people in other areas of the state. This law may be relevant in other areas of the state but it is certainly not practical or reasonable to expect people to work under these provisions in that area. Mayor Fred Pascoe has been vocal on this issue. People in the area need help as the law is too onerous and is making things very difficult.

The government needs to look at this issue in order to free up industry and movement in the area. People should be able to use their discretion so that road trains are not being stopped. Road trains can safely go through 400 or 600 millimetres of water—even up to a metre—to get food and other goods through to people in flood times. They are being stopped by what would be considered a trickle over the road. Another point is that these are mostly shallow rivers and watercourses. It is pretty flat up there so the water is slow moving. There has to be discretion available, and common sense has to be brought back to the issue. The government really needs to look at this to make things more workable—not just make a knee-jerk reaction to the issue after the floods.

Another issue very relevant to that same area of the world is the move towards bulk suppliers and supercontractors. Often towns in those areas are built on road crews. They are often the biggest business in those towns, whether they be council or a private contractor. They are starting to lose contracts to supercontractors or bulk suppliers. There may be some small financial benefit in using them in some cases, but great damage can be caused to communities by smashing a hole in what are big businesses for towns but relatively small contractors. That can really be damaging to communities. The procurement policy needs to give more weight to local contractors compared to bulk suppliers, which can be very damaging to smaller communities.

### Chatsworth Electorate, Parents and Citizens Associations

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (6.02 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the wonderful work of the parents and citizens associations at Chatsworth schools. It has been my privilege to attend leadership inductions at many of Chatsworth's schools in recent weeks. Each and every time, I have been struck by the number of talented students—those who excel in their

academic, sporting, musical, cultural or philanthropic pursuits. These outstanding student achievements are testament not only to the students themselves but also to the school communities, which provide students with the resources and environment to help them reach their goals.

Much of this is due to the hard work of parents and members of the community who give freely of their time to serve on the P&Cs, raising funds for the schools and supporting the work of the teaching staff. Dr Martin Luther King Jr told us that ‘the goal of true education is to help our young people cultivate intelligence plus character’. The P&Cs’ efforts contribute immensely to developing the sense of community within each of Chatsworth’s schools—instilling that school spirit that stays with young people long after they leave a school and that forms a part of their character. In many cases, the funding provided by school P&Cs enables students to access a wider variety of facilities than would otherwise have been possible, in addition to providing them with wonderful social experiences such as fetes, dances and fun runs which create lifelong memories and bring the community together.

I take this opportunity to briefly share with the House some of the wonderful work of Chatsworth’s school P&Cs. Tingalpa State School and San Sisto College P&Cs have both been putting in a tremendous effort to raise the required funds to add to their respective schools’ facilities. Belmont State School, Whites Hill State College and St Martin’s Catholic Primary School P&Cs are hard at work preparing to host school fetes—a wonderful opportunity to bring together the school and local communities. Gumdale State School P&C is working to support the school community through the implementation of the school’s master plan, which will see the school modernise and expand.

The P&C of Carina State School, my old primary school, is helping students say thanks to their mums through their annual Mother’s Day flower stall. Mayfield State School P&C is bringing the community together in the spirit of healthy competition with their trivia night. Camp Hill State Infants and Primary School P&C is helping their students embrace a healthy lifestyle with the Fit Kids Fun Day. And last but by no means least, the Agnew School P&C initiated production of a book about the Queensland floods of 2011 which raised over \$250,000 for charities including the Australian Red Cross and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. I am truly grateful for our school parents and citizens associations and I thank them for their role in making Chatsworth schools such wonderful learning environments for our young people.

### **Ipswich West Electorate, Schools; Public Transport, Buses**



**Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (6.05 pm): Last week I had the absolute pleasure of attending three great little schools in my electorate: Walloon State School, Haigslea State School and Ashwell State School—great schools experiencing great growth. I am so pleased to see all three of those schools having an increase in enrolments. I am very keen to see what will happen with those schools in the future. I attended the leadership ceremonies of Haigslea and Ashwell. It was great to see our great little leaders recognised by their peers.

It was great talk with the P&C members and principals at the schools. I got a great sense of what is ahead for our education system here in Queensland but also in my electorate. It makes me really proud. I say to the kids, ‘You are the essence of the community. You represent our community in so many ways.’ It was a great day. This Friday I am looking forward to going to Glamorgan Vale State School for grandparents day. Although I am not a grandparent—I have a bit of grey coming through—I am sure I will fit in very well and will have a great time. I know that they want to show their appreciation for a little gift I gave the school last time I was there.

I take this opportunity to also talk about the bus review. I do not know what the member for South Brisbane was on about, because, as members would have heard me say the other night, my electorate of Ipswich West is so grateful for that review. It has given my people some certainty about public transport. It has locked in routes. I refer to my beloved 514 and the great people in Tivoli, Moores Pocket and North Ipswich. Not only has that service been protected; it will be even better. People will be able to get on that bus and go down to Booval Fair, which is across from the office of the member for Ipswich. So we will wave to his office as we drive by.

I pay tribute to Robert Dow, from RAIL Back On Track. That man has been very objective in relation to this issue. It is really good to see a lobby group like that take things so seriously and look at things for what they are. I thank him and his members for being so objective and being so positive

about the opportunities the review has presented South-East Queensland commuters. The member for South Brisbane is just a delusion. That is the only word I can think of to describe her. I would back Mr Dow and his group any day over the member for South Brisbane.

I do hope that the Brisbane City Council takes very seriously the responsibility it has to make sure its buses are run effectively and efficiently and to protect services for commuters, just as Bus Queensland has done in my electorate and in the Ipswich region. Our services are what they are because of the great provider that Bus Queensland is and, of course, because of our great passengers. I look forward to riding more bus services and talking to them in the future.

### Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal; Drive-Off Theft

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—Ind) (6.08 pm): I draw to the House's attention the significant environmental disaster which will happen if a proposed cruise ship terminal goes ahead on the Gold Coast Spit. A major area of wetlands on The Spit will be endangered and what has been described by a leading wildlife author and photographer as 'a living zoo in the heart of the city' will be destroyed. As I have said previously, The Spit has a high environmental value and the significant wetlands are home to the striped marsh frog and the eastern sedge frog. They are on the eastern side of The Spit and were uncovered by Friends of Federation Walk, which has spent years restoring the area over more than a decade. The five areas are known as palustrine wetlands, which are marshes which are covered by vegetation rather than water. I agree with the Friends of Federation Walk, Gecko and Save Our Spit that these wetlands must be preserved. The area is highly fragile and once developers move in we will have lost an important part of our environment.

Author and photographer Bob Westerman has documented the world-class significant species and habitat of both the Broadwater and The Spit. He says that public knowledge of the wildlife on the Broadwater is close to zero despite the city having a living zoo in the city's heart. His book *Birds of the Broadwater and The Spit* shows the abundance of wildlife. He says the almost universal ignorance of what lives on the southern part of the Broadwater could lead to loss of birdlife through ill-considered development and that, given the abundance of natural life, it is surprising that nature tours, including bird observation, are not a greater segment of Gold Coast tourism. His book talks about an ark—in other words, the Gold Coast Broadwater. The birds are a wide variety of waders and shorebirds which feed on tidal flats, roost on the high water sandbars and fly the globe on their annual migrations and do a round journey to the northern polar lands of between 16,000 and 20,000 kilometres annually. He photographed a pair of endangered beach stone curlews at an area he calls 'the unnamed island' south of Wavebreak Island. In New South Wales there are only about 10 pairs of these birds. These birds are listed as vulnerable under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act and regarded as a high priority on the Back on Track project which develops special management plans for these rare species. The Broadwater is home to world-class wildlife and we do not want to lose these just for the sake of a development which will destroy our wonderful environment and take away our public space. There certainly needs to be an environmental impact assessment if the terminal proposal takes off.

I once again draw the House's attention to the increasing number of people driving off from service stations without paying for fuel. I have written to the RACQ and the Motor Trades Association to ascertain their views on introducing on-the-spot fines for people who do not pay. My proposal would be that it would work by a reverse onus of proof on the vehicle owner, therefore transferring the cost of processing away from service providers. I think it will help curb the number of drive-offs. I am also seeking feedback from my constituents on what they think about the idea. This already operates in Victoria and I think by adopting something similar it puts the message out there that we are serious about stopping this crime. The number of offences has reached over 500 in the last two months. We need to do something in this area.

### Toowoomba South Electorate

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (6.11 pm): Over the last two weeks sporting clubs in my electorate of Toowoomba South have received just over \$139,000 in combined funding through the Newman government's Get into the Game initiative. Through the Get Going component, successful recipients were announced this week including Toowoomba Valleys junior rugby league, Toowoomba Daytime Squash Racquets Association, Toowoomba Rangers Rugby Union Club and Football Toowoomba. These clubs will be putting funding towards the purchase of new equipment and come and try days as well as training club volunteers in coaching, refereeing and first aid. Of special note is the success of the Toowoomba

Softball Association, which will receive \$108,000 through both the Get Playing and Get Going components. The association has indicated that it will be upgrading the lighting at its local playing fields which will ensure that they are used to their full capacity. It will also be organising a 'get into softball' program to encourage new players to its club.

I also want to make mention of two outstanding girls who completed their schooling in Toowoomba South last year—Melissa Stark who graduated from Centenary Heights State High School and Alexandra Thomson who completed grade 12 at Harristown State High School, both of which are in my electorate. Both girls have been successful in becoming among the first to receive the Newman government's Supporting Women Scholarships. These girls are selected from a competitive field of nearly 400 applicants to receive scholarships which will assist them in gaining qualifications in areas of industry that are traditionally male dominated. Alexandra, I am thrilled to announce, has enrolled to study a Bachelor of Agricultural Science at the University of Queensland and Melissa has enrolled to study a Bachelor of Engineering majoring in civil at the University of Southern Queensland. I wish both Alexandra and Melissa all the very best as they embark on their studies.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.13 pm.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Byrne, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Crandon, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C. Davis, T. Davis, Dempsey, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Driscoll, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Hobbs, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Katter, Kaye, Kempton, King, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young