



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Hansard Home Page: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard>
 E-mail: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au
 Phone (07) 3406 7314 Fax (07) 3210 0182

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 7 August 2013

Subject	Page
PRIVILEGE	2381
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member	2381
PETITIONS	2381
NUTTALL, MR GR	2381
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	2382
Jolly, Mr NB	2382
Police Resources	2382
Queensland Health Payroll Commission of Inquiry, Report.....	2382
Queensland Health Payroll System Commission of Inquiry, Report	2384
Queensland Health, Payroll System.....	2385
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Queensland Health, Minutes of QH Reform Consultative Group, dated 9 March 2010.	2385
Royalties for the Regions	2385
Red-Tape Reduction	2386
COMMITTEES	2386
Membership.....	2386
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE	2387
Report	2387
<i>Tabled paper.</i> Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 33—Subordinate legislation tabled between 20 March 2013 and 4 June 2013.	2387
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	2387
Member for Redlands.....	2387
Member for Redlands.....	2387

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 7 August 2013

Queensland Health, Payroll System	2387
Member for Redlands	2388
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 22 July 2013, to the Speaker of the Parliament, Hon. Fiona Simpson MP, from a complainant (name redacted) regarding a complaint about the member for Redlands, Mr Peter Dowling MP.	2388
Infrastructure	2388
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 9 July 2013, to the Prime Minister, Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, from Acting Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney MP, regarding bilateral agreement with Queensland for assessment of major projects.	2389
Rockhampton, Main Roads Regional Director	2389
Cost of Living	2389
Nyanda State High School	2390
Berghofer, Mr C	2391
Gold Coast Hospital	2391
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2392
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Proforma letter, dated 21 May 2013, from the Australian Taxation Office regarding economic stimulus plan—tax bonus payment.	2393
Ravenshoe, Timber Industry	2393
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2394
Premier, Overseas Travel	2394
Road Infrastructure	2395
Feral Cats; Grazing Industry	2396
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2396
Mental Health Services	2397
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2397
Kingaroy Hospital	2398
MOTION	2399
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2399
Notice of Motion, Dissent from Deputy Speaker’s Ruling	2410
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.	2410
Resolved in the affirmative.....	2410
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	2410
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)	2410
Appropriation (Parliament) Bill	2410
Committee of the Legislative Assembly	2410
Report	2410
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 13 April 2012, to the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, from the Clerk of the Parliament regarding administration of members’ salaries.	2411
Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.	2412
Schedule, as read, agreed to.	2412
Appropriation Bill	2412
Finance and Administration Committee	2412
Report	2412
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee	2420
Report	2420
SPEAKER’S STATEMENT	2431
Jones, Mr K	2431
APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL	2432
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)	2432
Appropriation Bill	2432
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee	2432
Report	2432
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee	2444
Report	2444
Education and Innovation Committee	2454
Report	2454
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article from Boom magazine titled ‘The Arts staging a comeback’.	2465
Health and Community Services Committee	2465
Report	2465
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Government response to Health and Community Services Committee 2013 Estimates Pre-hearing Question on Notice No. 6.	2467
Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee	2476
Report	2476
Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.	2485
Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.	2485
Third Reading (Cognate Debate)	2486
Long Title (Cognate Debate)	2486
ADJOURNMENT	2486
Children’s Hospital	2486
Bruce Highway; Disability Services	2486
BrisBricks Pine Rivers Lego Expo	2487
Queensland Health, Payroll System	2488

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 7 August 2013

National Tree Day.....	2489
Australian Chamber Music Festival	2489
Broadwater Electorate, Shorebirds.....	2490
Youth Justice	2490
Algester Electorate	2491
Murrumba Electorate; Member for Redcliffe; Mikelsons, Mr A and Mrs M	2491
ATTENDANCE	2492


WEDNESDAY, 7 AUGUST 2013

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

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

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House by a Member

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (2.01 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege. As the Speaker you have urged moderation and restraint in the House. Last evening, in a speech beginning at 6.15 pm, the member for South Brisbane made a number of statements that ranged from offensive to factually incorrect. These included the claim that the Newman government has sacked teachers. This government has not sacked any teachers.

The member asserted that in estimates I acknowledged her efforts in scuttling the merger of Brisbane State High School and Coorparoo Secondary College. I did nothing of the sort. My exact words were that the member had sought to 'whip up fear'.

In another statement which I find offensive, particularly on behalf of my female colleagues, the member asserted 'I would advise every woman in Queensland not to join the LNP.' Successful, hardworking women like yourself, Madam Speaker, have contributed and will continue to contribute to our party and our state. I will be writing to you about these matters.

PETITIONS

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

Crime Penalty

Mr Kempton, from 15 petitioners, requesting the House to legislate to give magistrates the power to impose consequences and punishments to reflect the seriousness of crimes and that victims of crime are compensated for loss of property [\[3170\]](#).

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

Fitzroy River, Mine Water Release

Ms Trad, from 391 petitioners, requesting the House to launch an independent assessment of mine water releases into the Fitzroy River [\[3171\]](#).

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

Tattoos Register

338 petitioners, requesting the House to not pass any laws creating a mandatory government register of the tattooed or of those who receive a tattoo [\[3172\]](#).

Petitions received.

NUTTALL, MR GR


The CLERK: I advise that on 12 May 2011, the Legislative Assembly of the 53rd Parliament found Mr Gordon Nuttall guilty of 41 instances of contempt and ordered that Mr Nuttall be fined \$2,000 on each count—a total of \$82,000.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Ethics Committee, I advise that I have received from the Public Trustee, acting on behalf of Mr Nuttall, a sum of \$15,000 as a further pro rata payout from the proceeds of Mr Nuttall's assets. This means that, to date, \$31,000 of the \$82,000 fine has been paid.

The Public Trustee has advised that Mr Nuttall's Sandgate property was to be auctioned on 16 February 2013; however, the property was affected by flooding that occurred during the Australia Day weekend. Repairs to the property have now been completed and the property will be auctioned. Once settlement of the property has been effected, the balance of the debt owing to the parliament will be paid in full.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Jolly, Mr NB


 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.04 pm): Since the last time the House met, it was with great sadness that we learned of the death of one of Brisbane's most fervent supporters: Mr Norman Brisbane Jolly. Norman had as strong a connection as anyone could to Queensland's capital city. He was the youngest surviving son of Brisbane's first Lord Mayor and a bit of an iconic heroic figure to me: William Alfred Jolly. Having been born in 1926 during his father's term as Lord Mayor of Greater Brisbane, Norman was given the middle name Brisbane.

Following in his parents' footsteps Norm was a great lover of people and his community. He was always one to get involved and never ceased to be an enthusiastic advocate of his home town. Rotary, Lions, Apex, Probus, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and various school P&C committees were just some of the community groups that Norm was actively involved in, often as either president or secretary. Norm had a strong work ethic and was renowned for self-discipline. He worked his way up from the mail room of what was then Vacuum Oil to become the Queensland marketing manager for Mobil Oil Australia.

I note that in a eulogy for his father, Norm's son Warren told of how his father thought himself fortunate to have experienced a life of simple pursuits safely enjoyed.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the government to place on record our thanks for the years of service that Norman Brisbane Jolly gave to the Brisbane community. On behalf of the government, I extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Jolly's family and friends.


Police Resources

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.05 pm): This government is serious about making sure our police are properly resourced so that they can catch criminals and get them off of the streets. We have a commitment to increase front-line police by 1,300 officers over four years by recruiting 1,100 additional police and putting 200 desk officers back on the beat. The Queensland government is well on its way to delivering on that commitment. In 2012-13 we delivered an additional 300 police above the rate of attrition caused by retiring officers. In 2013-14 the Queensland Police Service will grow by a further 267 police officers above attrition. This is the state's largest police recruitment drive in more than a decade and is a major part of the government's plan to revitalise front-line services. New police are going out on the beat and back into the communities that need them most. The government has allocated \$358.3 million over four years to this initiative, with \$63 million allocated for 2013-14.

Today I went to the Gold Coast with my colleague, the police minister Jack Dempsey, to launch a new police helicopter. This helicopter is a part of the ongoing contract between the Queensland Police Service and Surf Life Saving Queensland to provide police helicopter support in the region. The Gold Coast helicopter has already carried out more than 2,200 'taskings' and also headed to Bundaberg to help during the January floods. The new chopper's operational flights start from today to deliver functions such as searches for criminals and missing persons, drug crop identification and major event and traffic management.

The state government is committed to reducing crime across the state and we will meet our commitment to provide a second police helicopter for South-East Queensland in the 2014-15 financial year. This new 'copper chopper' *PolAir 1* is another key part of the state government's commitment to ensuring our police have the right resources to fight crime—all part of this government's plan for making Queensland a great state with great opportunity.

Queensland Health Payroll Commission of Inquiry, Report

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (2.08 pm): Queenslanders have every right to be shocked and disgusted by the grubby dealings revealed by Mr Richard Chesterman's report into the Health payroll system that I tabled yesterday.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Listen to the opposition! They do not want to hear it. Sweep it under the carpet. Let's reinvent it. Let's reinvent ourselves. We are not the Labor Party of old. We have got new politics, a new way and a new three-word slogan.

Along with the people of Queensland, I am angry about what we have learned of the culture in the former Labor government in regards to IBM and what it has cost this case. This is a case that highlights the need for high principles in our corporations and in our Public Service. There were two parties to the failed contract that impacted on more than 80,000 Queenslanders and their families directly—and the entire state through the cost of \$1.2 billion to fix this mess—and they are the former Labor government and IBM. The report found that in handling the contract the Labor government was timid; one key director general, Mal Grierson, was found to be naïve; another, Michael Reid, paid no more than lip-service to his burden of responsibility. For its part it appears that IBM took the state of Queensland for a ride.

I repeat what I said yesterday. The inquiry found—

The replacement of the QH payroll system must take a place in the front rank of failures in public administration in this country. It may be the worst.

As a result of the Labor-IBM payroll deal and the findings of this commission of inquiry, I am announcing today that the state government will not be entering into any new contracts with IBM until such time as IBM can demonstrate that its governance and contracting practices have been strengthened to deal with past misconduct and prevent future misconduct. I will expect IBM to deal with employees who have been adversely named in the commission of inquiry report, no matter where they are located in the IBM world. In addition—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: Again I hear opposition members objecting. What basis could there be for objecting or interjecting right now? What basis could they have for interjecting right now? You would think they would be interested in whether these are the right actions. I assure Queenslanders: these are the right actions and they will be undertaken.

First, the CEO of the Public Service Commission will evaluate actions that may be taken in relation to public sector employees who are adversely named. The commission will ensure the approach to discipline is consistent and that natural justice principles apply. Second, Crown Law will provide advice on what actions can and should be taken in relation to former public servants. Third, I will ask the CEO of the Public Service Commission to review the Public Service code of conduct and provide recommendations for its amendment. Fourth, the Integrity Commissioner will review the absence of a probity adviser or a conflicts register on the payroll project and make recommendations for future contracts. Fifth, unions active in the state public sector will each receive copies of the report, together with a request for information about the oversight of representatives, including those on the Queensland Health payroll consultative committee, who failed to act to protect rank-and-file members impacted by the payroll system collapse. Six, at the next session of parliament the state government will publish what actions it is taking in relation to each of the recommendations contained in the report.

These are actions that Queenslanders expect and deserve and actions that would never have occurred under Labor. For months last year the Leader of the Opposition covered up the true extent of this disaster and denied Queenslanders information about this shameful episode. I ask again, as I did yesterday: what possible benefit did Labor hope to achieve for Queensland by delaying public access to the truth? Once again I ask the Leader of the Opposition to speak up—to apologise on behalf of the former Labor government for the wasteful, indulgent and hands-free culture that saw so many hardworking Queensland nurses, doctors and auxiliary workers suffer. They were not paid, they were overpaid and they were underpaid.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The Leader of the Opposition by her actions and by her interjections right now again demonstrates contempt and a failure to understand the problems they created.

As I look across the chamber I see in the opposition three people who were ministers and part of this Health payroll debacle that let so many Queenslanders down. Why were they and the unions not interested in what is now the biggest failure of public administration in this country? I remind the House that we cannot even locate the contact with lobbyists registers or access the diaries of former Labor ministers, without paying huge sums of money in RTI fees, to determine whether any Labor ministers had contact with IBM or other parties involved in this debacle. In contrast, my government will never back away from ministerial responsibility. I say to all Queenslanders today: we will deal with the Health payroll debacle and we will take action to ensure this sort of thing is never again allowed to happen in Queensland.

Queensland Health Payroll System Commission of Inquiry, Report



Hon. IB WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (2.14 pm): I also wish to address the House on the Queensland Health Payroll System Commission of Inquiry report, which was tabled by the Premier yesterday. This 261-page document is damning. Those opposite might be interested to read the introduction at point 2.15 on page 12 of the document. The Premier has already referred to it today, but it is the essence of this report. It states—

The replacement of the QH payroll system must take a place in the front rank of failures in public administration in this country. It may be the worst.

Members should just let those words sink in, because they are extremely important and are the nub of what this inquiry found. I am sure it is a sentiment that many Queensland taxpayers who have borne the brunt of this would agree with.

This debacle is expected to cost the state \$1.2 billion. That is money that could have been spent on front-line services such as roads, the health system or the Police Service. This Labor legacy is an embarrassment and should never have occurred. I am working hard to make sure a similar debacle never happens again. As the IT minister I am overseeing the Newman government's—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Minister, I will ask you to pause. I warn members on my left. I appreciate when there are interjections on the basis of being provoked with personal or other reflections that issues can start to get heated, and I ask members across the chamber to please moderate their language. The member with the call does not deserve the interjections and it is time the House paid attention. I call the Minister for Science, IT, Innovation and the Arts.

Mr WALKER: As the IT minister I am overseeing the Newman government's ICT transformation, in particular the way the government invests in ICT and manages ICT investment. In response to the commission of inquiry and following on from the ICT strategy, I will set out a clear ICT accountability framework. This framework will be elaborated on in the ICT action plan, which I will release publicly later this month. It will set out the roles and responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders.

From a whole-of-government perspective I will lead the ICT transformation. Ministers, however, will be responsible for agency-specific investments, because they are best placed to understand their own business priorities and objectives. Advice will be provided by an informed directors-general council, which will provide another gate-checking mechanism against significant ICT investments. I will also have oversight of all significant and at-risk ICT projects. If Labor had had this kind of foresight, we may not be discussing the Queensland Health payroll today.

Recommendation 2 of the commission of inquiry states—

Before the initiation by the Queensland Government of major ICT projects, specific attention be given to what lessons may be learned from this Project for the particular project under consideration.


To ensure we learn from the mistakes of the past, I will ask all ministers to ensure that a single project director is appointed to oversee the day-to-day operations of all significant ICT investments reporting directly to the project sponsor—a senior executive officer with a clear understanding of the agency's business priorities. This will provide a clear line of oversight for each significant investment. This is directly in line with recommendation 3 of the commission of inquiry.

I want clear lines of transparency established. Each department director-general will be accountable to the relevant minister. As we now know, this was a significant failing of the Health payroll project. There was no single officer responsible for day-to-day decision making, with reporting often convoluted and inconsistent.

Our IT dashboard will also assist us to be open and accountable. All major investments will be tracked online for anyone to see. That means that part B of a project cannot progress until the successful completion of part A. This reflects a shift in the way the Newman government manages significant investments. Unlike those opposite, we will not be afraid to halt a project that is presenting significant risks that cannot be reasonably resolved.

Would it not have made sense to postpone the build of the Health payroll after \$100,000 or even \$1 million had been spent rather than to have continued heading down a doomed path? We are working hard to ensure Queensland taxpayers get the best service for the best possible price. I look forward to updating the House on the Newman government's ICT reform agenda in the near future.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (2.19 pm): Yesterday in a ministerial statement I recounted the final weeks before the catastrophic implementation of Labor's failed Health payroll system on 14 March 2010. As the Premier has said, there were two partners in the payroll deal—the Labor Party and IBM. Both are rightly condemned by the findings of the commission of inquiry tabled in this parliament yesterday. But each had hangers-on. IBM had Lochlan Bloomfield—a man found to have lied in evidence who was granted \$67,000 in rewards on top of his IBM salary for his performance that year. On the other side, Labor was followed by union representatives too busy with meetings to stand up for the most basic rights of union members—the right to be paid and paid correctly. Yesterday I reported a committee of five Health department managers and six union representatives was following the failed project and met to congratulate themselves just a month before the ill-fated go-live date. I was wrong. In fact, at least two committees involving the Labor government's bureaucrats and union delegates were following progress on this doomed project. Today I table minutes of the Queensland Health Reform Consultative Group—a committee entirely separate from the one I discussed yesterday.

Tabled paper: Queensland Health, Minutes of QH Reform Consultative Group, dated 9 March 2010 [[3162](#)].


This was chaired by Adrian Shea, one of two former public servants to be sacked because of their part in the Health payroll project. This meeting was just five days before go-live and in attendance were Mark Doherty of the Queensland Nurses Union, Don Brown of the LHMWU, Kevin Place of the Australian Services Union and Peter Eldon of the AWU. I quote their minuted account of the report on the project by an insider, Mr Tony Price. It states—

He advised there are still a number of defects, but was confident even with workarounds, the process would go live ...

This list of union officials appointed to represent health workers—not the Labor Party—now have some explaining to do. They can join Pat Martin and John Connor of the QPSU; Kevin Place, Peter Robertson and Tanya Strachotta of the Australian Services Union; and Margie Dale of the Federated Clerks Union who were the union members of the agency consultative committee present at the meeting I mentioned yesterday.

There were two sides to the payroll deal—IBM and Labor. Now, because of the steps of the Premier and what he has decisively done today, IBM will need to report on its efforts to change its corporate culture. I challenge the Leader of the Labor Party to do the same. For months last year the Leader of the Opposition covered up the true extent of this disaster and denied Queenslanders basic evidence about this shameful episode. Once again, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to speak up. Has the wasteful, indulgent and hands-free culture been drummed out of the Labor Party; or would a vote for Labor bring back the same waste, the same deals and the same sloth in the future?

Royalties for the Regions


 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (2.23 pm): Round 2 of Royalties for the Regions opened on 15 July and regional councils have until Friday week—16 August—to submit their initial expressions of interest. Informed by the experiences of round 1, the pilot round of the program, there have been some changes and improvements this year. The most significant is the expansion of the eligibility to include all councils in regional Queensland outside of the south-east. I want to inform the House that there has already been a great deal of interest and I expect we will receive a large number of applications. There is a huge unmet need for critical community infrastructure for road improvements and road mitigation projects in regional centres and country towns right across Queensland.

The applications for funding received through round 1 could not have provided a clearer demonstration of that unmet need. Councils submitted 71 applications in round 1 seeking funding for almost \$260 million worth of projects. But, because of the financial circumstances left to us by the former incompetent Labor government, we could only make \$60 million available and with that fund just 18 of those 71 applications. They included road upgrades, new water and sewage plants and a new medical centre in Dysart. However, we could have built new medical centres and indeed new hospitals in dozens of communities across this state had the previous government had the competence to prevent the Health payroll fiasco from occurring.

The Royalties for the Regions program could have made good use of that \$1.2 billion that was wasted by Labor's bungling of the Health payroll. We could have been able to fund not just a string of new hospitals across regional Queensland but we could have been able to fund projects like water

and waste management improvements. We could have been able to fund numerous road and bridge upgrades—all of which are badly needed. Councils are also seeking funding support for libraries, for museums and for recreation centres—the sorts of amenities that nurture and add liveability to all towns big and small. But the people of regional Queensland have been deprived of those amenities—deprived of the \$1.2 billion worth of investment—because of the shameful failure of governance of the Bligh Labor government. Its failures mean that once again we will continue to be restrained in the amounts of money we can allocate to the Royalties for the Regions program. The former Labor government's mismanagement will continue to constrain our efforts as Royalties for the Regions works to reinvest in the regions of Queensland. But in those regional centres and country towns, we badly need the \$1.2 billion that Labor wasted in the Health payroll debacle.

Red-Tape Reduction

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.26 pm): In the lead-up to the 2012 election campaign, the Newman government made a commitment to reduce red tape by 20 per cent, knowing that for too long Queensland businesses had been burdened by Labor governments with excessive and overly bureaucratic regulation. If I recall correctly, the number was something like 90,000 pages of red tape.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is 92,000; I thank the Minister for Small Business for informing me of it. A CCIQ survey released earlier this week revealed 72 per cent of Queensland business owners believed red-tape compliance has a moderate to major impact on their businesses. This is simply not good enough. That is why we are creating an environment that makes it easier—not harder—for the entrepreneurs of our state to conduct business. Shortly after coming to government we set up the Office of Best Practice Regulation within the Queensland Competition Authority—a favourite of the Attorney-General's—to advise on regulatory issues and provide a rigorous and transparent approach to making and reviewing regulation—another favourite of the Attorney-General's.

Last Monday as part of Queensland Small Business Week, the Newman government outlined its response to the OBPR's final report on measuring and reducing the burden of red tape. The response clearly sets out the government's agenda, not only for reviewing and removing unnecessary red tape but the considerations that go into the introduction of new regulation. Of the 50 recommendations made by the OBPR in the report, the government has chosen to support either in part or in full all but one recommendation. A reduction target for each portfolio will now be included in the key performance indicators of directors-general. The government also supports the recommendation that the OBPR publishes an annual report on the government's progress in reducing the regulatory burden. This is important because it gives the Queensland community a chance to track our progress and see if we are as good as our word. Perhaps most importantly the government has accepted the recommendation that the overall regulatory objectives should be to achieve a net public benefit.

Contrast this to Labor's approach to red tape. During the 2007 election, Kevin Rudd promised that for every new regulation an old regulation would be removed. In six years, the federal Labor government has introduced 21,000 new regulations on Australian businesses and communities. In return, it has abolished just 1,000. We are setting the example. We are doing it across all areas—vegetation management, small business and also approvals for environmentally relevant activities. But there is much more work to be done. We are determined to strike the right balance to ensure that Queensland businesses and communities have the right opportunity to make things work. I conclude by thanking the member for Nanango, the Assistant Minister for Finance, Administration and Regulatory Reform, all my colleagues and the departments in their efforts to achieve what will, I am sure, be a great result for a great state with great opportunity.

COMMITTEES

Membership

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (2.28 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

- (1) That the member for Redlands, Mr Dowling, be discharged from the Ethics Committee and the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee and the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, be appointed to the Ethics Committee as chairperson and as a member of the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee;

- (2) That the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, be discharged from the Finance and Administration Committee and the member for Capalaba, Mr Davies, be appointed to the committee as chairperson; and
- (3) That the member for Capalaba, Mr Davies, be discharged from the Health and Community Services Committee and the member for Beaudesert, Mr Krause, be appointed to the committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report


Madam SPEAKER: I call the member for Ipswich.

Mr BERRY (Ipswich—LNP) (2.30 pm): Madam Speaker, thank you for that duly noted recognition. I lay upon the table of the House report No. 33 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, *Subordinate legislation tabled between 20 March 2013 and 4 June 2013*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 33—Subordinate legislation tabled between 20 March 2013 and 4 June 2013 [[3169](#)].

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Member for Redlands

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (2.30 pm): My question is to the Premier. On election night the Premier said, 'I pledge to you that we will conduct ourselves with humility, grace and dignity.' Will the Premier outline how the conduct of the member for Redlands, the latest in a long line of LNP members to bring shame and embarrassment on the government, is consistent with that pledge?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for her question and I say this: firstly, yesterday in this House we saw the member for Redlands stand up and deliver a statement and an apology. Subsequently, I stood up and delivered my own statement and I have indicated to the House that the matter is now being investigated by the Clerk of the Parliament. I will not be commenting further until the matter has been investigated.

Member for Redlands

Ms PALASZCZUK: My next question is to the Premier. In relation to the more than 20 staff members in the Premier's office, will the Premier explain how many of them were aware of the complaints about the member for Redlands' lewd behaviour along with LNP bosses and the Speaker's office when he was made aware only at 5.30 pm the day before yesterday?

Madam SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to rephrase the question and put it again with respect to the portfolio responsibilities of the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier. In relation to the more than 20 staff members in the Premier's office, will the Premier explain how many of them were aware of the complaints about the member for Redlands, considering he said to the parliament yesterday that he only became aware of the complaints about the member for Redlands at 5.30 pm?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question and, again, I reiterate that I have told the House that this matter is now being investigated by the Clerk. Indeed, yesterday I was asked essentially the same question and again I say—

Ms Palaszczuk: It is about your office now—your office.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr NEWMAN: I told the House yesterday that I heard sometime after 5.30 pm on Monday afternoon and that is the first time that any member of my staff heard about it as well.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Miss BARTON: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the report of the commission of inquiry into the Queensland Health payroll system and I ask: will the government take any action against IBM?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the honourable member for her question, because the commission of inquiry has uncovered some serious misconduct by IBM's employees. I announced earlier that the state government will not be entering into any new contracts with IBM until such time as IBM can demonstrate that its governance and contracting practices have been strengthened to deal with past misconduct and to prevent future misconduct. The inquiry found that Mr Lochlan Bloomfield, who led the bid, acted in breach of his employer's business conduct guidelines, misused a competitor's confidential information and endeavoured to gain unauthorised and unlawful access to its competitors' information. The inquiry also found that Mr Bloomfield was not honest in his testimony to the commission.

Joseph Sullivan, with Lochlan Bloomfield's knowledge, sought access to Accenture's and Logica's request for proposal responses on CorpTech's systems. The inquiry also found that IBM employee Mr William Doak acknowledged few material deficiencies in the system after go-live. In the face of so much evidence to the contrary, this did him no credit. Then Mr Nickolas Kwiatkowski said there existed 'unexpected performance issues' following the first pay run. What an insult to nurses and doctors.

Sadly, it seems to be very clear that some of these people are still working for IBM. Not only are they working for IBM, but IBM does not seem to know where some of these staff are. I am particularly appalled that IBM informed the commission that one of the key people in the report no longer worked for IBM in Australia. However, the commission staff located Joseph Sullivan in London where, lo and behold, he works for IBM United Kingdom.

I do not want people of this character working on government projects in this state. I do not want companies that have this sort of culture doing work for the people of this state. I am going to require all tenderers—not just IBM—to demonstrate rigorous governance in contracting systems. The behaviour exhibited by IBM on the payroll project will not be tolerated by my government.

Again, I call on the opposition leader to do the right thing by all Queenslanders and release the contact with lobbyists registers and diaries of former Labor ministers to determine once and for all who had contact with IBM or other parties involved in this debacle.

Member for Redlands

Mr MULHERIN: My question is to the Premier. I note that the Premier is the appropriate minister for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Services under the Financial Accountability Act. I also note reports and an official letter of complaint about the member for Redlands, particularly allegations that he abused domestic and international travel entitlements to take sightseeing tours when he was on taxpayer funded parliamentary duty. I ask: will the Premier investigate the travel of all members of his backbench? I table the letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 July 2013, to the Speaker of the Parliament, Hon. Fiona Simpson MP, from a complainant (name redacted) regarding a complaint about the member for Redlands, Mr Peter Dowling MP [\[3163\]](#).

Mr NEWMAN: I have answered the question in relation to the member for Redlands. Because the member for Mackay is obviously hard of hearing, I will say it again. The Clerk is investigating the member for Redlands. If the member for Mackay has some suggestion that any member of this House has done the wrong thing at any time, then let the honourable member come forward and put it on the table. By the way, I hope that he would be fair enough to similarly have the same view about the actions of his current colleagues or, indeed, former colleagues because, frankly, there is an old saying which is—that he who is without sin throw the first stone.

Infrastructure

Mr CHOAT: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Can the Deputy Premier inform the House of the priority Kevin Rudd places on major projects and infrastructure development necessary for Queensland's economic growth?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. I sit here every day waiting for questions about the important projects that are a part of Queensland's future.

Mr Springborg: You almost had one yesterday.

Mr SEENEY: Yesterday I almost thought I had one. Almost. I went that close. You have no idea how excited I got. Today I want to inform the House that I have written to the Prime Minister. In fact, I wrote to the new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd very soon after he returned to the office. He being a

Queenslander I thought he would share my passion for the development of these major projects that we all know are important for jobs in Queensland—jobs for the next generation of Queenslanders. But like Labor here in Queensland so it is for Labor at a Commonwealth level. Kevin Rudd is just as big a no-hoper as the people who sat on these benches for so many years because he has demonstrated that he is not interested in the big projects. Almost a month ago I wrote to him about this issue. I wrote to him about the COAG agreement that is so important; about the bilateral assessments process that the former Prime Minister recognised as being important, but then caved in to the Greens that held her government to ransom. I thought Kevin Rudd might understand the importance of that. I thought he might understand the importance of the list of projects that I listed for him that were important to the Queensland economy. But almost a month has gone past and I have had no reply—no reply, no interest. I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 9 July 2013, to the Prime Minister, Hon. Kevin Rudd MP, from Acting Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Hon. Jeff Seeney MP, regarding bilateral agreement with Queensland for assessment of major projects [\[3164\]](#).

Even though I have made it public before, I table it again today for the benefit of the members of the House and especially for the benefit of the Labor members of the House who might like to pick up the phone to their incompetent Prime Minister and suggest that Queensland is important. Tell Kevin Rudd that Queensland is important. Tell Kevin Rudd that the future of Queensland's economy is important to us, important to our children, important for the generations of Queenslanders who will need a job. But do not hold high hopes, honourable members. Remember always that Kevin Rudd is the person most responsible for the fact that Brisbane does not have a second runway at its major airport. Remember that Kevin Rudd is the person who spent his own money trying to stop that essential piece of infrastructure being built. That is the reason that so many people go round and round in circles waiting to land at the Brisbane airport. That is Kevin Rudd's legacy. Kevin Rudd has not changed. Kevin Rudd will not change. Kevin Rudd will always be a no-hoper and a dud. That is the message that all Queenslanders understand because Queenslanders know Kevin Rudd's legacy. They know that in this campaign that is about three-word slogans, the one they have to remember is that Rudd's a dud—always been a dud, always will be a dud. Rudd's a dud.

(Time expired)

Rockhampton, Main Roads Regional Director

Mr BYRNE: My question is to the Premier. I remind the Premier of his testimony at estimates on 16 July 2013 in relation to the selection of the new regional director of Main Roads in Rockhampton when he said, 'I have had no conversations with anyone ... about the appointment of anybody other than Mr Caltabiano within that department.' Given today's report in the *Morning Bulletin* that the member for Gregory spoke to the Premier about this matter, will the Premier advise whether he misled the House last month or is the member for Gregory confused?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the member for Rockhampton. I know the member for Rockhampton often has great difficulties with the interpretation and comprehension of the English language, but he actually read out my testimony, as I recall it, quite accurately and the key words are 'within the department'. I say again today that I have had no conversations with anyone within the department about the appointment of a regional director of Main Roads in Rockhampton.

In relation to conversations that have been reported in the media about members, they were making representations which I wanted to have nothing to do with because I was not going to interfere with anything going on within the department. I hope the member for Rockhampton can now get it.

Cost of Living

Mr HOLSWICH: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Can the Treasurer update the House on the cost pressures facing Queensland businesses and families and if he is aware of any new challenges.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for his question, another member from this side of the House—although he is over on that side—who does actually pay attention to what is occurring in the economy and is keen to know about what, of course, is one of the big issues being debated at a federal level. I am aware very much of the cost-of-living pressures being faced by families in Queensland and throughout Australia. In fact, we were so aware of it that the first bill that was introduced into the House by the Newman government was the cost-of-living reduction bill.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I hear an interjection from the shadow Treasurer there, the promulgator of the mythbusters fact sheet who proudly said, 'No, we have done everything we can. We have increased car registration. We have made it more expensive to buy a house'. There were cost-of-living pressures and they were all being delivered by the Labor Party because we know debt and deficit are in their DNA. We took steps in Queensland to do what we could do to reduce it. Our coalition colleagues at the federal level are doing the same thing, having announced today a one and a half per cent cut in the company tax rate to help small businesses, companies throughout Australia, rise to the challenge. They have also agreed to get rid of the minerals resource rent tax, the tax that collects nothing except pain. They will do what they can do to fix it up.

But what is a challenge to business and families in Australia and in Queensland at the moment? The biggest challenge to families in Queensland is the Australian Labor Party and the 43 new taxes they have introduced since taking office in 2007. They started back in 2008 with the alcopops tax. Since the beginning of this year alone, while the Henry tax review has been left to gather dust in the offices of the Treasurer, Labor has introduced 16 new taxes. Only the Labor Party could introduce a tax that barely raises any revenue and spends the money before any of it actually comes in. We have heard that story before. It was the story of the former Labor government in this state that spent money on Mines to Minds before they even had the revenue. Of course, they had the super profits tax. There are \$14 billion of unfunded promises on the back of tax receipts from the MRRT that will not be there. We have also got the carbon tax introduced by a Prime Minister who said, 'There will be no carbon tax under a government I lead'. The carbon tax is adding to the cost burden. And last month Labor also announced plans for four new taxes on families and businesses: a \$5.3 billion increase in tobacco excise; a \$733 million levy on Australian banks—effectively taxing the savings of everyday Australians; a \$533 million increase to visa application charges; a raid on Australian's superannuation and a \$1.8 billion hit on the car industry in Australia. Taxes, fees and charges are Labor's specialty.

Nyanda State High School

Mr JUDGE: My question without notice is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment about considerations relevant to the proposed closure of Nyanda State High School. Can the minister outline all due diligence measures taken over the past five years by the department to intervene in the unacceptable decline in enrolments at this \$27 million state asset or have very overt and contributing factors simply been ignored?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. The member has raised a very, very serious issue about school utilisation in his electorate particularly and it is something that the government has not shied away from and that is our utilisation rate of 77 per cent. He is speaking specifically about Nyanda State High School in his electorate. It is important for us to consider that Labor closed on average seven schools per year over the last 20 years—139 schools altogether. We are not making these decisions lightly. The honourable member has at least entered into the consultation process in the way that he should have, in the way that members are expected to as part of representing their communities: speaking about growth, speaking about perception and the changes that could be enhanced at Nyanda as part of his submission. As opposed to what we saw from those opposite about the proposed merger of Coorparoo State Secondary College and Brisbane State High: whipping up fear from the member for South Brisbane. But at least the honourable member has put in a submission, as have many people in his electorate and as have many people in the other areas where we are considering these matters.

Importantly, we will and we do look at all the historical issues when it comes to utilisation and, importantly, we are going to make sure that we look at all the submissions. The submissions closed only last week. We had more than 650 submissions in the case of the proposed merger. We are going to take into consideration all of those submissions, because it is such a serious matter. We are going to compile the information from the stakeholder meetings. We are making sure that the issues that are raised, either in the written reports or at the community meetings, are considered before a decision is made. I point out to the honourable member and others that no decisions have been made regarding those schools. The decisions are expected to be made in the near future. Importantly, these closures are not about making money. We have said that any funds will be reinvested to improve school infrastructure. Of course, that ties in with the fact that, as we have heard yesterday and today, the actions and the inactions of the government of those opposite have cost this state \$1.2 billion. That money would enable us to build 30 new high schools. It would enable us to employ 12,000 more teachers. Those are the sorts of costs that as a government we have had to bear.

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I note that the member for Bundamba is questioning whether those issues about costs have affected this government and have meant that we have had to make other tough decisions, but of course they have. The consequences of the decisions in that portfolio have cost us \$1.2 billion and that has affected us all on the front bench and in the Newman government and has meant that we will have to make the decisions that we will come to over the next few weeks and months.

Berghofer, Mr C

Mr MOLHOEK: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the human and financial cost of the IBM-Labor Health payroll debacle. I ask: in contrast to the culture of waste and mismanagement that beset Queensland Health under Labor, can the minister advise if any great Queenslanders are coming forward to help build our health expertise through their own extraordinary generosity?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Southport for his question. As he alluded to, the previous Labor government oversaw a system that all but destroyed the healthcare system in this state through its negligence and neglect. There is no better example of that than the \$1.25 billion payroll debacle, which has had an ongoing effect with regards to the delivery of healthcare in Queensland and was directly attributable to 1,500 Queensland Health staff losing their positions in the previous financial year.

In contrast to the mismanagement of the Labor Party in Queensland, which is absolutely endemic and now on the record for everyone to see, a great Queenslander is making an extraordinary contribution through his own generosity and philanthropy. I am sure that everyone in Queensland is aware of the generosity of Clive Berghofer. He is very well known and respected, not only within Toowoomba but also throughout the Darling Downs and right across the Queensland community. Indeed, just after I was elected in 1989 I was very pleased and very privileged to sit in this place as a member of parliament with Clive Berghofer. The previous Labor government, through envy, changed the laws in the state so that Clive Berghofer was not able to serve as a mayor and the local member of parliament, which he was very capable of doing. He is a self-made man. He left school at the age of 13. He has indicated that he had difficulties in reading and writing because of dyslexia, but he was able to go beyond that, to apply himself and to build a very successful business.

A number of years ago Clive Berghofer made an initial contribution of \$10 million to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. We now have probably the most generous act of philanthropy from an Australian that we can find. Today he has made a contribution of \$50.1 million to the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, which will be renamed in his honour. That is an amazing contribution and it is going to reinforce the valuable work being undertaken by that research institute, which only recently was recognised as the most outstanding of its kind in Australia. That institute is at the cutting edge of researching such things as morning sickness, cancer, infectious diseases and mental health disorders. Only recently, it signed a collaborative arrangement with another three partners for the delivery of what will be a state-of-the-art cutting-edge imaging research facility in the southern hemisphere.

Today, I am very pleased and proud to announce that in this year's state budget the Newman government has increased its contribution to QIMR, now known as QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute, by 34 per cent to \$19 million.

Gold Coast Hospital

Dr DOUGLAS: I give my regards to Mr Berghofer, too. The minister spoke very well. My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the health minister please inform the House on what date the Health department received the report from Gold Coast Hospital CEO Ron Calvert regarding the 23 cases from the medical assessment unit for investigation?

Mr SPRINGBORG: As I indicated to the honourable member yesterday in the parliament, the Newman government takes any of these matters very seriously, but in order for something to be properly investigated we need to have evidence. Yesterday in this parliament I reported on, and I want to reinforce, the facts of the matter. If we look at the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, waits for crucial cancer diagnostic investigations have plummeted from over two years to six months in recent months; eight out of 10 patients are now seen and treated within four hours of arrival, compared to five out of 10 in 2010; 90 per cent of patients now have their elective surgery within the

timeframes recommended by their doctors; and there has been a statistically significant improvement in the quality of care as measured by the hospital standardised mortality rate. No-one can question those very fundamental facts.

As I said yesterday, the honourable member raised some issues recently in the parliamentary estimates process about concerns that have allegedly been raised at the Gold Coast Hospital by a number of clinicians. I invited the honourable member and others to come forward with that particular information and evidence. I understand that subsequent to that invitation, some days later, information was made available to Queensland Health. I can find the information for the honourable member and get back to him. However, clearly a lot of the matters that have been raised had been previously investigated and nothing remarkable had been found internally. Notwithstanding that, the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, to ensure its own integrity and the confidence of its own citizens as well—

Dr DOUGLAS: I rise to a point of order. The minister has not attempted to answer my question.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! What is your point of order?

Dr DOUGLAS: I asked the minister on what date the health department received the report—

Madam SPEAKER: Member, take your seat. The minister has time on the clock to answer the question.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Madam Speaker, I am not sure what happens in the parallel universe of the united party of Clive, but to the best of my recollection a few minutes ago I indicated to the honourable member that, sometime subsequent to the matter being raised at the parliamentary estimates committee, information came into the department with a request that we use our reserve powers to appoint a reviewer. I also indicated to the honourable member—and I say, 'Earth to the honourable member for Gaven'—that I would be more than happy to find the information and come back to him with specifics. Again, I remind the honourable member that there have been extraordinary performance increases at the Gold Coast Hospital in recent times, as well as right across the health service. The other thing that needs to be corrected today is that any assertion that has been made—

Dr DOUGLAS: I rise to a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER: I remind the honourable member that frivolous points of order are not allowed under the standing orders. What is your point of order?

Dr DOUGLAS: I presume the minister is saying that he will take the date on notice?

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. The minister has the call and I will take no more points of order from the member for Gaven.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Third time lucky: that is precisely what I was saying to the honourable member for Gaven, that I will come back to him with regard to that. As for the assertion that someone has been sacked, that is not true. There has been a managerial restructure and the person does not have the medical position; they have their substantive position as the director of neurosurgery.

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr BENNETT: My question without notice is to the Premier. How will the \$1.2 billion cost of the Queensland Health payroll system be met? Is the Premier aware of any other cases where taxpayers' money has been wasted?

Mr NEWMAN: The unfortunate but simple answer to the first part of the member's question is that Queenslanders end up paying—men, women and children—through the taxes and charges that have ultimately flowed through to government. Queenslanders end up paying the \$1.2 billion cost of this Health payroll debacle caused by the Australia Labor Party members, many of whom are still in this place.

Moving to the second part of the question, I am sad to further confirm that Labor's waste does not stop at \$1.2 billion—not even close. There is the black hole of \$3 billion plus that was spent on a water grid with pipelines to nowhere, an unused water recycling plant and a desalination plant that rusted from—guess what?—salt water. Some \$450 million was spent on a dam that would never hold water. There was also the failed clean coal scheme—ZeroGen—which cost more than \$100 million. Almost \$140 million went on new drivers' licences which Labor said would not cost the state any

additional money. There were Labor's \$20,000 worth of garden gnomes and \$750,000 worth of backpacks which are still sitting in a warehouse. There is the \$700,000 egg sculpture out on an offshoot of a 50 kilometre walking track.

It is not just Beattie and Bligh Labor governments that are good at wasting money it is also Kevin Rudd. That is right; he started in 2007 with \$40 billion in the bank and now federal Labor has a staggering \$254 billion of taxpayer debt and a budget blowing out by \$3 billion a week. Kevin Rudd will blow \$65 million on pre-election advertising. He threw away money building very expensive school halls and ran an insulation scheme that cost more than \$3 billion and sadly three young Australian their lives. He does not have the ticker to sit down with their families and face them eye to eye.

But yesterday put the icing on the Labor waste cake when a businessperson from the Burnett electorate provided an ATO document—I will table it—which shows the federal Labor government is still pushing out \$900 flat screen TV payments.

Tabled paper. Proforma letter, dated 21 May 2013, from the Australian Taxation Office regarding economic stimulus plan—tax bonus payment [3165].

That is right; on 21 May 2013 they tried to send a cheque to a backpacker for a program that they instigated four years ago. They are still sending out \$900 cheques. I table the actual cheque.

Mr Bleijie: Rudd's back.

Mr NEWMAN: This is extraordinary. Too right Kevin Rudd is back! He is back and he is the same. He is, as the Deputy Premier said, a dud. Kevin Rudd is a total dud. He has not changed. He cannot govern this country because he has no idea about what proper administration is about. They called him 'Dr Death' for a reason; he did not care about the people he sacked back then. He is sacking people now. He does not have the integrity to admit it. I advise Queenslanders to send Rudd right out the door.

Ravenshoe, Timber Industry

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Acting Minister for Energy and Water Supply. Minister, the town of Ravenshoe lost its thriving timber industry—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member, I am going to ask you to start your question again. There is too much noise in the chamber while the member is asking his question. I call the member for Dalrymple.

Mr KNUTH: The town of Ravenshoe lost its thriving timber industry and Tully Millstream hydroelectric scheme for political reasons. Bearing this in mind, will the minister commit to retaining the Ravenshoe Ergon Energy depot that is currently under review for closure despite looking after more than 350,000 kilometres of electricity line?

Mr CRIPPS: I thank the member for the question. The matter of Ergon Energy depots across the state is one for Ergon Energy. The government, in its consideration of the energy assets that we have in Queensland, has made very clear its policy in relation to that matter. That policy in relation to the distribution and retail assets that the government currently owns is that we have no plans whatsoever to divest ourselves of those assets. In relation to energy generation assets, the commitment that the government has given is that we will give consideration as to whether or not we will divest ourselves of those businesses, but we will make it very clear to the people of Queensland prior to the next election and give them the opportunity to provide us with that advice about whether or not we should divest ourselves of those assets through the result of the election.

I can assure the member for Dalrymple that the delivery of effective electricity services and the network throughout the great state of Queensland is one issue that has been exercising the minds of this government since we came into office. I would have to say in terms of the issues surrounding electricity that it has been the matter which has exercised the minds of the cabinet the most since we came into office such was the mess that was left to us by the previous Labor administration of this state. There is absolutely no doubt that the effectiveness, efficiency and costs associated with the delivery of electricity in Queensland have been compromised by decades of incompetent management by the previous government.

Associated with that has been the policies of the federal Labor government which has driven up the cost of delivery of those services not only to regional and rural Queensland but also to all communities across the state, including the carbon tax and, of course, the renewable energy targets that have been set by the federal government. But not to be outdone, the previous Labor government

in this state embarked on its own ridiculous and loopy, left-leaning policies such as the solar bonus scheme which are driving up relentlessly the costs of delivering those energy infrastructure assets and supply to all communities across the state, including regional and rural communities.

I can assure the member for Dalrymple that, in terms of the serious issue that he raised, services to regional and rural Queensland are at the front of our minds in terms of the future delivery of the energy network and services to communities across the state.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr COSTIGAN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. I refer to the Labor-IBM Health payroll debacle that Commissioner Chesterman found, it has a place—

... in the front rank of failures in public administration in this country. It may be the worst.

Given the Labor-IBM deal will suck an estimated \$1.2 billion out of the Health budget, is the minister aware of what that money could have been spent on if it had not been for the waste, squander and maladministration of the former Labor government?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Whitsunday for not only his question but also his very concise analysis of the impact of the Health payroll debacle in Queensland which continues to have a catastrophic effect, as many ministers have outlined here today. We have seen recently in Commissioner Chesterman's report a blow by blow description of how this catastrophe and all of the cover-ups have actually moved on to the situation where now the Labor members opposite are in complete denial that there is a problem and there is a problem that we need to be concerned about. It is as though \$1.253 billion will just fall out of the sky like confetti—modern-day political cargo cults; look towards the sky and it fall down upon you. It will be made somewhere and it will fall down upon you. That is their view.

I have some information here for the honourable member about what \$1.25 billion would roughly buy in Queensland Health terms. It would buy 53,860 knee replacements, 54,660 hip replacements, 28,080 cochlear implants—and we need them. It was very interesting when the budget was voted on in this place that the Labor Party in this parliament actually voted against our plans and our investment in completely clearing the cochlear implant waiting list. It would purchase 398,000 tonsillectomy, 182,000 appendectomies and 298,000 normal births. If we want to convert it into nurse terms we would have been able to employ roughly 13,000 nurses.

Let us look at the legacy we have with regard to this maladministration. We now have the Labor Party opposite not prepared to take any responsibility. It was always someone else's fault. It was not their fault. We had hands-free ministers, hand-picked directors-general too scared and too terrified to take on big business.

Let us look at Mr Grierson, one of the people apparently at the cutting edge of negotiating with IBM and protecting the state interest. The Labor government in Queensland actually let Mr Grierson off the hook. Some 68 weeks ahead of his contract expiring on 2 July 2011 they actually let him go. They terminated his contract with a great, big, fat, golden handshake—\$763,856.07. Mr Grierson let IBM off the hook, but the Labor Party let Mr Grierson off the hook and gave him a great, big, fat, golden handshake as they opened the door and let him off so that he could not be accountable for his actions.

Premier, Overseas Travel

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's report on his trip to Papua New Guinea. Bearing in mind the importance of the Premier to the success of the Liberal National Party's federal election campaign, does the Premier have any plans to leave the state again before Saturday, 7 September?

Mr NEWMAN: No. I do not intend to leave the state and go overseas before 7 September. I am a bit mystified. I think I have answered the question, but I might just talk about PNG anyway and make some observations. Where to start? I believe it is in Queenslanders' interest for us to have a strong, stable, healthy PNG. That is why this government is prepared to assist the Papua New Guinea government and their Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill, with the provision of front-line police as long as appropriate legal protections are provided for our hardworking police men and women. We know that it will be very challenging if in fact it should occur. Indeed, the Minister for Police has been with the commissioner recently negotiating with the PNG government as to how that should happen.

We are also happy to help with health services. As we were saying a few weeks ago, there are many people who come across the strait from Western Province in PNG to be treated within the Queensland health system. It is currently costing Queensland taxpayers \$10 million a year. That is \$10 million a year that we do not get back from the Commonwealth government, from the feds, for what is really a federal government issue. So we are prepared to help with the building of a new hospital at Daru in Western Province.

Before I conclude I just want to make the point—and I thank the honourable member for the question because it is an important point—and once again reflect on Kevin Rudd's ability and capability as Prime Minister, because under his plan he has put a whole lot of people in PNG who do not want to be in PNG—and no offence to PNG but they do not want to go there; they want to go to Australia. What he is seriously expecting people to believe and stomach—and it is extraordinary—is that, once the thousands of boat people, asylum seekers, who want to come to Australia have been processed in PNG and given asylum, they are going to stay in PNG. Well, no, they will not. What they are going to do is come down through Western Province, across the strait to Horn Island. We do not ask for passports there. We are going to simply see people move into the Qantas system and end up in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne—where they want to be.

The trouble with Kevin Rudd is that he does not know what he is doing. He never thinks things through because he is always on to the next activity, the next photo op, the next Twitter. This is a guy who thinks we all want to know about him cutting himself shaving or something. I cut myself shaving this morning—stiff bickies! You did not catch me tweeting it because I am thinking about taking Queensland forward, not self-aggrandisement, not self-promotion, not doing bizarre activities the like of which we have never seen a Prime Minister in this nation's history perform.

Road Infrastructure

Mrs MADDERN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Minister, how many kilometres of road infrastructure would \$1.2 billion, the equivalent of Labor's Health payroll bungle, deliver?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the honourable member for the question. Let us be very clear: there was a lot of waste in my department under Labor. We have talked about the 58,000 backpacks that were left in storage. Do you remember those backpacks? Do you remember the electric points they put in to use for the electric cars? They actually never got the electric cars. Do you remember the redundancies—the \$96 million paid out in redundancies—and at the end there were 100 more people in the department than when they started? That is the legacy of the Leader of the Opposition. So it was all of those things.

But I have to concede the Minister for Health's good work in exposing this. What has happened in TMR, even under the incompetence of the now Leader of the Opposition when she was transport minister, pales into insignificance compared to that maladministration—the worst fiscal failure, the worst government blunder, probably in this nation's history. That is what has been uncovered. I must congratulate the health minister on uncovering that, despite the fact that Labor was determined that nothing would be found and nothing would occur. The reality is that we have uncovered that.

But I will get back to the question: what could we do in my department with \$1.2 billion? As I go through this list, please remember what could happen in your own communities with this money. There is the Gateway upgrade north—almost the entire project could be paid for. So for those in Brisbane, that money would pay for that. How much could go towards the Toowoomba second range crossing? In terms of the Bruce Highway, a considerable amount of the six-laning of the Bruce Highway on the Sunshine Coast could be done with that amount of money. We can go all the way up the Bruce Highway. Imagine all that work that could be done on that vital network for this state. Member for Cook, David Kempton, imagine how much of the Peninsula Development Road could have been paid for with that \$1.2 billion. For those using public transport, with \$1.2 billion you could have free public transport for three years—three years of free public transport with that amount of money. That is what you would get with the waste of money from Labor.

I call on the Leader of the Opposition once again to release the diaries. Release your lobbyist registers. Let us know who met IBM. Do it. Just reveal it. Stop trying to hide it. You have been hiding it from day 1. This is the worst—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members. I call the minister.

Mr EMERSON: Again I say to the Leader of the Opposition: release the diaries, release the lobbyist registers. Let's find out who in the ALP met with IBM as part of this. Who met with IBM? Why won't you tell us? What are you hiding?

Feral Cats; Grazing Industry

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Will the minister provide funding to western councils with large feral cat numbers to facilitate a bounty to help eradicate this pest and also provide income relief to cash strapped people in remote areas impacted by poor conditions in the northern cattle-grazing industry?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for his question but would suggest that he needs to check again the portfolio responsibilities of the Newman government. The responsibilities around feral pets—pests—I will not comment but he is probably also responsible for feral pets—are those of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, my good colleague Dr John McVeigh, and I do know that he is taking this matter very seriously. I do know that he recently convened a summit in Toowoomba where the matter of feral pests was raised in significant details.

I made sure that my department was well represented there, because there are impacts on the broader environment. There is no question about that. I equally know that the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing is also taking a very active interest in this and recently had a cat cull, for want of a better word, in many of our national parks—something that the previous government just buried their head in the sand about and refused to do anything about. But the minister is taking this very seriously and is rolling out a range of programs to make sure that these feral animals, particularly cats, are being addressed in our protected area estate around Queensland.

The member is right. This is an issue. It does need to be dealt with. A number of ways that it is being dealt with in particular in my department is through the Everyone's Environment grants. We have made no bones about the fact that that money is available to community groups to get out there and fix up their own backyards. I do know that in a number of instances, including in the member's own electorate, that money has gone to catchment care groups and NRM groups and landcare groups to ensure that they are tackling things particularly like weeds. The minister is making sure that his graziers and landholders are getting the best economic benefit they can by addressing those feral pests and weeds, and I am sure that will continue.

I know that Minister Dickson is looking at new avenues. Most importantly, I would encourage the member to direct his questions in future to the correct minister. I am sure Minister McVeigh would be pleased to elaborate on the activities of his department and the activities of his officers in regional Queensland who are working with councils to ensure that we address what is not only a scourge on the environment but also a scourge on agricultural production throughout the state.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr GRANT: My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Will the minister inform the House of how the actions of the Bligh government have impacted on Queensland students?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. We have had significant discussion today about what \$1.2 billion will buy in individual portfolios. When the Premier mentioned a few minutes ago the Rudd government and \$900 cheques still being given out, it reminds me that nine million Australians, as I recall the statistics, were given \$900 back then—\$8.1 billion. At the time people said, 'We know this is too good to be true. The government can't just give money away.' And guess what? They can't because someone has to pay for it and it is the taxpayers of Australia. In the case of the Bligh government they did not even give the money out. It ended up costing over 4½ million Queenslanders over \$250 each. \$1.2 billion divided by the number of Queenslanders in the state at this time has cost each and every man, woman and child in Queensland over \$250. They did not even get the benefit of the \$900 cheque that led to at least some spending in our economy, let alone the fact that it had to be paid back.

I have already mentioned this afternoon exactly what \$1.2 billion can buy in my Department of Education, Training and Employment. It can buy 30 high schools at \$40 million each. We are wrestling with the fact that we need more schools. We have 12,000 teachers. I know the honourable health minister mentioned up to 13,000 nurses. We have had to find the money to fix the maintenance backlog in schools. As honourable members are very aware, we have provided funding of up to \$300 million for this year and the next couple of years to fix the maintenance backlog that we were left with. They are the issues we are dealing with which those opposite just do not seem to understand.

Kevin Rudd likes to proclaim himself the education Prime Minister. Let us look at what he has been doing in education—cutting over \$1.15 billion out of kindergartens from the end of next year and total cuts to universities of \$3.8 billion. Just last Friday he cut \$241 million out of the forward estimates for apprenticeships and traineeships. We know we have skills shortages. He proclaims that he can fix them but he then cuts \$241 million from traineeship and apprenticeship incentives for employers to put on more people. That is this Prime Minister. That is the record of those opposite. No wonder the *Daily Telegraph* says, 'It's time to kick this mob out.'

Mental Health Services

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister advise which service providers in Queensland are currently capable of delivering integrated treatment and education to young people with severe mental ill health apart from the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Wacol?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for Mulgrave for his question. Mental health is of enormous concern in our community not only in adults but also in young people. As the honourable member would be well aware, we contribute about \$1 billion to support people who have mental illness in Queensland. Unfortunately, it is an area of not only rising concern but also rising need in this state.

The honourable member would also be very much aware that in his own area there are people who are routinely required to seek the assistance of the Barrett centre located within the confines of The Park because it is the only facility at the moment which is capable of providing that. There is significant dislocation for families who have to take their young family member to access those particular services and sometimes for a long period of time.

When I became the Minister for Health I was not impressed by the decision of the previous government to close the Barrett centre and simply to seek to replace it with a centre at Redlands. I put that on hold pending further advice and consideration of the matter involving the Queensland Mental Health Commissioner. It makes sense that we take a service like this and expand it across the state so it can be provided closer to where the young person lives. The reality is that we do have a growing demand. There has been the establishment of a clinical expert committee that involves psychiatrists and psychologists from within Queensland and interstate, residents of the Barrett centre and parents of residents of the Barrett centre. We take our advice from them. Anyone in Queensland who can say today that we have properly and adequately met the needs of young people with complex mental health needs by the utilisation of the current system is absolutely ignoring the fact that it is falling short of what we need.

That expert panel is working towards a final decision on the model of care for the early part of 2014 and the transition of those young people into that particular model of care which may involve in-patient, complex treatment and support from the department of education for the educational needs of those young people with complex mental health needs. I can assure this House that none of those young clients currently there will be left in the lurch. They will be properly accommodated and looked after, and there will be additional capacity for others—

(Time expired)

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr HOBBS: I have a question for the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister outline the types of projects that could have been funded from Labor's \$1.2 billion Health payroll mismanagement?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I thank the honourable member for the question. I will outline some of the things that could have been done with that \$1.2 billion, but if only that were the only waste that had occurred in this state. The Premier did such a great job before of outlining some of the other projects—dams without pipelines, pipelines without dams and a litany of failures in the health department. It is a cause of great embarrassment to me that we speak about this today. We have visiting us in the gallery today the Victorian planning minister, the Hon. Matthew Guy. It is great to have him here today. It is a shame that he has to sit through us outlining such a disgraceful legacy in Australian political history that is this payroll bungle.

What could \$1.2 billion have bought? It could have funded every single application we had through the betterment fund—every single application. Members would know that we asked for a \$200 million fund to be funded jointly between us and the Commonwealth. We only got \$80 million. We had over a billion dollars worth of applications for that fund. This waste could have funded everything. So the next time there was a disaster on our doorstep we could have been in a much better position. Rather than continually replacing the same things like for like, time and time again, we could have been in such a much better position.

We might have only \$80 million, but it is my intention with that money to show those opposite and to show their colleagues in Canberra what a good government does when it puts its mind to delivering a proper project rather than a rushed job that we have seen from Canberra. This fund was just one of many things that disaster-hit communities wanted to see. At the moment applications are coming across my desk for disaster mitigation seeking many tens of millions of dollars from communities that have been hit time and time again. Applications come from places like Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Gympie, Roma, St George, Emerald and even little communities like Wyandra and Eulo in the Paroo shire. They have a thirst for doing things better, and this government will support them. But imagine what we could have done with another \$1.2 billion.

I ask the opposition leader to do the right thing by Queenslanders. I ask her to release the contacts with lobbyists and the diaries of former ministers to determine once and for all who had contact with IBM. Put it on the table so we can see once and for all what they are hiding. But \$1.2 billion—

Opposition members interjected.

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

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I warn you under 253A. I was speaking. I call the minister.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Standing in our way is not just that legacy but also a dud federal government in Canberra—a dud federal government that will not approve mining projects, that will not pay us back the \$725 million that we are owed and that will not properly fund betterment projects. In a few weeks time—

(Time expired)

Kingaroy Hospital

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Minister for Health. We have been informed that the Kingaroy Hospital was without snake antivenene for some time. Are Queensland hospitals adequately equipped with snakebite antivenene?

Madam SPEAKER: Minister for Health, one minute.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is routine for hospitals to have an appropriate inventory of antivenene and also other types of medicines that can assist them to deal with emergency situations. I would expect that that would be the case not only in Kingaroy but also around Queensland. Similar concerns have been raised with me over the years in relation to snake antivenene in particular. Sometimes it may be popular given the nature of the snakebite and the fact that it may require additional vials of a particular type of antivenene. A hospital may not necessarily have everything that it needs, but often it can be shipped very quickly from somewhere else. The normal standard practice is that antivenene be readily available in our hospitals around Queensland now—

(Time expired)

MOTION

Queensland Health, Payroll System

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Manager of Government Business) (3.31 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House:

1. notes the statement of the Leader of the Opposition in this House on 29 November 2012 that 'openness and accountability in government decision making is of paramount importance';
2. notes that the former government's ministerial diaries and contact with lobbyist registers may be integral to establishing full and transparent accountability for the Health payroll debacle which has cost Queenslanders \$1.2 billion; and
3. calls on the Leader of the Opposition to do the right thing by all Queenslanders and release the contact with lobbyist registers and diaries of former Labor ministers to determine once and for all who had contact with IBM or other parties involved in this debacle.



Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (3.32 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion that was moved by the honourable Leader of Government Business. What we saw was a Labor Party that had been in power for such a long period—all bar a couple of the previous 20 years. During that time it lost touch with reality and with regard to the basic standards of accountability. As its members now find themselves in opposition following the people of Queensland so resoundingly passing judgement on them over 12 months ago, they still do not understand the most basic aspects of openness, transparency and probity. In order to fix a problem, you need to first recognise that there is a problem. Indeed, the former Labor government, which sits in opposition today, has been in complete denial since the commissioner Richard Chesterman brought down his inquiry report, which was tabled in this parliament yesterday. What we have seen is a remarkable transition from the initial cover-up by the former Bligh government in Queensland to the current complete and absolute denial by honourable members opposite, a complete lack of requirement and a complete lack of desire to atone for their actions and assist us in obtaining the last semblance of information that we need to finally address this issue in Queensland.

Today we have seen the Premier being most decisive in taking action within one day of that report being tabled in parliament, outlining a clear pathway with regard to addressing the inappropriate activities of Queensland government employees who may still be in the system, who may have been linked in some way to the payroll catastrophe—a \$1.25 billion disaster, the likes of which we may never have seen before in government administration in Australia and, hopefully God, we will never ever see again in the future. We have already outlined a clear road map to address that and also, with regard to IBM, to possibly take action against those who formerly worked for the government in senior bureaucratic positions. I outlined in this place this morning what the Labor government did regarding Mr Grierson. Sixty-eight weeks ahead of the final date of his contract, the former government let Mr Grierson walk out the door. He could have been employed by the Newman government until October 2012, almost six months after this government came to office. The Premier, as the person responsible for holding the contracts, might have been able to get Mr Grierson in and ask him what went on. But, no, there was a \$760,000 golden handshake as Robert Schwarten let Mal Grierson slip out the door and slip away into the sunset.

As a result, we have very few options open to us to uncover facts beyond what has come forward in the commission of inquiry regarding who met with whom with regard to ministers and IBM. This motion simply calls for the Leader of the Opposition to make freely available those particular diaries and lobbyists registers so it can be considered and properly understood if her former colleagues—or even the leader herself—had met with particular officials from IBM. The whole thing has certainly been a very smelly, stinking morass; there is no doubt about that. Far from accepting any of the opposition's protestations that they have been open, honest and accountable when it comes to the release of this information in parliament, let us go back to the testing under which we put the Leader of the Opposition last year in this place as the custodian of the cabinet material and the advices to the previous Labor government in Queensland. Despite the initial repudiation of the motion of the parliament by the Leader of the Opposition and her strident resistance beyond that as we sought more and more to get the Leader of the Opposition to release that information, it was only under the threat of a royal commission that that information was actually made available. There is no doubt about that. We will hear more bah humbug today from the opposition and the opposition leader about how they are open and accountable. If they are so open and accountable, they should release

their lobbyists registers and diaries. They should make them freely available with no strings attached so we can see what meetings, if any, were held with IBM officials or those other nefarious characters who may have been involved with this particular sad stain on the history of public administration in Queensland.

We know that this is a \$1.253 billion debacle. That is something which was sitting on my desk when I came in as Minister for Health. It is information that was freely available to the previous health minister and, arguably, the one prior to him but information that the Labor government chose not to release in the public interest. It was sitting there. I was absolutely astounded—in absolute disbelief—that this could be right. So I brought in KPMG to conduct a review. They verified the assessments which were actually before me as the incoming Minister for Health in Queensland. This is an extraordinary catastrophe.

We hear much about honourable members opposite. However, what about the normal operating costs of the payroll system in Queensland? This is a \$1.253 billion catastrophe and anyone who wants to know the extraordinary operating costs behind this should go no further than the KPMG report that clearly outlines that the extraordinary operating expenses for this particular system are in excess of \$800 million. It does not matter how much we look at it; if you buy a car and you have to spend three times as much on it as it should have cost in contract terms and in operating and servicing costs, you have a bomb; you have a lemon. The original cost is completely wiped away because at the end of the day you are putting sticking plaster on top of sticking plaster and bandaids on top of bandaids, and that is what is happening here.

After the contract had started its life as a \$6 million contract to build a new Health payroll system, it quickly escalated and is now heading towards \$1.253 billion. This is equivalent to paying \$200 for a Mars bar or \$7 million for a Holden Commodore. I understand with the way debates down south are progressing at the moment some people might say we already are.

It is an extraordinary mess. You can just imagine if you bought something new, and then you had to spend all of your time in the garage trying to fix it up and piece it back together. That is basically what we have here. The real issue is why did the previous Labor government accept the advice to do nothing and let IBM off the hook when it suited them, but when it did not suit them they directly contravened other advice that they were given in regard to fixing the Health payroll system? I will have more to say about that at future times in this parliament.

If this opposition is open and transparent and wants to assist us in establishing if there were any meetings with IBM that may actually help inform us, then they need to—

Ms Trad: Then let's have an inquiry!

Mr SPRINGBORG: We have done lots of that. I will take that interjection. When it comes to the performance of emergency departments in Queensland, there has been an extraordinary improvement in the last eight months. It has gone up from 64 per cent to 76 per cent. But apparently that is not governing. Maybe it just happened! It is just remarkable and by some chance it happened!

The Newman government fixed the disaster left in the wake of the fake Tahitian prince; we looked at the grants scheme in Queensland and got that working; we are balancing the budget in Queensland; we are rebuilding the hospitals which have been run down; we are addressing the lack of maintenance in this state; we are rolling out telehealth across Queensland and achieving the best results in the country for elective surgery targets; and we are doing a whole range of other things.

Unlike the members opposite, we can walk and chew gum at the same time. Unlike the members opposite, we can do a whole range of things at the same time. We are not frozen with fear like they were or intimidated by big business. We do not seek to cover up and let public servants off the hook as they did. We are not only administering and reforming government in Queensland, but we are also trying to fix things which have been major problems in the past and we are trying to get to the bottom of the causes. We can do a number of things, unlike the previous government. They did not in any way question the advice which was given to them when it suited them with regards to letting IBM off the hook, but then they ignored the other advice they received to fix the payroll. That is a fact.

As Richard Chesterman said when he was considering whether to make an assertion of improvidence and whether there was thoughtless, wasteful and spendthrift behaviour on the part of the former cabinet, he accepted that it was not his job to judge the former government's administration, but simply leave it to the people of Queensland to make their own decisions once they

had read the report. I say to the honourable members opposite through you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that when it comes to probity and due diligence, you failed. When it comes to openness and accountability, the honourable members opposite absolutely fail. We are prepared to release our diaries. We are prepared to make sure—


Ms Trad: How? How do you release them?

Mr SPRINGBORG: That information is now released, I understand, on a monthly basis. Mine certainly is. How? I suppose the simple answer to that 'How?' is you actually release them. It is similar to abandoning ambulance bypass in Queensland. When I abandoned ambulance bypass people said, 'How are you going to ban ambulance bypass?' I said, 'By banning it.' I suppose the Labor Party would have had a committee, and then they would have procrastinated and worried about it, and then they would not have done it.

A government member: And sung *Kumbayah*.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, and sung *Kumbayah* and all of those sorts of things, and we would not have ambulance bypass going on in Queensland.

The Newman LNP government does release its diaries. It is also making sure that we are accountable with regards to our dealings with lobbyists. That is information which is now readily and freely available. We simply ask the honourable members opposite, who were the custodians of the reins of government in Queensland when this catastrophe was ignited, and as it has burnt its way through the Queensland Health system, to be open and honest and accountable today and to release that information as per the motion.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (3.45 pm): I cannot let the consideration of this motion in the House this afternoon pass without making some comments to support the case that has been so extensively made by the Minister for Health. It is a case that would be self-evident to anybody who has been in this parliament and followed the political debate in Queensland at any level. The issue of the Health payroll debacle has been extensively debated in this House. It has been extensively considered in the public domain. One of the features of the whole debate has been the extent to which people have refused to take responsibility.

The former Minister for Health at the time, Paul Lucas, used to deny any responsibility at all. He used to sit over here and we would ask him questions about it, but the minister who should have been responsible would not take responsibility. He used to suggest that the former member for Rockhampton was somehow responsible. Suggesting that the former member for Rockhampton was responsible for anything to do with technology or anything complex or complicated is a bit of a stretch. Knowing the former member for Rockhampton—there seems to be something about members for Rockhampton—I would suggest that he would not really be suited for the role. But in that government when this debacle unfolded, one of the key things was that nobody would take responsibility. The minister used to stand up here, and I remember a number of days when, in answer to questions, he used to say, 'We are entitled to trust the people who work for us. We are entitled to take the advice that we are given.' Those were the sorts of expressions and comments that were made to justify—as has been rightfully pointed out—the greatest single failure in public administration anywhere. Ever. I do not think there is a comparison for this project. It started off with a projected cost of \$6 million and ended up costing \$1,200 million—and we are still counting. It is still not fixed. It is still a significant problem for the minister who inherited it. It cannot be readily and easily dismissed in the way that the current opposition in this parliament seek to dismiss it.

One of the features of the consideration of this question since the government changed has been the attitude and the comments that have come from the people who are in opposition now who were in government then. There are a number of constants, if you like, in that response from the opposition. We heard it repeated again a couple of times a few minutes ago from the member for South Brisbane, who says 'Get over it! Move on!' That is what they want to do: they want to get over it. They want to forget about it. They want to deny it. They want to pretend it never happened and that somehow or other this \$1.2 billion is something that we should forget about.

Ms TRAD: I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier is misrepresenting me. I find his comments offensive, and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask you to follow the standing orders and withdraw.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw, of course, Madam Speaker, but I suggest that, when the member for South Brisbane says in this debate across the chamber that we should get over it, that is indicative of an attitude that is inherent within the Labor Party. They want to move on. They want to forget about it. They want Queenslanders not to acknowledge it, and it is an attitude that has always been reflected in their response to this issue. It is an attitude that has also been reflected by the three people in the current opposition who should take the most responsibility and who should be doing whatever they can to cooperate with our government to try to—and if not fix the problem—at least understand why the problem happened.

They are the three people who were ministers in that government—the three people who sat in the cabinet room, who had access to the cabinet briefs, who know what happened. The Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Manager of Opposition Business were all ministers in the cabinet. They sat around the table and they know, as we know, that they would have received extensive briefings. I suspect that it was more than that. I suspect that they, like every other member of the cabinet, would have been lobbied by people such as IBM. It is fair to assume that every minister in that cabinet received some sort of briefing, some sort of lobbying or some sort of information during the process, if not when the initial contract was let then certainly when the debacle became apparent—certainly when it became obvious that the \$6 million was blowing out to \$600 million to \$1 billion.

Every minister in that government would have had access to information. They would have had access to people who would have been explaining to them what was happening and why it was happening. If they did not, the incompetence inherent in such a suggestion is barely comprehensible. The suggestion that they were ministers in a government that was presiding over that sort of administrative debacle and did not receive any briefings, did not have any meetings or did not consider these issues is not believable. It defies belief. Of course they did. The three former cabinet ministers who now sit in opposition had access to all of those briefings. They had access to all of the information that was being provided by IBM. They had access to all of the information that was being provided by the department and the various consultants who were wheeled in to try to fix the problem.

This motion is about ensuring that there is a level of cooperation from the people who sit opposite that certainly has not been evident until now, that there is a level of cooperation that is about ensuring this sort of thing never happens again. The people of Queensland cannot afford such a thing a second time. What this motion is asking for would be the basic expectation, I think, of every reasonable Queenslanders: that everyone in this parliament do whatever they can to ensure this issue is addressed and that this atrocious, enormous waste of money is never repeated.

The people who sat in that cabinet—the people who were part of that decision making, the people who had access to those companies and those public servants—need to be part of the effort this motion is calling for. It suggests that the Leader of the Opposition and her colleagues reflect with action what they talk about. Paragraph 1 of the motion before the House is something nobody in this House would disagree with. A feature of this opposition is that they come into this place and mouth these things—they talk the talk—but there is never any effort to reinforce that talk with action.


The Leader of the Opposition used words that nobody would disagree with—that openness and accountability in government decision making is of paramount importance. Of course it is. But the Leader of the Opposition never reflected that by her actions when she was in government. The government she was a part of certainly never reflected that in their actions with regard to the Health payroll debacle. They refused to take responsibility. They refused to be accountable and open in any way.

Now the Leader of the Opposition has the opportunity to do the sorts of things she has talked about and has called for. Today she has an opportunity to stand up in this parliament and give bipartisan support to a motion that is reasonable, that is sensible and that reflects what I think every Queenslanders would believe is a responsible response from us as a parliament to the debacle that has grown over a period of time but was fully quantified in the report tabled in the parliament yesterday by the Minister for Health. The report speaks of an episode that will stand in Queensland's history as a low point in public administration. It is appropriate that this parliament considers its response.

The first step in making an appropriate response is to recognise the problem and stop practising denial in the way the current opposition is practising denial—stop trying to tell everyone to get over it and move on and, rather, recognise the extent of the failure and the disaster that was

wrought upon the people of Queensland and the budget of Queensland and recognise the impacts that disaster is still having. As minister after minister outlined today, the consequences of that failure have not gone away. They wish that they had gone away, but the consequences of that failure have not gone away. They are still being reflected in the choices that every minister in the current cabinet has to make. The consequences of the disaster are reflected in the decisions that my colleague the Treasurer has had to make until now and will have to make in years to come.

We cannot just get over it. We cannot just move on. We cannot just pretend that it did not happen. Each and every one of us has to do what we can to ensure we fully understand why it happened, recognise the impact the disaster has had and ensure it never happens again. The motion before the House is one small step towards achieving that. I call upon every member in the House today to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and for which the Minister for Health has outlined the case so completely.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.56 pm): I note the motion moved by the government today. It is very interesting that for the last two days an issue has engulfed this government—an issue perhaps of their own making—relating to the member for Redlands. That matter is now under investigation by the Clerk—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. What relevance does this have to the motion?

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is very relevant, because this is, once again, a diversion by this government from the issues that have been engulfing this government over the past two days with the revelations that have been brought forward about the member for Redlands.

Mr Choat: You are a disgrace.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a diversionary tactic. We are used to diversionary tactics in this House—very used to it.

I take this opportunity to give the Minister for Health and the Deputy Premier a bit of an understanding about how an inquiry operates. Let us be very clear. When the inquiry was set up, the chair of that inquiry was entitled to access whatever documents it wanted. Everything and anything the inquiry wanted from me was granted to that inquiry—any cabinet document, any CBRC document, any briefing note. If the inquiry wanted the diaries of the former Premier, Anna Bligh, former minister Schwarten or former minister Lucas, the powers of the inquiry were at hand for them to be handed over for careful and clear examination.

I know that those opposite are new to governing in Queensland—and what a mess they have made! It has been shameful over the past 18 months. Let us make it clear for all members to understand: any document that Chesterman wanted for the inquiry was granted through me as the Leader of the Opposition.

Did he request the diaries? No. Did he request the lobbyist register? No. The inquiry has now ended. The inquiry has now ended and this government has a new scandal engulfing it and once again it thinks, 'Let's have a diversion. Let's play a diversion with trying to get some documents that Chesterman could have accessed of his own accord.' I have been told that everyone likes the expert legal advice of the Attorney-General. Everyone had the opportunity to get any advice they wanted, and they chose not to take it. We have heard from the Minister for Health going back in time and blaming Labor. Let us talk about the sacking of some 4½ thousand nurses, doctors and allied health professionals under your watch. These people are not going to be getting paid at all because they have been sacked. I have publicly acknowledged that the Health payroll was a debacle.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. I have publicly stated that on the record and I want to publicly state how much I support our nurses, our doctors and our allied health professionals. But as I travel around the state they are not talking to me about the Health payroll; they are talking to me about the actions of this government, and they are talking to me about the actions of the Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and the health minister. If you walk into any hospital in Queensland, I can tell you that they are not saying anything favourable about the Minister for Health.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: They are petrified for their jobs.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I was out at the rally last night—proud to go out there and support the union movement.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Proud to go out there!

Mr Bleijie: What an objective group, though!

Madam SPEAKER: I will remind the member I was on my feet. I know you were not paying attention, but there is too much noise in the chamber. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I was proud to go out there and support the workers of this state and I heard a health worker speak and what he told me was quite disturbing. He told me that some of the senior cardiac specialists had been sacked and that now only junior cardiac officers were in charge when people suffered a cardiac arrest. Minister for Health, do you accept that? Do you accept that these cuts are happening in our hospitals that are actually putting stress and strain on our hospitals?

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Springborg: What about the interstate Nurses Union delegates who were out there last night swelling the numbers to 400?

Madam SPEAKER: Order! I know there are questions being asked across the chamber and responses being invited, but the noise is too loud to hear the debate. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rather than this health minister engage with the unions—oh no, continue the union bashing! You want to keep belting them and belting them and belting them rather than working with them and talking about the concerns of outsourcing pathology, pharmacy and radiology in this state. Who is going to benefit, what LNP mates are going to get benefits, what are the conflicts of interest, who is attending these QForums that you are holding around the state, who is paying money—cash for access? You are going to change the laws soon so people will have to reveal less in relation to donations.

Mr Newman: Kevin Rudd is doing cash for access as we speak!

Ms PALASZCZUK: So it is right for you to just continue doing it? We also heard today—actually, it happened late last night, and what a surprise that was—that the health minister has closed the Barrett Adolescent Centre in Wacol, in my own electorate.

Mr Springborg: It hasn't closed.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is going to be phasing it out. I asked the Minister for Health to come out there. He sat down and he listened to those personal stories of those young people who had either attempted suicide or were contemplating suicide.

Mr Springborg: Wasn't your government going to close it?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No. The previous government had decided to move it to another centre.

Mr Springborg: Oh, so from your electorate to another centre?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, to another centre but keeping the model in existence.

Government members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I will ask you to take your seat. I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition did take those interjections, but the debate is starting to stray from that which is before us and is not being directed through the chair. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. So the health minister has decided to close this centre and I hope he goes out there personally and explains to those hardworking men and women—not just from the health sector but also the education sector—about why he is—

Mr Choat interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn the member for Ipswich West.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Getting back to the substantive motion before us, I have explained very clearly that the inquiry had all of the powers to ask for any of those diaries relevant to the inquiry and also any of those lobbyist registers. Did I receive a request? No, I did not. The inquiry has now ended. We have now received the results of the inquiry. The opposition is going through those recommendations, but I do note that one of the recommendations is to outsource the payroll. Once again I would suggest to the Minister for Health that he treads very carefully here, because this is going to now happen on his watch. Is the minister going to guarantee that there are going to be no issues associated with going over to a new payroll? On that issue, I have been contacted by many people who are currently working at the Health payroll and they are very concerned about their jobs. So my next question is: how many jobs are going to go from payroll?

I note that the Premier professes to run an open and accountable government and he said that he would release his ministerial diaries. How are these diaries released? These diaries are not tabled in the Queensland parliament. My diary is tabled each month in the Queensland parliament. I ask the Premier today: will you ensure that all of your ministerial diaries, like the opposition leader's diary, are tabled in the Queensland parliament? I want a guarantee from the Premier of this state that he will be as open and accountable—

Mr RICKUSS: I rise to a point of order. Under standing order 246, I feel that the leader is just quarrelling; she is not actually debating the question.

Madam SPEAKER: Would you please take your seat.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr RICKUSS: That is standing order 246.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am talking about the diaries. It says here—

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, I would ask you not to instruct the member for Lockyer on the standing orders. That is not upheld in respect of a debate here on this subject, but I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to address the motion. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I do have another question, and this is something that the opposition has been asking the health minister and his director-general, from my recollection, since not just the last estimates but the estimates before—that is, for a final breakdown of the \$1.2 billion. I want to know and Queenslanders want to know what part of that \$1.2 billion is the normal operating costs of a payroll. Have we received this information? We have been refused this information.

Mr Springborg: There is the \$800 million of extraordinary—


Ms PALASZCZUK: No. My challenge to the health minister today is to release the final detailed operating costs of the \$1.2 billion.

Mr Springborg: Go and have a look at it. If you can't read it's not my fault.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is what I am asking the health minister to do today. In conclusion, I want to make it very clear once again, just in case those opposite have not understood very clearly, why this motion is out of order. It is out of order because we have just had an inquiry for which Queenslanders have paid \$5 million.

It probably did not get the results that those opposite wanted, because we know from the very start that they wanted it to be a witch-hunt on the former Labor ministers. Yes, there were issues with the payroll. Everybody acknowledges that. If we could turn back time and do it all again, would we? Yes, we would. But the issue is now what this government is going to do to ensure that it does not happen again. If it is going to be outsourcing, how many jobs are going and how many more jobs are going to go from Queensland Health? These are very legitimate questions yet questions that the government refuses time and time again to answer.

The inquiry had all of the powers to compel any production of any document and any document that I was requested to provide I provided to that inquiry. I put it to members today that this motion is clearly out of order. The inquiry has passed and they have failed the test.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (4.10 pm): The test today is a test of the opposition leader's commitment. It is a test of her commitment to follow through on the words that she pronounced in this House in November last year, and they are—

Openness and transparency in government decision making is of paramount importance.

Today, the opposition leader and her team have the opportunity to either pass the test or fail the test. It is simply put that way. They can release their documents, they can release their diaries, they can release their lobbyists register and they can pass the test. Or they can vote against this motion and they will fail the test. The test is about their openness and accountability when they were in government—not now that they are in opposition; when they were in government. It is a test that they have failed so far.

I go back to the history of the failed introduction of the Health payroll system. It has been described a number of times as the biggest single failure of public administration in Queensland—I think my friend the Minister for Health said possibly since the Collins class submarines, another Labor failure of public administration. When the failures first started occurring, I recall what the Labor Party said. It said there was no problem. It said, 'It's all going to be fixed up. It's only a teething problem at the beginning of it.' Then when it got worse and we found that people were not being paid, were being overpaid, or did not know where their pay was, there was going to be a report. If I recall, PWC was going to do the original report. The Labor Party still was not open and accountable, because I had to write to the Auditor-General to request that the Auditor-General carry out an investigation into the botched and failed introduction of the Health payroll system.

There are a lot of questions that remain unanswered in relation to the political leadership, if you like, at the time. Those questions can be answered either in the positive or the negative by the Leader of the Opposition simply agreeing to release the documents—the diary and the register of lobbyists interests. We often hear the Leader of the Opposition come into this place and lambaste us, ask us questions and, in fact, ask questions on the basis of documents that we have already released. We release far more than they ever released in government.


So what has the opposition leader got to fear from releasing those documents? Why is she holding on to the documents that we release monthly? We put them up on the web every month. They have full access to the meetings that I hold, the meetings that the education minister has. I have even heard the Leader of the Opposition in comments on my own diaries being released saying, 'He seems to work quite hard. He's doing a good job.' Who knows? Maybe we will be able to say the same thing about the opposition leader. I do not know, but we will have a look and we will see. So it is a test that the opposition leader has so far indicated that she is not willing to put herself to. It is a test that she seems to be reluctant to undertake.

We know that a record of attendance of Labor ministers at fundraisers and other events is now not publicly available and introductions by lobbyists and others is not publicly available. We do know that they meet with them. They have a history here of an article in the *Australian Financial Review* in September titled, 'Bligh defends staff links to lobbyists group'. We have an invitation to an evening with Premier Anna Bligh to help raise funds for Murray Watt's re-election. We have the *Australian* article titled 'Rudd keeps Labor Party donor names from public'. Then we have another article titled 'Bligh deputy ordered to meet party donors'.

When it comes to being open and accountable and to releasing documents, the Labor Party says one thing and, as always, does another. In the whole litany of the disaster of the Health payroll system, there has been a failure on the part of any member of the Labor government to fully accept responsibility for what has been singularly the largest failure in public administration in Queensland's history. They continue to express their sorrow but fail to take the responsibility in the way that a responsible, open and transparent government should.

So what is it that they do not want people to know? What is it that they are afraid that people will see in releasing their diaries and their lobbyists register for those periods? That documentation would otherwise be available except it would cost taxpayers thousands and thousands of dollars to get it through right to information access. So the information is there, it can simply be released and

the questions can be laid to rest. But until the opposition leader and her team agree to provide that information, the question mark remains. What did they know? How much did they know? The failure to release the information condemns them as continuing to blindly support the previous government and its failure to admit that it got it so badly wrong when it comes to the Health payroll system.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (4.15 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the motion before the House. This is a disgraceful attempt to redirect attention away from what is obviously an inability of this government to support its federal colleagues in the current federal election campaign. We know absolutely that the call has been made by the Leader of the Opposition at the federal level to his colleagues in Queensland, 'You need to go on the attack. You're dragging my vote down. Kevin looks like he's bringing it home in Queensland and I need you to do something.'

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Members!

Ms TRAD: Quite frankly, I would not even be surprised if the Premier goes on holidays again during the federal election campaign.

Ms Palaszczuk: Where is he going to go? Maybe overseas on a trade mission?

Ms TRAD: Yes, Paris may be calling. Let us look at why the federal opposition should be so concerned about the LNP government in Queensland and why it is such a drag on its vote here. It should be concerned, because this government has been responsible for driving a slowing down in economic growth in Queensland. This government has been responsible for sacking thousands of public sector workers. This government is defunding critical—

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order. I again refer to relevance in terms of the member for South Brisbane's speech. This particular motion makes no reference to economics whatsoever. She should return to the matter of health.

Madam SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of Government Business. I ask the member for South Brisbane to address the motion.

Ms TRAD: I am talking on the matter of openness and accountability, particularly in terms of decisions made by this government. It is obvious that there is a whole range of things that happen behind closed doors by this government which would, of course, cause concern for the federal coalition opposition. Of course, the front page of yesterday's *Courier-Mail* is a stellar example of why those opposition members at the federal level should be concerned about the performance of this government. More evidence? How about the member for Nudgee and his contribution to the political debate in Queensland? Has that not been a stellar contribution! Or even the member for Mudgeeraba, whose absolute incompetence is a stellar example of what you get when you vote for the LNP. Or maybe it is the member for Moggill, who so kindly recorded so many conversations with party powerbrokers in the LNP in Queensland, basically giving such a good character assassination of his colleagues. I thank the member for Moggill for his stellar contribution in terms of describing quite aptly the abilities and the competencies and the character of his colleagues. Of course, we also have the desertion of the member for Condamine, the member for Gaven and the member for Yeerongpilly.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, I would ask you to come back to the motion before the House.

Ms TRAD: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the Leader of the Opposition said, there had been no request by the commission requesting that the opposition provide documentation as listed in this motion. The Premier said yesterday in his address regarding the payroll system commission of inquiry report that 119 summonses or requests for information had been issued. Were any issued for former ministerial diaries? No. Were any of them issued for former ministers' lobbyist registers? No. So why is this government so intent on putting this motion before the House? I think the government has put this motion before the House because it really desperately needs to keep this issue kicking along.

Rather than getting on and governing this state, rather than getting on and improving the economic conditions of Queensland, rather than looking at how to increase employment opportunities in Queensland, they are engaging in schoolyard politics—in student university politics. That is what it is. It is student university politics—nothing more, nothing less. How will this enhance what has currently happened? How will this fix what has currently happened? Absolutely nothing. Five million


dollars was spent. I sat in this place and I heard the Minister for Health insinuate that there had been a conspiracy that had led to the payroll debacle; that somehow there had been a conspiracy of the highest order and that the cabinet documents first needed to be released so that the conspiracy could be revealed. They were all released. Was there a conspiracy? No, there was not a conspiracy. Then he had to set up a commission of inquiry. He put the Hon. Justice Chesterman in charge. He, according to the Premier—and I have no reason to doubt him—performed his role expertly with regard to this. Did he find that there was any high-level collusion or corruption? No, he did not. He did not. Did he ask the member for Inala, the Leader of the Opposition, to produce the documents that the government is now seeking? No, he did not. He did not.

When it comes to being open and transparent I think members will find that the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition in general has been very accommodating of the government—incidentally accommodating of the government, particularly on this issue. The Treasurer got up and said that this is really a test of openness and transparency in government decision making and whether the opposition believes in this. Let me put the test back on the Treasurer and the members of the government. If the test of openness and accountability is for the opposition to reveal lobbyist registers of former ministers and former ministers' diaries, then I put to the Treasurer that the openness and transparency in relation to this government's massive outsourcing program, particularly in health, is for it to reveal who exactly has signed up to the QForum dinners. Who exactly is paying \$22,000 to sit next to Lawrence Springborg at the next health QForum dinner? Who is paying \$3,300 to sit next to Tim Nicholls? We know that Tim Nicholls fetches a much lower price than Lawrence Springborg. Of course we know that Ray Stevens, the honourable member for Mermaid Beach, would not even be invited to the QForum. I am not even sure that the member for Mudgeeraba ever made it to one.

This is a very important issue. This motion purports to be about openness and accountability. This purports to be all about how decisions were made. Let me put it to the government that the current decisions being made about outsourcing and privatisation of services in Queensland hospitals and across government sectors need to be addressed by this mob revealing who exactly is paying how much in a fee for service from this government through the QForum. This government needs to absolutely reveal every single person from big business who is paying big bucks to influence this government when it comes to tendering out services. Nothing less, nothing more than a complete list of who, how much, when and what for. Quite frankly, that is it. You cannot stand up with any credibility in this place and talk about openness and accountability without revealing every single big business personality that comes to the QForum dinners to sit next to each one of you individually from \$22,000 to \$3,300 and what exactly they are getting for their bucks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): I call the Manager of Government Business.

Dr Douglas: Mr Deputy Speaker?

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.25 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to close debate on the matter.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: As the mover of the motion, I am now closing the debate.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Dr DOUGLAS: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the point of order, member for Gaven?

Dr DOUGLAS: I was on my feet and the minister has now indicated that he wanted to shut the debate. I was on my feet. I am a speaker and I want to speak on the debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Gaven, the Leader of the House was on his feet. He was the next speaker and I gave him the call. The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. This today is a motion that is a very genuine attempt to bring forward a better outcome for Queensland. The motion in itself is extremely simple, extremely simple to accede to and I cannot understand the reluctance by the Leader of the Opposition not to bring forward those diaries of those particular ministers. She wondered which ones earlier in her cross call in the House would be of interest, but I am sure the health minister, the IT

minister and also the former Premier's diaries would give great leads to what diaries may be required. From our point of view I cannot tell you how many times people from Mermaid Beach say to me, 'I get sick of the carping by the Leader of the Opposition on the television about openness and accountability in government.' And that is exactly what we are trying to get here today. The Newman government has committed itself above and beyond. In fact, I am the assistant minister for openness and accountability through e-government specially created by the Premier to make sure that all our datasets and statistical information is put out there in the public forum.

Mr Costigan: A terrific initiative!

Mr STEVENS: Thank you very much, member for Whitsunday. What we get in response is negativity from the Leader of the Opposition, which is both embarrassing and hypocritical when she calls for openness and accountability in government. I cannot believe that the Leader of the Opposition can defend the greatest financial fiasco in Queensland's operational expenditure. I am also reminded of the other great financial fiasco by the same Labor government in terms of spending in excess of around \$7 billion on drought-proofing South-East Queensland with a white elephant water recycling plant down at Currumbin and a \$2.5 billion recycled water pipe that has not been used to any effect whatsoever.

The opposition is the leading expert in world's best practice for wasting money. It has a duty—and it is the right thing for it, as well—to try to help Queenslanders with any possibility of getting back money from the firms the previous government was involved with. In this case, as we all know, that happens to be IBM. Whilst we do not say that the former government corruptly gave IBM any advantage, we are saying that its Olympic-class stupidity in taking a \$6 million exercise to a \$1.2 billion debacle is absolutely unbounded in the history of this state. We are clearly asking the Leader of the Opposition to come clean on those diaries and give the diaries—

Ms PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! What is your point of order, Leader of the Opposition?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Any document that the royal commission asked for from me they have received.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order; it is a point of view.

Mr STEVENS: I will say it again: we are asking the Leader of the Opposition to come clean with the diaries of former ministers who were involved in the payroll debacle so that we can see how this horrible exercise evolved. Any refusal by the Leader of the Opposition to come clean with those diaries will show the greater public of Queensland clear guilt by lack of admission. In the eyes of the Queensland public, if she has nothing to hide there is no reason for her not to come forward with those diaries. The royal commission was after these particular matters for its own reasons. However, the smell and stench of hiding the diaries from the Queensland public means that the Queensland public can only believe that the opposition has plenty to hide. That is the sad situation even though, night after night on television, the Labor Party carps on about openness and accountability. It talks about sacking nurses and other misleading rubbish. Quite clearly, it was one K Rudd who took \$103 million out of Queensland during his de facto prime ministership while he undermined the good Julia Gillard. It was she who actually took the \$103 million out of Queensland Health. Quite clearly, as the health minister has explained on numerous occasions, that is the reason certain sections of Queensland Health are being put under pressure.

Mr WELLINGTON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! What is your point of order?

Mr WELLINGTON: I thought the Manager of Government Business had finished. When he is finished, I want to move a matter. I will wait until he has finished, out of courtesy to the speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has the call.

Mr STEVENS: As I was saying, if you take \$103 million out of the Queensland health system, QED by definition we will lose \$103 million worth of medical services. If you take \$1,200 million out of the Queensland health system, which the Labor Party in government successfully did, that will mean a lot fewer health procedures. We heard the health minister refer to this in question time. It will mean a lot of people will not be able to have health procedures done here in Queensland.

The Leader of the Opposition has admitted that this is one of the worst debacles ever in Queensland or in the health system. Quite clearly, she would like to forget about the matter. However, there is no reason for Queenslanders to forget about the matter when it is still an ongoing issue that was caused by the Labor Party. There are still difficulties with that payroll system and we are still trying to patch it up. Quite clearly, the Labor Party can assist this government to address this ongoing problem for Queenslanders. It can assist this government on behalf of the people of Queensland by making those diaries available. There is no reason for this motion not to be supported in a bipartisan fashion. The opposition could then stand up and say, 'Queenslanders, we are trying to help fix the Queensland payroll system.' I am appalled at the recalcitrance of opposition members in this House today that they will not support this motion. In closing the debate, I commend this bill to the House.

Notice of Motion, Dissent from Deputy Speaker's Ruling

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (4.36 pm): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your matter of privilege?

Mr WELLINGTON: I give notice that I will move dissent from the Deputy Speaker's ruling in relation to the closing of the debate on this matter.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the member to put the matter in writing as per the standing orders.

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

AYES, 73—Barton, Bates, Bennett, Berry, Bleijie, Boothman, Cavallucci, Choat, Costigan, Cox, Cripps, Crisafulli, Cunningham, Davies, C Davis, T Davis, Dempsey, Dickson, Dillaway, Douglas, Dowling, Elmes, Emerson, Flegg, France, Frecklington, Gibson, Grant, Grimwade, Gulley, Hart, Hathaway, Holswich, Hopper, Johnson, Judge, Kempton, King, Krause, Langbroek, Latter, Maddern, Malone, Mander, McVeigh, Millard, Minnikin, Molhoek, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Pucci, Rice, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trout, Walker, Watts, Woodforth, Young. Tellers: Kaye, Menkens

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL


APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Committee of the Legislative Assembly

Report

 **Madam SPEAKER:** The House will consider the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill first and then the Appropriation Bill. The question is—

That the report of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly be adopted.


I will take the call as Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. As chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, I will make a few comments on behalf of committee members in relation to the committee's report of its examination of the budget estimates contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill for the 2013-14 financial year.

I note that this week marks 145 years since the parliament met for the first time in this building. Much has changed since then. In 1868 Federation had not yet occurred and Queensland was a colony with two houses of parliament. However, reading the *Hansard* of that day, much is familiar to us. For instance, members shared the space with tradesmen, the *Brisbane Courier* reported on the parliament and some members thought too much was spent on the building. The words said by the Acting Governor of the day, His Excellency Maurice Charles O'Connell, are as pertinent today as they were then. He said, 'The progress of events once again demand your watchful care.'

Regardless of political affiliation, I am sure that all members in the 54th Parliament go about their business within this precinct mindful of their care of the state as they seek to represent their constituents. In this we are supported by the many excellent staff the Parliamentary Service has from

the chamber services to committee staff, finance and administration personnel, function staff and many others. The role of the non-political staff of the parliament who ensure the smooth operation and the institutional integrity of the parliament is vital to allow the Legislative Assembly to function. I speak on behalf of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and on behalf of each member of parliament when I express my sincere appreciation for the valuable assistance provided by each and every staff member.

In conclusion, I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their contributions throughout the year as we work together for the good of the parliament.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak to the report of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly regarding the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2013. From the outset, I will state on the record that the opposition supports the recommendation of the committee that the expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2013 be agreed to. But there were several matters that were raised in the committee hearing that I wish to draw to the attention of the House.

Firstly, the committee proceedings dealt with one of the most controversial decisions of the Newman government since the 2012 state election—that is, the issue of pay rises for state politicians. On page 5 of the report it is noted that one of the matters raised during the hearing was ‘the payment of allowances to members of parliament’. As we all know, this dot point relates to the LNP government’s decision to give themselves a 41.9 per cent pay rise. But what did this mean for those on the Treasury benches?

I certainly note that the Deputy Premier is in the chamber. I note that during the committee hearing he was out of the box very fast trying to defend what he had done. What it means is a pay rise of \$57,000 for all members of parliament. But what the government failed to disclose was the flow-on effects of the pay rise. Fortunately, the Labor opposition was able to reveal to the public the full extent of the greedy pay grab by the Newman LNP government. The obscene 41.9 per cent pay rise means an annual increase of more than \$90,000 for cabinet ministers and a \$100,000 annual increase for the Deputy Premier. But the truly staggering figure is reserved for the Premier, who is in the chamber this afternoon. He stands to collect \$118,000 more a year, making his salary virtually equal to that of the President of the United States.

Mr STEVENS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr STEVENS: The member for Bundamba is anticipating debate on the bill to be debated tomorrow.

Mrs MILLER: No, I am not.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I would ask you to be careful and address the report and not anticipate debate on the specifics of the bill being debated tomorrow.

Mrs MILLER: Absolutely. For the benefit of the Leader of the House, I have actually taken advice in relation to this very matter. He can be well assured that I will not be going anywhere near the bill.

During the debate the Deputy Premier tried to hose down the issue—straight off; first out of the blocks—that has attracted widespread condemnation from all quarters. But his testimony to the committee was at best less than sincere. In fact he said—

This issue had its genesis on Friday, 28 June, when I received crown law advice regarding the payment of salaries to parliamentarians.

But of course that is not true. We know, as a result of documents released under RTI, that the government had known about this for some time. In fact, the Clerk of the Parliament wrote to the Premier on 13 April 2012, just three weeks after the LNP came to power, to alert him to the issue. I table a copy of that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 April 2012, to the Premier, Hon. Campbell Newman, from the Clerk of the Parliament regarding administration of members’ salaries [\[3166\]](#).

It was also provided to the Deputy Premier by the Clerk at the time. So the Deputy Premier is glossing over the real facts in his explanation. The letter proves one of two options: either the Deputy Premier knew that the 41.9 per cent pay rise was going to apply to all other salaries, so his subsequent explanations at the committee meeting were an attempt to deceive the people of

Queensland, or he did not properly read or understand the briefing material provided to him by the Clerk and/or the Director-General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which indicates that he is incompetent. But either way the Deputy Premier undoubtedly is not up to the job.

I would now like to go to a few other issues of importance to this particular committee. The member for Rockhampton drew to the committee's attention the government's failure to liaise with the CLA before releasing the list of witnesses who could be directly questioned at this year's estimates. Given that this list involves an amendment to schedule 7 of the standing orders, it should have been referred to the CLA before finalisation. That way the CLA could have considered a request from the member for Mulgrave and the Finance and Administration Committee for the CEO of the Queensland Treasury Corporation to be included in the schedule.

The opposition believes that the QTC CEO should be subject to direct scrutiny by the committee. However, the Manager of Government Business made the announcement in this chamber without any reference to the CLA. The opposition wants to place on record its dissatisfaction with this process and also provide early warning—that is warning from today—that next year the schedule should be referred to the CLA before it is announced in this House.

Another area of concern for the opposition was the government's use of parliamentary resources to coordinate travel arrangements for the Queensland Plan. It is very clear that they do not understand the doctrine of the separation of powers. In conclusion, I would like to thank the Speaker, the Clerk and other officers of parliament for their efforts.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.


Appropriation Bill

Finance and Administration Committee

Report

Madam SPEAKER: The question is—

That the report of the Finance and Administration Committee be adopted.

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak to the 2013 Appropriation Bill as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee and wish at this point to thank Michael Crandon, the member for Coomera, for his leadership of the committee. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee since the last appropriation debate for their contribution and the staff who assist our committee including Deborah Jeffrey. I note that the member for Coomera has accepted a role on the Ethics Committee, and I look forward to working with the member for Capalaba as the new chairman of the Finance and Administration Committee.

I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, and senior government officials for their time and for answering our questions so thoroughly. Budget estimates are an interesting process. One would expect an old accountant to say that. I also note that Queensland is a great place. Where else can a kid who went to primary school in bare feet and who, during his provincial high school years, had the privilege of watching cane fires light up night skies find himself in the Queensland parliament sitting opposite the Premier and Treasurer asking people in those key positions the important questions for this great state? Our great state has a unicameral parliament. Hence, the importance of the committee structure and the work that is done to review and scrutinise not only legislation but also appropriation processes.

I represent a good place—Murrumba—where I see my role in aiding it on its journey to a great place. It is an exciting place, with the announcement of Thiess as the successful tenderer for the Moreton Bay Rail Link, with construction commencing on the Costco site, with Australia's largest Bunnings under construction at North Lakes, with a new school announced for Griffin, with a new bus interchange for Deception Bay, with cycle lanes on Anzac Avenue—just to mention a few.

This speech will now directly address the estimates hearing of the committee and will now examine the Appropriation Bill 2013 including the areas administered by the Premier and the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. I thank the Premier for responding to my question about the Bruce

Highway Action Plan and look forward to the implementation of the blueprint for a safer, more reliable and flood-immune Bruce Highway, which is titled *Out of the crisis*, including the plans for \$6 billion in projects and upgrades.


I also thank the Premier for answering my question on education—a field that is dear to my family, with my wife being a secondary teacher. I look forward to the implementation of the Great Teachers = Great Results policy and fully support this policy initiative. For Murrumba, I note with interest the announcement of 10 new schools, which includes a new school for Griffin, and for funding to assist the 26 schools commencing the Independent Public Schools initiative, one of which is Mango Hill State School.

Moving on to my questions of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, I thank the Treasurer who explained how reducing wasteful government spending and government debt reduces the burden on taxpayers in the present and in the future. Of note was his statement that a Queensland teenager leaving high school in 2005 and commencing adult life then—only eight years ago—would have done so with a state debt burden of a modest \$3,900 and that now, however, a student leaving school at the end of 2016 will commence his or her adult life with a state debt legacy of \$16,000.

Mr Rickuss: Four times.

Mr GULLEY: Four times—I take the interjection. I thank the Treasurer for outlining the Treasury and Trade portfolio achievements for 2012-13. I also thank the Treasurer for outlining how establishing Trade and Investment Queensland as a statutory authority will bring stability and certainty to the organisation and how this compares to the organisation's treatment under the previous government of having seven ministers in 10 years and being an organisation that was left to run its core relationship system from an Excel spreadsheet.

Queensland is a great state. Murrumba is a great place. Madam Speaker, thank you for your grace and dignity in how you conduct your role.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (4.57 pm): In this year's estimates hearings we saw just how out of depth and disconnected from reality the Treasurer and the Premier really are. It is frightening that the Treasurer was unaware that jobs growth was the weakest it has been in more than two decades under the first full financial year of this LNP government. Queensland Treasury's own website shows employment growth in Queensland is the weakest in percentage terms since 1990-91, when the Australian economy was last in recession.

So arrogant is this Treasurer that when asked about Queenslanders losing their jobs he tried to talk about Paul Keating and the early 1990s—such is this Treasurer's lack of regard for the reality we live in today, for substance or for facts. When I questioned the Treasurer about why there are 13,700 fewer full-time jobs seasonally adjusted in Queensland than when the LNP were elected, he harped on with rhetoric about 'ongoing volatility in monthly figures'. Well, Treasurer, on the trend measure there are 14,500 fewer full-time jobs in this state, with the trend unemployment rate consistently higher each month since this government was elected.

The Treasurer tried to insist that an economy growing at three per cent—a full percentage point slower than the rate the LNP inherited from Labor—is an improvement and that unemployment, now at 6.4 per cent, was somehow an improvement on an unemployment rate of 5.5 per cent. I know the Treasurer has said previously that maths was not his strong point, but I struggle to believe that he cannot comprehend these figures.

The Treasurer did confirm some understanding of figures in the budget papers. Despite previously describing an increase in tax per person of \$257 as 'complete and utter rubbish', the Treasurer conceded that these figures were from his own budget papers—just like the increase in net debt of \$7.58 billion since the LNP were elected. The Treasurer also conceded that key debt ratios such as the net financial liabilities to revenue ratio and the debt to revenue ratio were peaking higher under his government than projected under the previous Labor government.

It was concerning that in the estimates hearing the Treasurer disregarded concerns about his acceptance of hospitality from Echo Entertainment, although he did say it was a fair question. I agree. The Treasurer continues to be involved in meetings as a key decision maker on whether Echo will be granted a new casino arrangement in Queensland. He sees the acceptance of free holidays from parties he is negotiating with as part and parcel of this government's way of doing business. Unsurprisingly, the Treasurer still refuses to detail whether the sale of seven office buildings and the


move to 1 William Street stacks up financially. When questioned, the Treasurer did not even seem to be aware of the key financial indicators used by his agency Projects Queensland such as net present value.

The Treasurer revealed at the hearing that his claimed \$60 million saving was in fact a dubious back-of-the-envelope calculation. The lease costs on the seven office buildings sold have been revealed in a right to information request to exceed the sale proceeds by more than half a billion dollars over the next decade. It is disappointing that the Treasurer refuses to provide answers about the move to 1 William St, which has significant long-term financial implications for Queensland taxpayers. The Treasurer has still not released the book value of the seven office buildings sold without an election mandate despite them being referred to in documents released under right to information. It can only be assumed from this government's secrecy that Queensland taxpayers have received a very bad deal from the sale of these buildings.

At the hearing the Under Treasurer also revealed that no modelling was undertaken on the impact in disaster affected areas of the LNP's \$990 million insurance duty hike. This indicates that the LNP's tax grabs were thought up at the last minute to plug a revenue shortfall of this government's own making. When the economy is strong, growth is strong and revenue is strong. That is quite simple. This government has done everything it can to bring the state down and flatline the economy. This government and its Treasurer clearly believe they can get away with such arrogant and shoddy policy and decision making because they are protected by their huge majority. They do not think Queenslanders have a right to know projected LNG royalties or the book value of assets. No matter how much spin and obfuscation the government comes up with, Queenslanders know what is happening.

Unlike the Treasurer, I live in the real world where people are doing it tough and are struggling to make ends meet, many because they cannot get employment or because they have had their hours significantly reduced. They know that the jobs market is the worst it has been in many, many years and they know the Premier's vision for his own office tower will come at a heavy cost to taxpayers who will foot the rent bill for the Newman government's new Executive Building. They know the Newman government looks after itself first and puts Queenslanders a distant last, especially those in regional Queensland. We will continue to hold this LNP government to account for slowing Queensland's economy, increasing unemployment, hiking the cost of living and increasing debt that they rail against so much.

Finally, I wish to finish by thanking the member for Coomera for the job he has done as Chair of the Finance and Administration Committee. I trust that he will take his impartiality, bipartisanship and fairness with him to his new role as Chair of the Ethics Committee.

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (5.02 pm): I begin my contribution to the debate by thanking the Finance and Administration Committee for its examination of the budget estimates of my portfolio. I welcomed the chance to answer questions about the work we are doing to ensure that Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity well into the future. The government's second budget helps to grow our economy and deliver front-line services that Queenslanders expect whilst also making more headway in bringing government expenditures under control.

In the 10 years leading up to 2011-12, government expenses grew at an average rate of 8.9 per cent each year. This year the increase is just 1.1 per cent. You would think that even the financially challenged intellects of the opposition would be able to understand those positive numbers. While efficiencies have been made, we have wisely increased spending in key service areas. Education spending is up 6.5 per cent. Health is up 11.6 per cent compared to the former government's last budget, and we have increased spending on disability services by 4.7 per cent.

I note that the opposition has made some comments about the cost of living in a statement of reservations attached to the committee's report. I say to the opposition that it should reflect on its efforts in this regard when it was in government. Who in South-East Queensland could forget the current Leader of the Opposition's annual 15 per cent public transport fare increases? We have halved these increases while also introducing a weekly nine-journey cap on go cards, making the 10th and any additional journey each week free.


This budget continues to drive down the cost of living with \$5.1 billion worth of concessions. That is 3.7 times more than the concessions contained in the former government's last budget. Some of these concessions include \$1.2 billion in public transport subsidies; \$615 million to make sure

regional consumers pay the same for their electricity as those in the city; \$144 million for livestock and regional rail freight; and \$409 million for the government managed housing rental rebate. We are also continuing the freeze on family car registration and the \$7,000 concession on stamp duty for the family home.

In terms of recent electricity prices, I was as dismayed as anyone about the recent increases announced by the independent Queensland Competition Authority. I appreciate that this is a big blow for households and businesses. A lot needs to change in the electricity sector as we shift away from the mismanagement of the past decade, and we are taking action to address this. One thing I found staggering is the QCA's estimate that the federal government's carbon tax and renewable energy target along with the former state government's Solar Bonus Scheme will add over \$200 to a typical 2013-14 electricity bill. That is an incredible burden on ordinary people, and Queenslanders may want to reflect on that when they cast their ballots at the federal election on 7 September.

I emphatically reject the opposition's claim that I was not open and transparent at the estimates hearing. Information requested by the opposition about the remuneration of my chief of staff was provided during the hearing and then further information was provided to the committee by the Public Service Commission chief executive after the hearing at my request. All of this information has been tabled and is on the public record. There are no secrets here, but as we saw this afternoon there are still a lot of secrets over there with no revelations about the lobbyists contact register or their diaries. This government has a proud record already as the most open and transparent in Queensland's history from the Open Data initiative to the public release of ministerial diaries. Oh, there we go again. I have said it again. Where are theirs? We do not know and we never will, it seems. Because we want to do even better, we will be exploring these matters further at an open government forum being held here at Parliament House next Tuesday.

I conclude my remarks by again thanking the committee for its work in scrutinising the budget. I also thank the staff of the parliament and the government who have contributed so much to this year's estimates process.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.07 pm): I, too, wish to place on the record my thanks to the chair and members of the committee. Let me say at the outset that I love estimates. Estimates is my favourite time of the year. I think all members of the opposition enjoy estimates just as much as I enjoy turning up every day asking questions and embarrassing government ministers who simply do not know the answers. I only hope that after two very unsuccessful years of estimates they might learn that next year they might need to do a bit of study. When you are a minister and you need to appear before an estimates hearing it does require a bit of work.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Perhaps when the member for Mermaid Beach becomes a minister he will take note of the need to do some study before appearing before an estimates hearing.


Let me turn to the issues at hand. The Premier's appearance before the Finance and Administration Committee during this year's estimates hearing exposed just how poorly the LNP government is serving Queensland. The LNP was swept to power in March 2012 on the back of a suite of promises to Queenslanders. They promised to be open and transparent, they promised to reduce government waste and they promised to lower the cost of living, particularly in relation to electricity bills. What have we found? Electricity bills have gone up by more than 22 per cent. We have had a 22.6 per cent increase. That is massive. That is not lowering the cost of living. That is putting a huge burden on everyday Queenslanders who are trying to make ends meet.

The Premier promised open and transparent government, yet he refused—and appears to continue to refuse—to release the full details of the remuneration package paid to his chief of staff. The Premier's initial response to questions about his chief of staff's salary indicated that he was 'happy to provide that information as a matter for the public record', but he declined to ask his chief of staff, who was seated right next to him for the duration of the hearing. Instead, he insisted on taking the matter on notice, explaining that, 'We are more than happy to provide an accurate, to-the-dollar figure, which is what Queenslanders deserve—nothing more, nothing less.' However, four hours later, at the end of the Premier's estimates session, he could only muster up a piece of paper that stated his chief of staff was paid at a CEO 5.1 salary level. The opposition sought more information from the Premier on several occasions throughout the committee hearing. The government's responses, to the best of our knowledge, have not included that to-the-dollar figure that the Premier promised. The

Public Service Commissioner did provide a figure, but it was unclear from that response whether this included all aspects of the remuneration for this position including superannuation, motor vehicle expenses, leave allowances and any other payments that make up the remuneration package. To date the Premier is yet to state whether or not his answer included all of these remuneration components.

Perhaps the Premier is trying to avoid the answers to these questions, because we also had the issue of the hand-picked former director-general of Transport and Main Roads, Michael Caltabiano. Under questioning from the opposition at estimates, the Premier was forced to reveal that Mr Caltabiano was paid \$652,947 between 4 May 2012 and his dismissal in March 2013. This is an extraordinary amount of taxpayer funded remuneration for what was effectively five months work, as Mr Caltabiano was stood aside in October 2012.

The Premier also promised to reduce waste in government, yet at estimates the committee heard revelations of the government's misguided priorities and willingness to waste taxpayers' funds. It was revealed that \$24,000 was spent on a two-day Brisbane based cabinet meeting in August 2013. That is more than \$1,200 a head for each of the 19 cabinet ministers. The committee also heard testimony from the director-general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that he fully briefed the government about the impact of its decision to grant themselves a pay rise of 41.9 per cent. His testimony deposed as untrue the Deputy Premier's earlier claims that he was not aware of the decision made by cabinet while he was Acting Premier which would result in a pay rise for the Premier of around \$118,000, lifting his salary to that of the President of the United States. Finally, the Premier was unable to explain why his government has failed so dismally on its pre-election promise to reduce the cost of power bills. I look forward to estimates next year.

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (5.12 pm): I rise today to recommend to the Legislative Assembly that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2013 be agreed to without amendment. I would, first, like to thank the members of the Finance and Administration Committee, in particular the member for Coomera for running the estimates with such enthusiasm and professionalism. I also congratulate him on his appointment as the chair of the Ethics Committee. I am sure he will fulfil this role with distinction.

I would also like to thank the Premier and the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, along with the chief executive officers and associated staff, for their professionalism and cooperation in providing information to the members of the Finance and Administration Committee.

A number of great initiatives were raised during the estimates hearing with the Premier; all go towards making Queensland a great state with great opportunities. I want to focus on one particular area at this stage as it reinforces my fundamental beliefs of accountability and reward for effort. I noted that the 2013-14 budget continues to allocate funding to the implementation of enhanced performance frameworks for senior executives. This single initiative will help contribute to a stronger and more efficient Public Service and will help deliver cost-of-living savings across government.


It was clear from the Premier's comments that this government is focused on achieving an open and accountable government that will deliver a responsible budget and ensure that the hard-earned dollars of the people of Queensland will be allocated to the areas that need them most and will aid our economy in responsible recovery from the mess and inefficiencies of the past while delivering a high-performance culture.

I was, however, very disappointed with the lack of attendance of the Integrity Commissioner. The Finance and Administration Committee made it perfectly clear that it expected his attendance, yet still he failed to attend. Actions like this do not lead to an open and accountable government. I note today that he fronted a public meeting and apologised for failing to communicate adequately with the committee, and I look forward to reviewing the budget when it is eventually provided.

The Queensland Audit Office, under the management of Andrew Greaves, will be able to continue to deliver public sector expertise and identify and address expectation gaps with their clients while implementing a program of systemic organisational performance reviews to strengthen employment practices.

The Treasurer and his staff have worked exceptionally hard to deliver a responsible budget that will further develop Queensland's strategy to manage the fiscal repair needed and set Queensland up for a strong and resilient recovery. The continued work from this government to reduce red tape

across all portfolios is an incentive for which the people of Queensland have been calling for many years. I must finish by congratulating the Premier and Treasurer not only on their strong leadership but on providing the additional information during estimates and continuing to deliver open and accountable government as this is what the public expects and deserves.

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (5.16 pm): I rise to speak to the Finance and Administration Committee report No. 30 in relation to the budget estimates. Like other speakers, I would like to put on the record my appreciation of the chair, the member for Coomera. I also acknowledge the change in his position that was announced today. He has certainly been a good chair in terms of his fairness. On that basis, my experience with estimates this year was different in that the member for Coomera chaired the estimates committee hearing differently to other chairs in previous years. That is a positive statement, not a negative one. I would also like to thank the Premier and the Treasurer for their responses to questions that were raised by me on behalf of the community.

Both of these portfolios are obviously critically important in terms of the running of this state. I raised a number of issues in relation to the electorate of Gladstone. I know that the estimates process is about more than just electorate issues, and I acknowledge that. The cost-of-living issue affects people across Queensland and is of great concern to residents. It has to be remembered that just because the power goes up and it can be quantified, that is not the end of the cost-of-living impacts. When power goes up, so does the cost of any commodity where power is used in its production. So it has a far-reaching effect, and those increases have not been restricted to this government.

I asked some questions in relation to Royalties for the Regions and I note that this morning it was announced that Royalties for the Regions is open for another round and it has been opened to the entire state. There was frustration in the electorate of Gladstone because in the pilot round—and I acknowledge that it was the first round, with a more limited amount of money available—the Gladstone electorate received nothing in terms of assistance through Royalties for the Regions. I know that it was intensely frustrating for Mayor Gail Sellers and the council. They had several shovel-ready projects and Gladstone has been directly and significantly impacted by the LNG projects that are being constructed in the electorate. However, there seems to be a misunderstanding that Gladstone has received gold-plated assistance since LNG commenced, but that is far from true. In the scheme of things we have received a very small contribution due to LNG in terms of public infrastructure. Some of the organisations in Gladstone have received assistance, and in making that statement I am in no way criticising the LNG industry. Things like the communities precinct in Philip Street, the Kin Kora roundabout and the Gladstone Hospital all received nothing in recent years in terms of building on their capacity to cope with the industrial development. It is critically important for the community to not only see that government cares for them in terms of the industrial development but also be able to cope practically with the development as it occurs.


Another issue that was raised in the estimates hearing with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet was the removal of green and red tape to facilitate jobs and project investment in non-renewable sources. I put on the record my concern about the announced removal of social impact statements. It is a discussion for another time, but I believe that that is a significant backward step in terms of recognising the impacts on the community from the development of major projects.

I would like to echo the member for Sunnybank's comments in relation to the disappointment that the committee felt when the Integrity Commissioner was not present at the hearings. He did have a staff member who delegated for him, and I think she did an excellent job with the information that was available to her. The member for Sunnybank has already placed on the record the public meeting that we had today.

The other thing that I wanted raise in relation to SPER—and I raised it at the estimates—is that the major complaint that my office gets in relation to SPER notifications is that people feel that the notification does not always get to them. I know that it is sent to the last known address, but there is no way that SPER knows if a notice has not been received. That could be addressed if it was sent registered mail, which requires a signature when it is delivered. SPER would then know whether or not it had been received.

Mr Gibson interjected.

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: I take the interjection from the member for Gympie, who has firsthand experience in relation to the disadvantage of not knowing about SPER announcements. I thank the Treasurer and the Premier for their attendance and their input in the estimates process.

 **Dr FLEGG** (Moggill—LNP) (5.21 pm): I join with the other speakers to congratulate the chair of our committee, Michael Crandon, the staff of the committee, and the Premier and Treasurer for presenting to it. I would say from the outset that I feel very privileged to have been on the committee questioning the leadership team about the financial reforms that this state needs. There has never been a time that the state has needed that sort of financial leadership more than now. Our state already had a credit rating downgrade and was heading for another one. There was rampant waste of public funds and the former government was trying to plug holes with new taxes or asset sales just to keep afloat.

The Treasurer has introduced the financial discipline of targeting a fiscal balance. This is something every person in Queensland knows. Your non-cash expenses like depreciation are not just cash that you can throw away and waste; they need to be returned to your capital stock. It does make it a more difficult target, but it is a vital target if we are to start to deliver what Queenslanders need and expect. Our budget shows a debt that will peak at around \$81 billion in 2015-16. That is \$8.7 billion lower than it would have been had this government not taken action. Even so, the interest bill on that will be \$4.184 billion in 2015-16. That is money that could have been used if we had a more prudent system to provide for the welfare of Queenslanders.


The member for Murrumba previously mentioned that in the years 2005-2016 the debt per person will rise from \$3,900 to \$16,000. Because of the financial discipline that the LNP leadership has delivered to this state, we were able to do things such as cut fare increases. The massive increase in fares by the Labor Party was one of the panic measures they put in place to plug the holes in their budget. We were able to return stamp duty to people buying their own homes. These are really important dividends that were returned to Queenslanders because of the financial discipline of this Newman government. We were able to see a substantial increase in education spending, with \$300 million going towards maintenance for some of our very neglected schools and \$537 million for Great Teachers = Great Results. We were able to come forward and commit to the future NDIS.

It may be a dull topic to talk about, but growth in expenditure exceeding growth in revenue is very, very important. People would have experienced extreme levels of pain in the future if expenditure had continued to exceed revenue. Under the previous Labor government, we had spending in this state as though there would be boom conditions for the rest of the century. In 2011-12 spending went up 8.9 per cent. Because of the discipline that has returned some benefits to Queenslanders, the rise in expenditure in this budget for 2012-13 is only 1.1 per cent.

Whilst it is very easy to get people excited about the NDIS, Gonski funding, or Mines to Minds—of course you can get people excited by saying you are going to throw money at an issue that is of concern to them—if you do not have the financial discipline to have that money available, those people will be very disappointed. To see this, you do not have to look further than the federal government. In the best of times and with terms of trade that we will never see again in our lifetime, they introduced carbon taxes, taxes on bank accounts, mining taxes, car taxes, and smoking taxes. To afford education reforms, they then had to slash spending to universities and child care. What sort of education funding reform actually slashes funding to parts of education?

The \$4.2 billion drop in revenues, principally from taxes and royalties, has been a significant blow. I am very pleased to see that we have a government that made the decisions that enabled us to deal with it—

(Time expired)

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algester—LNP) (5.26 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Finance and Administration Committee estimates report and to review the great works which have been delivered or are being delivered in my wonderful electorate of Algester. I am getting on and delivering for my electorate on the commitments that I made on behalf of the government—commitments that range from extra police at Browns Plains station to protecting environmentally important bushland, both physically from illegal dumpers and trail bikers and legislatively by transferring the land to Brisbane City Council.


I joined with parents at the Algester State School last weekend on a working bee around the school. It was great to see the results of our government's policy of up to \$160,000 per school to address the maintenance backlog. For Algester State School this injection of funds has resulted in some of the school's buildings being repainted and general maintenance being undertaken around damaged or dangerous footpaths. It was great to hear such positive comments from the parents regarding our initiative. In all, my schools received well over \$700,000 through this government initiative.

Social services are also benefitting from the Newman government. The Salvation Army at Forest Lake can continue their great work with youth in the area under this government's investment of well over \$110,000 in this program. Members would remember that I have spoken in this place about The Spot. Ken Houliston, the general manager, is doing a great job in my community. I was very happy to welcome the minister for community services, the Hon. Tracy Davis, for a tour of The Spot. The Newman government has supported this organisation again with a grant of well over \$500,000 for its families and parenting program.

I made a commitment to my community that I would fight for extra police for the Browns Plains station. I work very closely with the police who keep my community safe, and I am happy to report that, due to our government's promise to put an extra 1,100 police on the beat, my promise to the community was delivered on. The Browns Plains Police Station is now at strength; in fact, it has 10 first-year constables. This has meant that there is an increased visible presence on the streets of my electorate.

The communities of Forestdale and Hillcrest saw something delivered by the Newman government, Minister Cripps and me that they had been fighting for for so long. The community has seen the protection of 125 hectares commonly called the Glider Forest. It has been fenced in record time. It has been cleared of rubbish and asbestos, and flora and fauna within this area has been protected from illegal dumpers, illegal 4x4 drivers and trail bikers.

I have also been very happy to support or sponsor a number of community events. I have sponsored a number of 'cinema in the suburb' events in support of my school P&C. Boronia Heights and the Pallara State School P&Cs have raised funds from these events. I would like to finish on the Algester Queensland Day festival, which I sponsored this year. I am told that well over 2,000 people enjoyed the free entertainment on the day. They enjoyed displays by the Queensland Police Pipe and Drums, the Australian Defence Force and A Battery, and the Victoria Barracks Historical Society. It was a great day in a great electorate—an electorate that I am honoured and privileged to represent in this place.

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (5.29 pm): First, I thank the committee for the opportunity to answer questions. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I, too, enjoy estimates. It is the only time the opposition actually ask me a question, so why wouldn't I? Not that that infrequency has actually improved the questions in any way, shape or form, but at least it is an opportunity to have a kick-out, even if it is a pretty one-sided operation.

The Newman government's budget this year—the second budget we have delivered—continues down the path of fiscal repair. It continues to implement the four fundamental fiscal principles that we have undertaken to follow in order to fix the mess that we were left by the Labor government. Unlike those opposite, we do not change our fiscal principles when the going gets tough. We stick to the principles and we continue to make the decisions that are necessary in order to deliver them, because they are the right thing for Queensland and the right thing for Queenslanders.

Unlike the previous Treasurer, who, when it got too tough, decided to change his principles, we stick to our principles and we continue to make decisions. As a result, we have delivered the lowest increase in government expenditure since accrual accounting was introduced in 1998-99—something that Labor in office was never able to do. We have managed to contain the increase in employee expenses to the lowest level since 1998-99—something that Labor was never able to do. And we have plotted a path back to a fiscal surplus—something that Labor was unable to do for half a decade.

This is a budget that focuses on growth, rebuilding and resilience and that continues to deliver increased funds in vital areas for vital services. We increased funding by \$707 million for the education department. We increased funding by \$64 million for disability services. We increased funding by \$533 million for health. While I am on the topic of the Health budget, I heard the Manager of Opposition Business continue today with the deceit that this government has cut the Health budget. Today we again confirm that it was increased by \$533 million—an additional \$533 million. Only in the warped world of Labor politics does an increase of \$533 million add up to a decrease. That is how the member for Mulgrave would do his sums. And of course we have \$868 million for DisabilityCare Australia that those opposite voted against. They voted against the single biggest reform to disability care in Australia—bigger than the Labor government was able to deliver in its entire term in office. This is a budget for the times and a budget that makes the right decisions, even though some of decisions are tough, that delivers on fiscal consolidation and that provides additional funding for all the services Queenslanders want at a price they are prepared to pay.

I saw some comments in the statement of reservations by the Manager of Opposition Business in relation to growth. In respect of growth, I inform him that the March quarter Queensland annual gross state product growth was 3.6 per cent. In comparison, the rest of Australia gross product rose 2.4 per cent. So you can see that Queensland continues to outperform.

The opposition Treasury spokesman made claims about the unemployment rate in Queensland but failed to mention that unemployment under Andrew Fraser and Anna Bligh went from 3.7 per cent in September 2007 to 5.5 per cent in March 2012—an enormous increase of 1.8 per cent. In our term, the unemployment rate has gone up by 0.5 per cent—much less than 1.8 per cent under their stewardship and much less than the whole of Australia under Kevin Rudd and Labor, which has gone up 0.6 per cent. In terms of full-time employment, what they failed to say is that under Labor in 2009 full-time employment actually fell by 0.9 per cent, despite their promise to create 100,000 breadwinners jobs.

In terms of debt, the member for Mulgrave made comments about the increase in net debt of \$7.8 billion. What he failed to say is that under Labor it would have been \$10.8 billion. We are \$3 billion better off as a result. In terms of accountability, he proceeded to make claims in relation to me but failed to mention the trips to Gina Rinehart on the \$350 million *The World* ship. Hypocrisy, thy name is ALP.

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Byrne): Order! The question is—

That the report of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee be adopted.

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (5.34 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the committee's consideration of budget estimates for the portfolios of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; Energy and Water Supply; and Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. At the outset I thank committee staff for their work. So much of that goes on behind the scenes in the preparation for estimates. I thank all of them for their involvement. I also wish to thank the parliamentary staff who were involved on the day. It was a particularly long day, made more difficult by the fact that State of Origin was on that night and we all wanted to see the 'eight straight'. We were very focused on making sure we finished on time, and we did.

I wish to thank the various ministers, their departmental officers and the various other CEOs for agencies who came before our committee. I believe that in all cases they were able to bring forward the information that the committee sought from them. We were able to have free-flowing questioning. That was tested by the member for Mulgrave and the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, but it was part of the process.

I believe that the committee process we now have for estimates is an incredibly robust process. You only have to look to the make-up of this parliament to realise that. This government has such a majority, yet for the estimates process the non-government members—certainly in my committee's case—are given more than 50 per cent of the time to ask questions of the government, despite the fact that they do not hold that percentage in terms of numbers in the House. This ensures the process favours non-government members—as it should. There is no reason estimates should not favour non-government members. They should be given the opportunity to question the government because they often bypass that opportunity in the House.


We heard something from the Treasurer, and it was the same for the Deputy Premier. That is, he approached estimates with glee because he knew that, for one of the very few times, he was going to be asked questions by members opposite. It was an opportunity for him to answer any question they had—any question at all. As all members in this House know, each committee considers particular portfolio responsibilities, and questions can only be directed to those portfolio responsibilities. What was disappointing was that some non-government members decided to play political games and ask questions that had nothing to do with the portfolios being considered. I can only assume that either they were incredibly poorly prepared or they decided that they would choose

to waste their time in the committee process for political purposes rather than try to hold the executive to account in determining expenditure for the portfolio areas. Of course, that is a decision for the opposition to make. If they wish to waste the time that is allocated to them, so be it.

I thank all members of the committee—those who are members of the committee permanently and those who were co-opted in at various stages throughout the course of the day. I thank particularly the non-government members who came in and the deputy chair. I think the day flowed very well and we were able to probe and ask various questions.

I note the statement of reservations made by the deputy chair. I do not agree with all of the points made in it, but it is his right to register those. It has been the right of all oppositions to make a statement of reservations or a dissenting report. In this case there were no dissenting reports; it was only the ALP that lodged a statement of reservations. The other non-government members, from Katter's Australian Party, did not. I see that as their support for the budget.

In conclusion, estimates committees are an essential part of this process. I am not like the Leader of the Opposition in that I do not see this as the best time of the year—for me that is Christmas and family—but it is a time of the year where we are able to exercise a very important role of this parliament. Often we forget just how important the estimates process is. This year we were able to show that the estimates process within the 54th Parliament is alive and well. We are holding the executive to account, we are examining expenditure across a broad range of areas and we are doing that effectively. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.39 pm): I echo the comments of the chair of the estimates committee about the importance of the committee in scrutinising the executive and I place on record my appreciation for the way that he and other members of the committee conducted themselves throughout the proceedings. I also thank the committee staff for the assistance they gave our committee and also the staff of the parliament who were involved in the estimates process over those two weeks about a fortnight or so ago.

At this year's hearing the Deputy Premier continually sidestepped questioning over why there has been no probity process established for meetings being held between his government and casino proponents. The Deputy Premier's advice to the committee was that no decision had been made about varying the operation of casinos in Queensland and that 'the formal process will involve a level of probity that will have absolute credibility'. However, the Deputy Premier had told the *Courier-Mail* on 9 July that—

I think it's time we got down to some formal negotiation ...

He continued—

Even though the public consultation isn't complete, we are getting a clear message that people want to see a signature development, a landmark development here.

He continued—

It's almost impossible for that sort of development without inclusion of a casino, without involvement of some big players, so we are starting to talk to those players.

It is disappointing that the Deputy Premier has one story for the parliament and another version of events for the media. It also follows the revelation at the hearing that the Treasurer is still engaged in high-level meetings with casino proponents after accepting hospitality from one of the proponents. It is clear that this government thinks that it is above the probity or the levels of accountability imposed in the private sector. The Deputy Premier also did not think it was important to have had any consultation on the construction of 1 William Street despite saying on Channel 9 news on 24 July—


The last thing I want to see across the road from our great parliament building is a great glass and chrome thing ...

Once again, the Deputy Premier refused to acknowledge that spending \$160,000 in taxpayers' money over nine months for charter flights is prohibitive and has persisted with his refusal to accept that cheaper commercial flights are available. There was also no assurance provided by the Deputy Premier that local communities and local governments will not lose out from any changes from the government's discussion paper on infrastructure charges. The discussion paper states that it came about from stakeholders identifying that 'some local authorities charge for infrastructure which is not

essential'. The paper goes on to state that revising the list of essential infrastructure will 'show a reduction in infrastructure costs for a developer, regardless of location, based on the reduced scope of infrastructure'.

In discussions this 'non-essential' infrastructure includes stormwater networks, arterial roads and the reduction of green space required from four hectares per 1,000 people to two hectares per 1,000 people. This may lead to infrastructure that is essential for local communities not being built at the time of a development, with higher retrofitting costs incurred, or on the other hand a significant burden on the financial sustainability of local governments. Ultimately, someone has to pay for this infrastructure. The Deputy Premier provided no assurance that what he refers to as 'gold plating' is not in fact essential community infrastructure. I am glad that the Deputy Premier at least accepts the complexity of this issue now that he is in government.

The committee was also advised that the Deputy Premier is still not aware of how many mines will be included in the expansion of the mine water release trials planned for later this year. It was a little strange that the Deputy Premier sought to blame the previous government for incomplete datasets from his own government's mine water release trial. I hope the Deputy Premier will at some point in his career stop attempting to blame the previous government and start focusing on the current fall in private investment happening under his watch. Queensland Treasury is forecasting this contraction in investment to occur for another three years. It follows record-breaking private investment under the previous government. It would be appreciated if the Deputy Premier could start focusing on the challenges stemming from his time in office rather than on what might have happened two or 10 years ago. To conclude, as the deputy chair of the committee, I once again thank everyone who was involved in the estimates process.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.44 pm): I rise to add to the Appropriation Bill 2013 and in particular the estimates committee meeting of 17 July of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. I add to what the member for Mackay just said about our chairman, the member for Gympie, David Gibson. The member for Gympie runs a very efficient committee. As estimates committees are made up of non-government and government members, one might think that there might be a bit of argy-bargy every now and then, and we do have a little bit of that going on. But, in general, we get on very well and a lot of that has to do with the way that the member for Mackay handles himself in our committee meetings. I commend the member for Mackay for his behaviour in those meetings and in particular at estimates. However, I cannot say that about some of the other members from the non-government side who did attend our estimates committee hearing.


I also personally thank the staff of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee—our research director Erin Pasley, Margaret Telford, Mary Westcott and Dianne Christian. Without them our committee would struggle on a day-to-day basis. I thank the ministers, in particular the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply and my friend the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games for the way that they handled themselves at estimates. They were very controlled in the way that they dealt with the questions. They had the answers to every question that government and non-government members put to them and they were very concise and controlled with the way that they delivered those answers.

In the brief time available to me, I want to highlight a couple of the things that we discussed at estimates as they relate to my electorate. Of course, the Deputy Premier spoke to us about the Commonwealth Games infrastructure planning and how important that is for the Gold Coast in 2018. The Gold Coast is really looking forward to those couple of weeks. In fact, the months either side of the Commonwealth Games will be vital to the way that the Gold Coast recovers from the global problems we have had over the last couple of years. The Deputy Premier also spoke about the planning laws and the changes that have been made, as well as the timing of the review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan—another very important issue for those on the Gold Coast.

We also heard from the Minister for Energy and Water Supply and the GOCs involved with that department. We talked about some very important issues to do with the cost of living—that is, how the value of both water and electricity assets is causing the cost of electricity and water to rise and rise again. There was also quite a detailed explanation as to how the solar feed-in tariff—the ill-conceived solar feed-in tariff—that the last government put in place is having a major effect on the cost of living of those people in my electorate, those people on the Gold Coast in general and the rest

of Queensland. It was a ludicrous idea to be paying a 44c feed-in tariff for something that we were charging out at about 25c. It is obvious that that would certainly have quite an effect on the price of living. The energy and water supply minister also told us about his 30-year electricity strategy and his 30-year water strategy. It was great to hear about those particular issues.

Turning to the Minister for Tourism, we heard about the Commonwealth Games 2018 legacy that will affect the Gold Coast. As the member for Burleigh, I am very concerned about the sorts of issues that we may have on the southern end of the Gold Coast, in particular my electorate. I will be talking more to the minister and other ministers involved about what sort of legacy there can be for my end of the Gold Coast. Also, the airport is located down my end of the Gold Coast. We heard about the wonderful work that the minister is doing to attract airlines to Queensland. I congratulate the minister for that and I hope she keeps up the good work, because we want plenty more of those airlines coming into the Gold Coast. We also heard that the minister has a 20-year plan for tourism moving forward in this state. I commend the report to the House.


 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (5.49 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2013. The beginning of 2013 heralded a tough year for Queenslanders, with major flooding from ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald wreaking havoc on the east coast of Queensland combined with the total opposite in Western Queensland and Cape York with a total failure of any wet season. We have also seen one of Queensland's key pillars that underwrites Queensland's economy, the resource sector, take a substantive downturn in market pricing. With that at the forefront of the government's thinking, it is an honour to be a member of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee, which oversaw the 2013 budget estimates hearings and received evidence for the proposed expenditure for the relevant departmental portfolios.

One theme that carried across the three departments which gave evidence was the importance of creating opportunity and prosperity and building resilience in Queensland, with the goal being a stronger Queensland economy. It was interesting to hear from Mr John Cotter, the chairman of the GasFields Commission, who gave an insight into the capacity of the coal seam gas industry for not only the energy requirements domestically within Australia but also in terms of the importance of an export commodity and the state's income. The level of construction that this industry has created has proven to be of significant benefit as the coalmining industry faces a temporary downturn. The State Assessment and Referral Agency, also known as SARA, as discussed by the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning will make the minister's department the single point for state development applications, simplifying business regulation and, importantly, reducing the time frames for development, which have plagued development in Central Queensland.

The Minister for Energy and Water Supply provided a detailed brief of the impacts of the Solar Bonus Scheme. Obviously, in relation to the 44c feed-in tariff the Solar Bonus Scheme was not costed by the Bligh government. With approximately 20 per cent of Queenslanders now taking up the solar power panels, it is estimated that this scheme will cost the government \$2.8 billion by the contract expiry date of 2028. Another highlight of the budget estimates hearing from the Department of Energy and Water Supply was the release of the 30-year electricity and water strategy and reform of local management arrangements for SunWater channel irrigation schemes. This is a very welcome strategy for irrigators west of Rockhampton.

I also want to pass on my thanks to the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games for outlining her drive to promote sustainable industry growth by delivering a strategic, whole-of-government future for tourism, along with ensuring that the department provides services to small businesses. The department will be responsible for the administration of funds for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation and the portfolio of Tourism and Events Queensland. Without doubt, the department's greatest challenge will be the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Games legacy plan for Queensland.

The committee's report made one recommendation: that the proposed expenditure by each relevant committee portfolio be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly. At this point I wish to thank the chair, Mr David Gibson, and my fellow members of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee and the Deputy Premier, ministers, DGs, departmental officers and our committee staff for their hard work. I commend the report to the House.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.53 pm): As acting Minister for Energy and Water Supply, I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee estimates report. Today, I am representing the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, the member for Caloundra. I would like to recognise the

member for Gympie, who chaired the committee, along with the contributions made by other members during the estimates committee hearing. I would also like to recognise the director-general of the Department of Energy and Water Supply along with the chief executives of the government owned corporations and statutory authorities associated with this portfolio who attended the estimates process.


In Minister McArdle's opening statement he made it very clear that he believes that it is critical that there is responsible and robust planning for the future of our energy and water sectors. Minister McArdle believes that, at the core of Queensland's four-pillar economy, there needs to be a resilient, cost-effective and customer focused electricity and water sector. He also recognised that for too long electricity prices have been a burden on Queensland families, businesses, industry and agriculture. In fact, Minister McArdle stated that energy and water would be two of the three most highly sought-after resources in our world in the coming decades. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for the state of Queensland.

It will be how we structure our water and energy sectors that will underwrite the economic future of Queensland, but right now we are experiencing the significant and serious impacts of the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments' failure to plan effectively. The committee heard what the cost impacts are on Queensland households as a result of federal Labor's carbon tax and its renewable energy targets. The Queensland Competition Authority has advised that, on average, these Labor policies add \$258 to each and every household bill in this state. However, not to be outdone by its federal colleagues, the former Bligh Labor government in Queensland also did its best to increase the cost of electricity bills through the Solar Bonus Scheme. The Queensland Competition Authority has forecast that this will add about \$276 to each Queenslanders' household electricity by 2015-16.

In contrast, Minister McArdle outlined what the Newman government has done and is doing to reduce the impact of electricity bills in Queensland. This includes freezing the standard residential tariff—or tariff 11—for 2012-13, increasing the pensioners electricity rebate by 22 per cent, doubling funding for the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme for 2013-14 and limiting the tariff increase for certain transitional farming and irrigation tariffs to 10 per cent in 2013. Minister McArdle also provided the committee with an overview of how the Newman government is implementing short-term reforms to relieve cost pressures by using the government's response to the reports of the independent review panel into network costs and an interdepartmental committee on electricity reform to provide real, long-lasting reform to reduce the cost of electricity.

When it comes to abrogating its responsibility to plan for the future, Labor's form is not just limited to energy; it extends to water supply as well. The committee heard about the Auditor-General tabling a scathing report in this House on manufactured water assets such as the Gold Coast desalination plant and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. Thanks to Labor's neglect and mismanagement, not only do we have a \$7 billion water grid along with \$9 billion of debt in South-East Queensland but also we are encumbered with incredible costs to produce water. It costs \$256 per megalitre to produce water from our dams in South-East Queensland. The desalination plant costs \$4,881 per megalitre and the western corridor scheme costs \$9,442 per megalitre.

In highlighting these Labor legacies, Minister McArdle raised real concerns that not only are their policies impacting on the cost of living but also they are impacting on the competitiveness of Queensland's businesses, industry and farmers. Minister McArdle used the estimates hearing as an opportunity to inform the committee that, over the past 16 months, the Newman government has taken control and has a plan for the future. That involves short-term reforms to relieve the immediate cost pressures on Queensland households, businesses, industry and farmers. Minister McArdle is using the 30-year strategies for electricity and water to achieve lasting reform as we work towards resilient, cost-effective and customer focused electricity and water sectors. On behalf of Minister McArdle, I acknowledge the support of the officers of the Department of Energy and Water Supply and the ministerial staff for their hard work through the estimates committee process.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.57 pm): Firstly, I want to thank the committee and the chair, the member for Gympie, for allowing me to attend the estimates hearing and ask questions of the Minister for Energy and Water Supply. I also take the opportunity to wish the minister, the member for Caloundra, well in the coming weeks in terms of his health.

Let me start by saying that this government has consistently refused to accept any responsibility for the decisions that it makes and what happens on its watch. It was therefore disappointing, but not surprising, that the minister refused to accept any responsibility for delivering a

massive 22.6 per cent increase in electricity prices this year—the largest yearly increase in electricity prices on record. For those opposite who are actually putting in these increases, let us talk about the fact that, if there were no other contributing factors to electricity price rises other than the green initiatives, the price rise would have been three per cent, not 22.6 per cent. When the LNP was in opposition it routinely blamed the Labor government for increases in the price of electricity. But now it seems it is not willing to accept any responsibility for the 22.6 per cent increase, even when it explicitly promised Queenslanders that it would lower their electricity bills by \$120 per year. Since March 2012, instead of delivering two \$120 yearly savings, amounting to \$240, so far the LNP has delivered price increases of \$140 last year and \$260 this year. That amounts to a combined increase of more than \$400 since the government was elected on its promise to lower bills by \$120 per year.

The opposition questioned the CEOs of Energex, Ergon and Powerlink about the number of staff and contractors that had been lost in the past year. I am disappointed to report that in the past year 460 jobs have been lost at Energex, 690 at Ergon and 63 at Powerlink. This amounts to 1,213 job losses in Energex, Ergon and Powerlink in the past year. This is a massive figure and comes on top of the 14,000 jobs lost in the public service. It is no wonder that this government is presiding over the highest level of unemployment in Queensland since October 2003. We hold grave concerns for the ongoing safe and efficient operation of the electricity network in light of these massive job losses.

Unfortunately, there is a likelihood that these will not be the last job losses that we see in the energy sector under this government. When asked about the government's proposal to merge Ergon and Energex and the impact that such a proposal would have on jobs, the minister could not guarantee that jobs would not be lost, or even that electricity prices would go down. The minister was also unable to guarantee that the government would not sell off small remote generators with between eight to 15 employees. The impact that the loss of these jobs could have in remote and regional centres would be enormous. The opposition will stand up and fight for these communities to ensure that secure local employment opportunities are not destroyed by this callous and heartless government.

At the hearing I asked the minister about a significant underspend in the capital budget for 2012-13 in the energy generation, transmission and distribution sectors amounting to \$300 million. This question was taken on notice and the minister's response revealed that the capital underspend was actually worse than anticipated. The five energy government owned corporations spent \$578 million below the budgeted capital expenditure for 2012-13. There are legitimate questions still to be answered about whether this capital underspend will have any future impact on reliability.


I also asked the minister about media comments that he had made regarding the reliability of the electricity network and Queenslanders' expectations of reliability of supply. The minister has suggested that Queenslanders would be happy to accept lower standards of reliability for a lower electricity price. In his answer the minister seemed to imply that major centres such as Brisbane and Cairns might warrant a higher standard of reliability of supply than other more remote regions. I am deeply concerned that any review of reliability standards might have a disproportionate impact on regional and remote Queenslanders as well as impact on those who require a reliable electricity supply for medical reasons. The opposition will keep a watching eye over policy changes from the government regarding reliability of electricity supply.

When it comes to water, once again the government has been caught out promising more than it can deliver. At the election they promised a yearly saving of \$80 for every Queenslanders on their water bill. In reality they have delivered a one-off \$80 rebate that will never be repeated and was only paid to residents in South-East Queensland. And now bulk water charges are rising by \$49 a year, which means households will pay more for water not less, which is what the LNP promised them. Whether it is electricity or water prices, this government simply cannot be believed when they say they will do whatever they say they are going to do. When it comes to the cost of living—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr PITT: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will say it again for the benefit of the Treasurer and the member for Nanango: this government cannot be trusted on the cost of living. They promise one thing and they deliver another. They promised bills would go down and they have gone up. It is that simple, Treasurer.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (6.02 pm): The estimates hearings held by the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry committee highlighted the stark differences between this Newman LNP government, as we get on with the job of growing our state's economy, and the inadequacies of the Labor Party in even resembling a credible opposition in this state. What we saw from the opposition during our hearings was an inability to cope with the task of holding the government to account; an inability at times to do the basic research and to even ask the questions that were relevant to the portfolios in question; and an obvious desire to grab a cheap headline while concentrating on peripheral issues of no substance. By contrast, what we heard from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Minister for Energy and Water Supply and the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games were strategies to grow the Queensland economy, strategies to deal with red tape and inefficient bureaucracy and measures to support our great state's four-pillar economy.


In this short contribution I particularly want to focus on the small business portfolio and the actions being taken by Minister Stuckey and our government to assist small businesses that were highlighted during the estimates process. Times are tough for small businesses in Pine Rivers and many are desperately hoping for a change in federal government on 7 September to provide further security and confidence for small business. I had an email from a small business owner in my electorate last week echoing this sentiment. The businessowner wrote—

I am pinning all my hopes on a positive election result and, if the Liberals get in, a quick upturn in the market. Don't ask me why I think that will change anything but I know that whenever the Liberals are in power small business does well and they fall under Labor.

This government and the federal coalition understand the importance of small business. Not only do we understand small business, but we put policies and strategies into place to actively support them and to assist them not only to survive, but to thrive. It was with this in mind that I asked the minister during estimates about the importance of recognising small businesses through the inaugural Queensland Small Business Week held at the end of July just a couple of weeks ago. The activities of the week, from webinars to networking events around the state and the marquee Buy Locally Saturday promotion, all show a tangible commitment from this government to small business. In conjunction with Small Business Week, the Think Queensland, Buy Locally campaign that has been running for the past few months is another outstanding example of the commitment our government has to Queensland small businesses. The budget documents and estimates process showed that this has been a low-cost, high-impact campaign that has been having a dual positive impact of focusing consumers on supporting local businesses and helping to boost the confidence of Queensland small businesses. Another key strategy for small businesses that was outlined during the estimates process is the business web portal, a website that offers a one-stop shop for Queensland businesses. The ongoing success and regular virtual full houses for the online business webinars are testament to the importance of these training opportunities for Queensland small businesses. I know a number of Pine Rivers small businesses who have participated in these webinars and who see great value in this training format.

All of these activities and strategies come under the overarching Queensland Small Business Strategy and Action Plan 2013-15 and I am proud to be a part of a government that has put such an important plan into place. Our government continues to show an unparalleled commitment to small businesses and continues to put strategies in place to assist them in the important contribution they make to our economy. This is a great state with great opportunity for small business and this was highlighted yet again during the estimates process.

In closing my contribution I want to thank the committee chair, the member for Gympie, for his leadership of this committee, and particularly, as he has already mentioned, for finishing the estimates processes on time so that I could make it home—sticking to all the appropriate speed limits—to watch Queensland win the Origin match that night. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the committee and the secretariat staff as well for all of their fantastic work. It is a pleasure to serve our great state as a member of this committee.

 **Ms MILLARD** (Sandgate—LNP) (6.07 pm): I rise today to support the adoption of the report for the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee. I have come to value the unique and important role of this committee and would like to extend my thanks to the secretariat, its members and in particular the chair, David Gibson, member for Gympie, and everybody for their balanced

cooperation during this estimates process. Just highlighting what the member for Burleigh had to say, we actually do have a very good committee. We generally work very well together. I also thank the ministers who appeared before the committee, the departmental heads and officers responding to our questions with a view to increasing transparency and shedding light on the processes of governance that guides our lives. I commend our research staff for their contribution as without their research skills our knowledge would be far less complete.


The portfolios we cover in our committee are State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Energy and Water and Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. They are all essential to the running of the Queensland government machine. It would literally be impossible, I believe, to run our economy without them and it is with pride that I have participated in the process of improving transparency and clarity around the day-to-day activities of this government. It is here in this space that my role as MP representing the concerns of my electorate meets with my role as a parliamentarian where I do my best to represent my constituents and work for their interests before those who make decisions and govern. In this context I would like to draw attention to a few of the issues I was able to work through as a committee member in the estimates process. I appreciated the Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning's response to my questions about his approach to facilitate economic growth in Queensland over the next decade. Sandgate, as with many other electorates, is comprised of many small businesses, approximately 2,400, and for those businesses the government has gone on a crusade to cut the red tape that has strangled them, including the establishment of an Office of Best Practice Regulation to see regulatory burdens reduced by 20 per cent.

The establishment of the State Assessment and Referral Agency as a single agency that can fast track approvals and consider broader questions of economic development when considering projects is a great step forward for our economy. This is all supported by improving information on ways in which the government supports industry through the government business and industry portal at www.business.qld.gov.au. The Minister for Small Business reported an outstanding increase of over 280 per cent of visitors to that portal in early 2013, up from early 2012. Could it be that businesses actually have reason to feel more hopeful?

Perhaps what struck me the most about the approach of Minister Seeney was that, true to the title of 'planning minister', he understands that the government must do a bit more than simply enable the private sector to do what it needs to do. Yes, the private sector fuels our economy, but we cannot simply adopt a simplistic trickle-down model and expect that the wider benefits of sustainable economic growth will follow. The minister's approach addresses significant governance issues, a legal and institutional framework that will ensure we can all share in the benefits of long-term economic growth. I understand a number of those key issues have been addressed in the recently tabled *Governing for growth* report that followed the findings of the Commission of Audit. Thankfully, this government does not have to hide shortcomings in economic management, acting as though the mere existence of a private sector combined with layer after layer of regulation would be enough. Our government guides, our government facilitates and our government gets out of the way when it is not needed.

Another important arena is tourism and I would like to highlight a few positive measures. I welcome significant events such as the hosting of the G20 in Brisbane in 2014, which is a credit to our great state. It is noteworthy that we have a shortage of five-star hotel rooms in the Brisbane CBD, which is inconsistent with growing visitor numbers. We can only plan for growth that we can accommodate. I commend the Minister for Tourism on her service delivery statement, which includes plans to attract new hotel investment into the Brisbane CBD. I applaud the fact that the Shayer Group is to develop a 320-room five-star hotel in George Street as our CBD's largest single development to date.

Not only is Queensland's place on the tourist trail coming into its own, but also I am encouraged by steps to take Queensland forward and beyond our borders into the Asia century. I understand that the March 2013 China mission by Destination NSW attracted 45 Queensland operators, the largest ever contingent. Last year, accompanied by Minister Stuckey, the Treasurer led his own successful tourism investment mission to China, to train Queensland operators in cultural awareness and empower them to deal effectively with the Chinese market. I thank Minister McArdle for his contribution, explaining why this state is seeing increases in electricity prices even though, as a government, we are aiming to reduce those costs. I congratulate and thank the ministers and staff who participated in this estimates process. I commend the report to the House.

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (6.12 pm): I rise to address the report of the estimates hearing of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee in relation to my portfolio of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. I add my thanks to the hardworking members of the committee, chiefly the chair, the honourable member for Gympie, and the parliamentary staff who have once again assisted us through this lengthy process. Additionally, I express my sincere gratitude to my departmental and ministerial staff for their concrete assistance.

In this year's estimates hearing, I was really looking forward to seeing Labor finally take an interest in some key components of the Queensland economy, namely, our tourism and small business sectors. They have avoided those sectors in literally hundreds of question time opportunities. However, yet again I was let down by the laziest and best resourced opposition in the country. I reject the comments made by opposition members within their statement of reservations.

I turn first to the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, which is an event expected to inject an estimated \$2 billion into the Queensland economy and provide up to 30,000 full-time equivalent jobs. Departments across government will play a key role in delivering these games. However, their activities will occur at my discretion as the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. Harnessing expert knowledge to deliver the best result for Queensland and the Commonwealth Games is something the Labor Party fails to grasp or, indeed, to understand. For the benefit of the House, I am once again happy to explain how the roles and responsibilities are divided between the Deputy Premier and I.


In terms of infrastructure projects, as the Minister for the Commonwealth Games I determine the sport and village locations and sites for development with reference to bid-book commitment, occupational requirements and asset owner requirements. I determine venue requirements and the Commonwealth Games Village functional requirements. I manage the venue's construction budget and operate the venues and village in games mode. The Deputy Premier, through Economic Development Queensland, manages the procurement of the design team and the building contractors for venues. He manages the procurement of the Commonwealth Games Village developer. He provides the Commonwealth Games Village planning approvals and authorities and project manages the venue and village construction processes.

Undoubtedly for Queensland's \$17.5 billion tourism industry, this is an important budget as it is the first of the combined super entity, Tourism and Events Queensland. The 2014 budget allocated \$128 million to Tourism and Events Queensland to promote and market Queensland and its world-class destinations, building unique and appealing tourism experiences and identifying, attracting and developing major events for the state. On 22 July, I was joined by the Premier to announce that Queensland has secured a three-year agreement with V8 Supercars, which will see the continuation of the Gold Coast 600, the Townsville 400 and the Ipswich 360 until 2016. Less than 48 hours later, I had the pleasure of joining Tennis Australia to announce that for the first time Roger Federer, winner of 17 grand slam singles titles, would be travelling to Brisbane to compete in the 2014 Brisbane International. Let us not forget the magnificent Bolshoi Ballet's recent exclusive Australian season held right here in Brisbane, after an absence of over 25 years.

Despite what the opposition may say, I make no apologies for ensuring that our negotiations deliver the best outcomes for taxpayers' dollars and promote Queensland to an international market. Labor's record on negotiations is there for all to see. For a refresher course, I recommend that members opposite reacquaint themselves with report No. 1 of 2010, the Auditor-General's audit of the disastrous A1GP agreement, to learn what happens when you dispense with due diligence. What was more telling was the opposition's continual attempts to raise issues that are the responsibility of other ministerial portfolios. Whether talking about trading hours or insinuating impropriety without proof, they failed to follow up those issues with any of the relevant ministers to whom those questions should have been directed, despite ample opportunity to do so. Procurement is an important issue and the opposition members' attempts to score points on this issue backfired as the fact is that this procurement policy was one they themselves introduced when in government.

This budget allows us to continue the great work of my department in facilitating investment in Queensland's tourism industry to secure new and expand existing aviation routes and to progress priority items identified at the inaugural DestinationQ Forum held in Cairns last year. For too long our small businesses have suffered at the hands of Labor neglect. Last week I had the unqualified pleasure of hosting the inaugural Queensland Small Business Week. We all know the ALP has no respect for small business—it never has and never will—but I am very proud that the 2014 budget allows my department to continue our great work.

(Time expired)

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (6.17 pm): I rise to address the estimates report for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning as part of the Appropriation Bill 2013. I specifically want to address some significant developments in Cleveland and on North Stradbroke Island. On 16 May, the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning visited the Cleveland electorate to announce the anticipated decision that Toondah Harbour had been approved as a priority development area, a PDA. This announcement was fantastic news for the residents of Cleveland and North Stradbroke Island, in that the LNP government has done something that no other government had done before and previous governments and councils had been hoping for for some 30 years. It is a landmark achievement in itself.

The PDA declaration was the first step in opening up a number of mixed-use proposal ideas for the Toondah Harbour site, including residential, infrastructure, tourism and retail opportunities. The Toondah PDA development will feature dedicated ferry terminals, public open space and the potential for a marina. I commend the work of Economic Development Queensland in identifying the Toondah Harbour site and I thank the Deputy Premier for his support for the project. The Toondah Harbour PDA and upgrade provide for the long-term future of North Stradbroke Island residents in the transition to a non-sandmining economy. This announcement has been welcomed also by the residents of North Stradbroke Island. The improvement of transport facilities to Straddie will assist in the growth of the tourism pillar on the island.

During estimates comments were made about the government's plans for the development of North Stradbroke Island and the implications for residents, including the Quandamooka people. I was very concerned to hear the ill-informed statements made by some Labor Party members during the estimates committee hearing.

So for the few minutes I have left, I will discuss planning issues with respect to two items. One is the government's long-term plan for the island and its transition from sandmining and the other is the Indigenous land use agreement. I start by stating categorically that the government is honouring its commitment to both extend sandmining on North Stradbroke Island and to fully implement the Indigenous land use agreement, the ILUA, with the Quandamooka people.


With regard to planning around sandmining, the decision to reinstate the previously understood time lines for sandmining was first made during July-August 2010, just after then Premier Bligh's announcement in June 2010 to end sandmining early. Anna Bligh flew to Straddie and dropped a plan to end sandmining very early—a plan hatched by extreme green groups and the result of a dirty green preference deal not community consultation.

The angry response of large numbers of local residents, Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents, was immediate. People from all over the island approached me over the next weeks and months asking the LNP to oppose Bligh's plan that they thought would virtually shut Straddie down. I advised John-Paul Langbroek at the time of the uproar among the residents and the need to support the community. He agreed.

As a result of that initial response, I ran a survey. Some 700 responses from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people came back showing 80 to 90 per cent support for an extension of sandmining on the island. So the LNP's decision not to support Bligh's plan for Straddie was in large part due to the overwhelming rejection of the Bligh plan and the strong support of the community for mining to be allowed to continue. It was the right thing to do.

The commitment was continued by Campbell Newman when he became opposition leader in April 2011 and subsequently expressed when the LNP voted against Labor's North Stradbroke Island bill in July 2011. Thus no deal was made with anyone. It was a decision in response to the strong views of the over 2,000 island residents. The Premier was not in the parliament when the original decision was made and the current mines minister, Andrew Cripps, was not involved in the mining portfolio. So Labor's accusations in this House are baseless and false and are counter to the facts of the matter.

The LNP's plan to extend sandmining was then put strongly and clearly to the people at the election. Across all three booths on the island there was a high primary vote for the LNP of between 64 and 67 per cent. It was a very clear mandate. We are now working on that plan. We are implementing that plan. We are working with all residents, all groups on the island and the Quandamooka people. Their Indigenous land use agreement is also being fully implemented by this government. There have been many false claims made during estimates. I trust this corrects the record.

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (6.22 pm): I am happy to sum up the consideration of this particular estimates committee's hearings. I want to begin by congratulating the chairman of the committee, the member for Gympie, Dave Gibson, and his committee members on the way the hearing was conducted. I have been a critic of the estimates committee process in this place over a number of years. It is gratifying to see the process move more towards the dynamic process that I think it should be.

Unfortunately, I think the opposition has this year, not just with respect to this estimates committee but across the whole process, failed to understand what that process is. The estimates committee process essentially has at its heart the consideration of the government's budget. The budget is what sets the broad strategic framework for the government. We would expect the estimates committees to examine that broad strategic framework because it sets the program for the year. That is why it is an annual event. That is why we do this once a year—after the Treasurer introduces the budget into the parliament.

Not just with this particular committee but right across the estimates committee process, the opposition focused on minutiae, on stupid little things. That is the complete opposite of what the process is about. Instead of looking at the broad, strategic program that the government laid out in its budget and that the estimates committee is supposed to examine, the opposition did the complete opposite. It focused on the minutiae that they thought they could generate a cheap headline with.

The budget that the Treasurer introduced into this parliament and that the estimates committee was examining had the title, if you like, of growth, rebuilding and resilience. My department is focused on the growth part of that budget. That is what my department does. We outlined to the estimates committee the reform program that we had put in place over the previous 12 months and what is planned for the coming 12 months. That is what the process is about and that is what we did.

I outlined the program that we had sought funding for in the Treasurer's budget. That was for things like the governing for growth strategy that I tabled at the estimates committee hearing. I tabled the document that will set out our government's strategy to drive economic growth over the coming years. I outlined the planning reform—the biggest planning reform in Queensland's history—that has already been done and the work that is ahead for us for the next 12 months in continuing that planning reform. I talked about Economic Development Queensland—a totally new concept that the opposition did not even seem interested in. I talked about driving economic growth in Queensland and using government land to drive economic growth. I talked about the establishment of the units within the department that are tasked with doing this over the years ahead.


I talked about the Royalties for the Regions program; that incredibly important program for those of us who represent regional Queensland and want to see country people in country towns get their fair share of the resources that the state generates. I talked about the regional planning that is incredibly important to ensure that those two great pillars of our economy, agriculture and mining, can co-exist and continue to provide the economic benefits that they do and to deal with the community disaffection that has been a legacy of the former Labor government. We talked about those broad strategies that the government has outlined. We talked about the challenges ahead and the way the money that the government had allocated in the budget was going to be used to meet those challenges. I think that was a very effective use of the committee's time.

As the member for Gympie observed at the beginning of this consideration, I very much look forward to the estimates process because it gives me an opportunity to talk about those issues that never get raised in this parliament and those issues that the opposition never ask me about. I sit here day after day after day. I made the point to the estimates committee that for the period from the last estimates committee hearing to this one the opposition had asked me one question.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr SEENEY: It certainly was not. I certainly enjoyed the estimates committee process because it gave me an opportunity to talk about those programs that I am passionate about and which are at the core of the government's strategy to drive economic growth. They are the reasons this government exists—to drive the economic growth that is needed to build the economy in Queensland to put Queensland back on track.

(Time expired)

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.27 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the estimates committee process. I listened to the comments of the Deputy Premier. I found it a fruitful exercise. It was good to have that engagement with the ministers. There was some fruitful discussion. It was pleasing to be able to discuss issues with them.

The first issue of importance that I raised—and I think it is a good theme when talking about infrastructure development—was dams. We have heard a lot of talk from the federal opposition about dams and building irrigation and water storage in the northern part of Australia. At a flat period for our economy we are looking for opportunities for industries to grow. There are many opportunities for the development of industries in my electorate of Mount Isa. There was nothing tangible about dams. That question was asked and it was discussed.

We discussed the Royalties for the Regions program that is now available across all councils. It will make it difficult for small areas that have big mines. Mount Isa and Cloncurry have not got a dollar out of it yet. They are now competing with the rest of Queensland for funding. It is going to be very difficult for them to get any funding when they are competing with all the other regions. I identified that as a problem.

Another issue that I thought was important to raise with the Minister for Energy and Water Supply was the impact of the LNG industry coming on line next year. I have read numerous articles that indicate to me that that is expected to push the price of gas up from \$3 to \$4 a gigajoule to \$9 a gigajoule. I have many industries in my area, such as Incitec Pivot's phosphate plant to name one. The power supply source at Mount Isa relies 100 per cent on gas. I know that a lot of people are scared about their forward gas contracts now.

There has been a lot of discussion about the cost of having this market opened up and how it is going to raise the price of gas in Australia for our domestic industry. It will be very damaging. My question was what are the government strategies to deal with that issue, because undeniably it is an issue. As far as I can tell, there are no strategies to address that. What has been much discussed is the gas reserve policy, which is abhorrent to some and is labelled as some form of protectionism. It is done in the west and it is done in other countries around the world. I thought that was an important issue to raise.

We also discussed the issue of having effective water supplies delivered to areas. That was one of the propositions put forward in the forward strategy. I certainly have a couple of areas within the Mount Isa electorate—Forsayth and Dajarra to name two—that have entirely inadequate water supplies. But, as far as I know, there is no plan in the future to correct that. That was something that I wanted to draw attention to.

The other issue I raised with Minister McArdle was that of cost recovery for water. There are pricing mechanisms for the mines in the north-west area and their assets get revalued every year. The name of the program by which they revalue them and work out the cost recovery for those water assets escapes me, but they keep being revalued. I think there is price gouging out there with some of the impositions placed on the mines. It is a significant cost for them. Everyone wants our mines to thrive out there so that we have strong business. That is an issue that has been raised with me out there.

Another issue that I raised was the dividends. It has been flagged that the dividends are going to be reduced and eventually taken away from Mount Isa City Council's water supply. It is one of only two in the state that work off that. That is going to prove a problem for people who will be paying more for their water if that dividend is not returned.


(Time expired)

Report adopted.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Jones, Mr K

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, please be advised that Kevin Jones, Sergeant-at-Arms, has officially retired after 21 years of distinguished service with the Parliamentary Service. Kevin commenced employment at Parliament House on 9 March 1992 and was quickly

promoted to the position of Deputy Chief Attendant and then Chief Attendant. In 2002, Kevin assumed responsibility for security services and was subsequently appointed to the position of Sergeant-at-Arms and Manager of Security and Attendants.

Kevin was awarded a meritorious service badge in 2002 for his work on the regional parliament in North Queensland and the Clerk's award in 2011 for his excellence of work over many years in support of the Parliamentary Service. Kevin was an integral part of the Parliamentary Service team and will be missed. However, I am sure that you will join with me in wishing Kevin all the very best in his retirement.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Sitting suspended from 6.35 pm to 7.35 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill


Resumed from p. 2431.

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee be adopted.

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (7.35 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2013 and my committee's participation in the process which resulted from the estimates hearing of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, held on 18 July 2013. This hearing represents my first estimates hearing as chair and as a committee member since coming into this House. I wish to thank my colleague the member for Warrego, Mr Howard Hobbs, for his assistance in answering some questions on procedural effectiveness and how a committee runs an estimates hearing.

Now to the estimates hearing. I wish to place on record how we did things. We agreed to the regime of having government and non-government members being allocated question time in blocks of 20 minutes, with there not being a strict adherence to the time limit but for it to act fairly. For my part, the process worked very well and, more importantly, it was a very fair process. It allowed the non-government members to have follow-up questioning. This process—with the Minister for Police, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Mr Jarrod Bleijie, having a solid grasp of the issues relevant to their respective responsibilities—added to the efficiency and effectiveness of the hearing.

The structuring of the questioning format, as decided by my committee, minimised the time lost for ministerial staff and commissioners waiting in the precincts of the hearing, as far as it was possible. I give due notice and reference to the 2013-14 budget estimates report. It is a document worth reading in that it sets out my committee's work and how the hearing process works.

It is very pleasing to be a member of a Newman LNP government, as expenditure has been both controlled and disciplined. There is a need to remind Queenslanders that we continue to live in the shadow of Bligh's and Labor's debt which consisted of a consolidated debt of about \$65 billion and an annual fiscal deficit of around \$7 billion. While the government is targeting to bring Queensland's fiscal position into surplus hopefully by 2015-16, the decline in the world economy has made the task more difficult but still hopefully achievable. It is not just the world economy that causes our government to be burdened by debt but also the absolute intransigence of the federal Rudd Labor government. To have an annual fiscal deficit of about \$20 billion and for that deficit to be growing by \$3 billion a week, combined with a total debt of over \$260 billion, has not helped Queensland at all.

Mr Choat: You can thank Shayne Neumann for that.

Mr BERRY: I am not going to mention the member for Blair. I think it is unwarranted in these hallowed halls of legislature. Queensland is a regional state requiring major infrastructure. Queensland has been held back by the intransigence that I have referred to previously. Projects are on hold which can assist Australia's fiscal position by paying off debt, getting people into employment and reclaiming Queensland's AAA rating.

I now turn to my constituency, the electorate of Ipswich. Very soon I will be accompanying the Minister for Police and Community Safety to the opening of the Ripley Fire Station—one of those infrastructure projects that I have talked about previously that this government has been so active in providing to my constituents. Very soon Ipswich will be accommodating 1,200 public servants. There are many other areas where my government has invested in our region and rightly so. I will remind the mayor of Ipswich, Mayor Paul Pisasale, of his promise of having a welcoming barbecue for the newly arriving public servants. Ipswich is a great place to live, work and play.

I wish to acknowledge the hardworking secretariat of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee and thank them not only for their hard work and dedication but also for their intellectual input. I extend my thanks to the members of my committee for their assistance in ensuring that the questions to ministers and commissioners were seamless. My committee works extremely hard, and I believe it is one of the busiest committees in the parliament.

I will just make a very brief reference to the member for Bundamba. She decided to go to the *Queensland Times*. Unfortunately by doing that she showed the people of Ipswich how much she does not know about the estimate hearing process. Oh, well, maybe there will be another day when the member for Bundamba will actually find out how the system works. I am sure in the next 20 years she will get it down to a very fine art. I am looking forward to that day. It is going to be a great time for Ipswich.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. I find the member for Ipswich's comments offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr BERRY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I actually said quite a bit. What part is offensive, I am just wondering?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! If you would withdraw the comments, that would help the chair.

Mr BERRY: Indeed. Unqualifiedly I withdraw the comments so far as it concerns the words 'member for Bundamba'.

Mrs MILLER: No, he cannot do that, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr BERRY: Would you like me to go further?


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If you could just withdraw the comments, that would help the chair.

Mr BERRY: I withdraw those comments.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you.

Mr BERRY: But I might say that before the member for Bundamba goes to the press she ought to consult me. I will give her a hand.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (7.40 pm): I rise to comment on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report and its deliberations. I thank the committee secretariat for its assistance to all committee members. I note that the format of the budget papers is one that some people may find challenging. We often hear the phrase that the devil is in the detail and the fine print. There is no doubt when studying our extensive budget papers and the contents of the various line items that it is sometimes very challenging to understand what those line items refer to.

I listened to the member for Ipswich and the chairman of our committee speak, and I thank him for the way he allowed our committee hearings to be free flowing so that if a committee member was on a line of questioning he allowed the member to continue without being very rigid in the requirements for questioning. We certainly saw a significant improvement in the way our committee has been operating and how the hearing progressed.

I note that the Minister for Police and Community Safety is in attendance. Last year he was passionate with his answers and unfortunately I think some of us thought, 'The minister is waffling and taking too long.' I thank the minister very much for his contribution. He certainly has had a difficult task in bearing the brunt of the government's new tax. We hear the leader of the federal Liberal National Party talking about budgets and new taxes. No doubt unfortunately the Minister for Police and Community Safety had to bear that on the chin and cop it sweet. The Minister for Police and Community Safety is certainly held in very high regard in Queensland, and he has had to cop that decision of the government. No doubt it is the decision of the Premier and his leadership team, and the minister will do the best he can.

To return to the deliberations, I note that many Newman government ministers during the committee hearings have continued to claim that the budget papers show the Newman government is going to continue to deliver on its pre-election commitment of transparency and open government. I put on the record that I do not believe this Newman government knows how to be open and transparent and I do not believe the budget papers actually show that.

I believe the Attorney-General has shown how this get-square attitude of the Newman government permeates important decisions of the government. I note that the Attorney-General is in the chamber at the moment. There is no doubt that the get-square attitude of the Attorney-General has permeated so many important decisions. Quite frankly, at the next state election hopefully Queenslanders will reflect that in their votes at the voting booths. I urge all Queenslanders to take their rates notices when they go to vote and look at the Newman government's big new tax. They try to camouflage it and say that it is a levy. You know what it is? It is a big new tax. I put a question to the Minister for Police about how much it would cost to provide—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Order! The member has the call.


Mr WELLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe that during my contribution I need to give special recognition to the Crime and Misconduct Commission. I believe the Crime and Misconduct Commission is an agency which has the capacity to check the excesses of the government. Quite frankly, I believe this government has again continued the get-square attitude with the Crime and Misconduct Commission. We heard the Attorney-General's comments during the debate. I also reflect on his contributions during the last estimates hearings. The attitude of the Newman government towards the Crime and Misconduct Commission really concerns me. We have seen cutbacks. I have a real concern that those cutbacks may impact on significant decisions that the Crime and Misconduct Commission may have to make. I really believe that some of the important decisions—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr WELLINGTON: I am not listening to the Attorney-General. You will have your chance to contribute later. I have real concerns when the Crime and Misconduct Commission is considering undertaking important investigations which may require a lot of preparation that may not deliver some short-term results for the government they may have to question whether they are able to continue with those significant investigations which may have major ramifications for Queensland.

Recently we have seen the outcome of significant investigations of the interstate crime-fighting commission ICAC. I hope we never see similar examples in Queensland of ministers and politicians behaving as badly as some have interstate. That is the reason I say during this contribution that we need to fully resource the Crime and Misconduct Commission so it can investigate whatever it feels is appropriate.

(Time expired)

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (7.45 pm): It gives me great pleasure as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to rise to speak to the estimates committee process. Obviously ours is a very passionate committee. Whilst not all members of the committee do agree, I think we have very interesting discussions and very positive outcomes in terms of the reports that we see. I thought the estimates process ran incredibly well for the legal affairs committee, and I think that is a tribute to the chair of the committee. I would like to acknowledge the contribution that all of my colleagues make and the committee secretariat makes in ensuring that the estimates process runs smoothly for us.

The Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee estimates day was an incredibly interesting one, Mr Deputy Speaker, as I am sure you would remember. It was a day filled with people asking questions about donations, asking questions about who posted what on Facebook, about whether or not they did a beep test. There were questions about whether or not someone could understand a balance sheet and surprise, surprise the Labor Party was not able to understand a balance sheet and was not able to understand the concept of a surplus. But I have no doubt that the member for Bundamba now understands how to read a balance sheet and a surplus thanks to the chair of Legal Aid Queensland who pointed out to her that there had not been a cut in funding. What there had been was a cut in spending which meant that they had a surplus—a foreign concept for a member of the Labor Party, I am sure.

What was good to see was the funding commitments that have been made in the Police and Community Safety portfolio and the Attorney-General's portfolio. Coming from the Gold Coast, I was particularly pleased to see funding for the Gold Coast police helicopter. I note that today the police minister and the Premier went to the Gold Coast to officially launch the new police helicopter. I would like to put on the record my thanks not only to the Premier but also in particular to the Minister for Police and Community Safety while he is in the chamber for the contribution that he is making and that the government is making to ensure that the Gold Coast community feels safe.

I would also like to acknowledge the increasing number of police that we are seeing on the beat. The feedback that I am receiving from my community, and that I know my Gold Coast colleagues are receiving, is that they are heartened to see more police officers on the road. They are heartened to see more police officers on the beat. They really do feel that the Newman government is putting more police out there and that we are revitalising those front-line services, which is something that we said to the people of Queensland we would do. We made a strong commitment to the people of Queensland and we are honouring it.

The other thing that I am also particularly pleased to see is that we have funding for boot camps right across Queensland. As someone who comes from the Gold Coast, I have had the opportunity to go out to the boot camp west of Beaudesert and it was a particularly enjoyable experience. It might have been a cold and wet day and that was perhaps a little unfortunate because it meant that we were not able to enjoy all of the activities.


Mr Boothman interjected.

Miss BARTON: I went with the member for Albert. We were the only ones who were game enough to do it. We went on the flying fox. There is footage of me, and I am pleased to say that I did not scream like a girl as some people thought I might do.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Miss BARTON: I will take the interjection from the Attorney-General. The member for Burleigh did not go on the flying fox, but he did film me on the flying fox. So he is the one with the video footage. This government is committed to investing in those key areas in which Queenslanders want to see investment. We are making sure that offices such as the coroner are able to serve the people of Queensland well. We have seen that Legal Aid and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions are able to serve the people of Queensland well. We discovered during the estimates process that Births, Deaths and Marriages is looking at new ways that they can share information with Queenslanders so they can understand their heritage and so that their future children will be able to understand their heritage.

I think that this budget was a fantastic one. I think that the commitments we saw in these portfolio areas, in particular, were great. I thought that the chair of the committee did make sure that the estimates process ran very well. As the member for Nicklin said, it was incredibly free flowing. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and to prosecute certain cases. Both the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police and Community Safety, as well as the departmental officers and the respective commissioners in the portfolio of the Minister for Community Safety, answered their questions very well. As a member of the government, I was heartened to see the transparency of the government as we endeavoured to find out all of the details of this budgetary process.

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.50 pm): The Labor Party has not walked away from the core stated aims of police recruitment as set out in the Fitzgerald inquiry report. Fitzgerald said—

Investigation and verification of the background of each applicant must be undertaken, to ensure that only individuals of honesty and integrity are admitted to the Force ...

The opposition has long been concerned about the standards and vetting processes that allow people to enter the Police Academy and are equally concerned about the lowering of standards which seems to have been done to meet an election promise. Fine people are undoubtedly entering the Police Academy; one bad apple is the issue here. Despite me writing to the minister outlining some of these concerns in December last year, the minister appeared unwilling to answer basic questions about my concerns during the estimates hearing. He said that I should write a letter and my questions would be answered. I do not know how many letters I need to write to the minister, but the fact that the minister refuses to answer simple questions about the standards applied to recruits that he is letting into the academy is very concerning to the opposition. Clearly the minister believes in 'hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil' when it comes to bad news under his watch. I can inform the House that I have lost confidence in the minister being able to deal with these matters and I have written to the Police Commissioner and await a response from him.

I will quote from the Fitzgerald inquiry report about the function of the opposition, which is particularly important in the context of the way estimates is run and the standards applied to the police minister. The report states—

One of the functions of any opposition party in Parliament is to expose errors and misconduct by public officials. Unless the Opposition can discover what has happened or is happening and give consideration to events with expert assistance, it cannot expose and criticise activities and the people involved. It is effectively prevented from doing its job.


By the government refusing to answer questions, the opposition is prevented from doing its job. Fitzgerald went on to say—

It is essential that the Government is not able to claim that secrecy is necessary when the only thing at risk is the exposure of a blunder or a crime.

The minister must start to take responsibility for his portfolio and answer the more difficult questions. Poor decisions or other blunders must not be prevented from being brought to the public's attention because the risk is too great that unsuitable people will slip through the cracks.

The minister must be extremely embarrassed about his childish outburst against the United Firefighters Union. I put a simple question to the minister to comment on statements from the senior firefighters union. It had nothing to do with the UFU. The senior officers said that they held grave concerns for public safety and officer safety if the recommendations of the Malone review into the Rural Fire Service were implemented. The outburst that accompanied my question was ridiculous and revealing. We need look no further than the vitriol and hatred expressed towards working people from the LNP last night, particularly the venom spewed by the Attorney regarding unions and unionists. The mere mention of the word 'union' sends most LNP members into a frenzy despite the Premier's oft stated view that he is an enthusiastic supporter of unions—100 per cent. This enthusiasm and subsequent government actions could not be more in contrast. It is about time the minister started to negotiate fairly with firefighters and ambulance officers, come to an agreement over pay and stop playing petty games. The fact that the LNP government underspent \$20.6 million by not reaching an agreement with firefighters and paramedics, not to mention the associated legal costs in resisting that, means that this government has ripped \$20 million out of the hands of firefighters' and ambos' families. That is disgraceful. Once this LNP ideological rubbish is out of the way in terms of dealing with those employees, we can move on and try to get some simple explanations as to why, under an LNP government, there are projections of more people dying in car accidents, more people being hospitalised due to car accidents and more members of the community expected to be victims of crime, especially with more stolen cars. Perhaps the minister can explain why all he seems to be prepared to do is move the target estimates so they can pretend they have achieved something next estimates period.

In conclusion, the hearings I was associated with were well run and I appreciate the support of the chair in that endeavour.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.55 pm): I rise to speak on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee report of the budget estimates hearing. First, I would like to place on record my thanks to the secretariat and all the staff who do a lot of hard work in the background to make sure these hearings and our regular committee meetings work well. I would also like to thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for chairing our meetings. I think you gave the opposition great latitude, sometimes letting them talk for 25, 27, or 28 minutes. They asked question after question, so much so that they actually ran out of questions on a couple of occasions. The Attorney-General was answering all of the questions they had and on a couple of occasions they ran out.

A government member: Embarrassed!

Mr WATTS: I would have been embarrassed. We had plenty of questions to ask but we wanted to give the opposition an opportunity to ask questions and it was embarrassing for them when they had none. I also need to thank my colleagues on the committee as well as the member for Logan, who joined the hearing for the day. I really appreciate that.


I note that earlier the Deputy Premier said that the whole point of estimates is to set the agenda, the broad theme. The broad theme coming from our Attorney-General and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is to be tough on crime. The legislative agenda that we have brought into this House clearly shows that we have been tough on crime. I am sure that the people of Toowoomba North appreciate all of the legislation that has come forward, whether it be legislation that tightens up the ownership of weapons or hooning. Lots of different areas have been tightened up and, if time permits, I might come back to some of those.

Another interesting part of our broad theme in government and particularly in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is the delivery of efficient service. The taxpayers of Queensland have precious dollars which we use to deliver the services that they require. A great innovation that demonstrates that efficiency can be seen in the JP program in QCAT. That assists in providing swift justice in an affordable manner such that we can reduce some of the waiting lists that we inherited. I note that the clearance rates for several categories in relation to various courts were all over 100 per cent. They are now all operating more efficiently than previously.

Another theme of the Newman government is the cutting of red tape. I note in particular the cutting of red tape in relation to the Liquor Act, and I look forward to seeing more red tape cut. That is an industry with which I have been heavily associated that is completely overregulated. Once the expert panel submits some of its proposals and the Attorney-General hears those, I look forward to legislative solutions that will get big government off the back of industry so it can operate efficiently, safely and effectively, delivering good opportunities for people to go out and experience Queensland's hospitality and tourism without having to stand there filling in forms for hours and hours that then have to be posted to a bureaucrat.

The department itself has been well administered. I understand that there are several innovations which have been operating, and one of them is in youth justice. I think implementing the government's response to the review of the Youth Justice Act 1992 has been an important innovation. Many communities have been interested in the boot camps that have been offered, and certainly the people of my electorate of Toowoomba are very interested in these intervention camps. I did ask the Attorney-General a question about that, and he told me there was no funding for Toowoomba at the moment and that these trials need to finish in other places first, but I look forward to the time when they will be available in my community.

I would like to thank the Attorney-General, the department and all of the staff and various statutory officers who were there on the day. I think they all openly answered the questions which were put to them. It would have been good if the opposition had had more questions, but unfortunately they did run out of them on a couple of occasions. I thank the Attorney-General for delivering on the Newman government's agenda.

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (8.01 pm): I rise today to recommend that report No. 32 tabled by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee which addresses the services to be provided in the 2013-14 budget by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Queensland Police Service, and the Department of Community Safety be passed without amendment. I thank the chair, which happens to be the Acting Deputy Speaker the Member for Ipswich, and all of the committee members and, importantly, the secretariat and his team for their commitment and work.

We are nearly 18 months into the job of getting Queensland back on track, and we have continued to work to meet the targets in our six-month action plans. There have been many achievements in these areas of responsibility, and I commend our government for its action. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Community safety is a concern that is relevant to every community across Queensland. Recently, as I compiled and analysed all of the results from my electorate's biggest survey, it was found that 83 per cent of the respondents were concerned about youth crime; therefore, I am pleased to be able to report to my electorate our government's commitment by implementing the government's response to the review of the Youth Justice Act 1992, developing a blueprint for the future of youth justice and providing \$2.8 million for the youth boot camp trial.

I commend the Attorney-General on the work he is doing in this area under his ministerial portfolio and the steps we are taking as a government to turn young people away from lives of crime to the benefit of the community and the taxpayer—but at the end of the day, most of all, the individual.


This financial year the Queensland government will provide funding of \$1.4 million for the JP QCAT pilot program. This modernisation of the role of the JP in our community is part of a bigger aim to create a swifter justice system. We have recently seen an increase in the turnover rate of cases before QCAT from 98 per cent to 112 per cent. As the Attorney-General himself described it, we want QCAT to be a lean, mean justice machine. The JPs in my electorate of Bulimba are very excited and supportive of this program, which acknowledges the importance of services they provide to their community by giving them the opportunity to extend their service and experience.

In line with the government's commitment to revitalising front-line services in Queensland, the service delivery statements of the Queensland Police Service outlined the funding of \$63 million, which will put 267 police officers in the front line this year alone. I have recently had the pleasure of welcoming seven new constables at our local Morningside Police Station. They will be posted across a number of beats in my local district. In fact, since 24 March 2012 the Morningside Police Station alone has seen a 22 per cent increase in the number of policemen and women.

I also note that \$1 million will be put towards revitalising the Neighbourhood Watch program throughout the state. In the Bulimba electorate we are fortunate to have several very active Neighbourhood Watch groups. These groups help build a strong and resilient community and promote awareness of crime. My community survey found that over 52 per cent of the respondents indicated that they would consider joining a local Neighbourhood Watch group. This suggests that there is great potential for this program, and I look forward to our government putting that extra \$1 million funding towards its commitment to revitalise Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers and to seeing the positive outcomes firsthand. This year Neighbourhood Watch initiatives have been nicely complemented by the launch of the QPS myPolice blog which was raised in the estimates hearing. This new initiative targets crime and creates awareness. As social media becomes more and more a part of our daily lives, it is a fantastic way of getting instant updates to the community, thereby ensuring their safety and security. It is a well utilised resource that brings us up to speed with 21st century technology.

I also welcome our government's investment in strengthening the School Based Policing and Adopt-a-School programs. I have seen firsthand the benefits that this has had for both schoolchildren and police officers. Earlier this year at Parliament House I held a barbecue lunch with my local primary school captains and their respective Adopt-a-Cops. It is important that we continue to create strong relationships between police officers and our youth and positive attitudes towards the Police Service. During 2013-14 the Department of Community Safety will also purchase an additional 15 flood boats to support State Emergency Service groups and complete the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry funded program of 56 flood boats.

We are all very aware of the vital services the SES provides to our local communities and to broader Queensland. I take this opportunity to again congratulate and thank my local eastern SES group, in particular for the important role they play in extreme weather events—for example, ex-Cyclone Oswald in January this year—and also for their efforts in Bundaberg during the aftermath. I commend this report to the House.

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (8.06 pm): I also rise to make a contribution and to reflect on the estimates hearings conducted in the Legislative Council Chamber on Thursday, 18 July 2013. It has indeed been a great privilege for me to serve on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, as the portfolio areas of its focus are indeed extremely relevant and important to me and the people of Ipswich West. They most definitely reflect a number of the commitments that I made when I stood for election. As you would have heard me say in this chamber on many occasions, in terms of the natural disasters that we have experienced in South-East Queensland over the last few years, my electorate is indeed ground zero for a lot of it—particularly that which involves our dams. The people who work in the portfolios which the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee looks after are very important to me and my people.

Throughout my time as the member for Ipswich West—indeed, in many of the speeches that I have made to this parliament—I have reflected on the expectations of my people with regard to community safety and law and order in ensuring that as a government we address the decline of behaviour in our community in general. As I stated in my speech in this House last evening, the era of the excuse, the period of things being someone else's fault, as well as the age of getting off lightly, are coming to an end in Queensland. After a little more than a year we have seen real change in the policies delivered through both the Department of Justice and the Attorney-General and the

Department of Police and Community Safety. These changes have already had a positive impact, and the new legislative changes will deliver more and more on this government's and my personal commitment to get tough on crime and criminals.

Having participated in my first estimates hearing in 2012, I was more aware of what the process involved and was impressed at this year's hearings as to how our Attorney-General and Minister for Police and Community Safety approached the process. In typical fashion the honourable minister and the Attorney demonstrated their keen knowledge and understanding of their respective portfolios and how their policy decisions ultimately provide for a safe, secure and just Queensland—and, indeed, Ipswich West. I must also praise the professional conduct of the various advisors, commissioners, directors-general and other senior portfolio representatives, all of whom obviously have a very good grasp of the activities within their agencies and how the budget relates to them.

Staying on a positive note, this year's budget will see us cracking down on crime and criminals, ensuring adequate punishment is handed down and that there is adequate consideration about the adverse impacts of crime on my people. From improvements in sentencing, to the efficiency of how our courts are run, I know that my community can look forward to satisfactory decisions and outcomes as matters are presented to the courts. I particularly look forward to the new legislative provisions for addressing youth justice matters in the state over the next 12 months. We have seen dreadful examples of youth crime and public misbehaviour in Ipswich West this past year: there has been a stabbing in Rosewood and a youth lost his fingers at Leichhardt. These types of incidents are abhorrent, and the reforms of this government will go some way to preventing their recurrence.

I am stoked about specific allocations for my electorate including the new fire and rescue station at Brassall, the myPolice blog initiative, the additional police officers and, most importantly, the confidence and benefit our tough new laws and initiatives will bring about for my people. Be they in North Ipswich or Lowood, Grandchester or Karalee, we will protect them. We will get the scum off our streets and we will make certain that in future the punishment fits the crime.


Certainly all of the agencies that look after community safety—the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service including the auxiliaries and the rural fire services, our SES and of course our Corrections, although the Borallon jail is currently empty—work very well in my community. We appreciate them.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CHOAT: The federal government may have ideas of putting illegal immigrants in my electorate, but I can tell them that they will have a damn fight on their hands. I and my people do not want that in our neighbourhood.

I have a positive view of the new levy because the people in my electorate appreciate emergency services and the equipment required to look after people in times of need. All Queenslanders should contribute to that.

I applaud the minister and the Attorney-General for their dedication and drive, and I commend the men and women in their offices and their agencies for their professionalism. I look forward to my continued work on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee with my colleagues and to working hard for my people. I certainly commend the report to the House.

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (8.11 pm): These estimates demonstrate just how the Newman government's record investment in our free public hospital system and, indeed, the health minister's focus on good governance is getting Queensland Health back on track for patients and taxpayers. This requires not only ensuring that we avoid waste but also allocating resources so that they achieve the greatest quantum of health for the greatest number of people.

As the recent Chesterman report on the disastrous IBM payroll system has highlighted, there has been enormous waste, exceeding \$1 billion in just this one case. There has also been a failure to put in place the systems that can accurately determine how our most valuable resource—the time and expertise of our staff—translates into patient care and related services.

One of the bigger challenges for our health system is to strike a balance between investing in prevention and investing in treatment services, and such decisions are further complicated by having Commonwealth and state funding streams. Despite spending \$12.1 billion, or 27 per cent of the state's budget, on health, we cannot afford to do everything. Supported interventions need to be evidence based, although acquiring and interpreting that evidence is often complex and contentious.

There is, however, a substantial and growing body of evidence as to what health services we should disinvest in because of low or even negative effectiveness and in their place invest in activities that provide a clear return on investment.


The challenge is broader because there are many whole-of-government determinants of health. Examples include providing opportunities for meaningful work, housing, education, transport and public safety through law enforcement. All of these, of course, do require a strong economy, which is a key commitment and capability of the Newman government, and will require an Abbott federal government to contribute to even greater progress and security.

Just yesterday the Premier launched the Lives Lived Well organisation on the Speaker's Green here at parliament, reminding us of the vital role of non-government initiatives in contributing to the health of Queenslanders. That organisation is united in its mission to provide services in the community that reduce individual and social harms by addressing addictive behaviours, building individual and community capacity, and advocating and supporting healthy lifestyles. Dr Anthony Lynham, Royal Brisbane maxillofacial surgeon and ambassador for Lives Lived Well, reminded us that it costs us, the community, \$15 billion a year to treat alcohol related harms and injuries while getting only \$7 billion in tax. He estimates that 75 per cent of his work is alcohol related and 50 per cent of all police work is alcohol related.

Queensland hospital data shows that alcohol related admissions have soared by 50 per cent over 10 years, to some 30,000 hospitalisations. A report released yesterday by the New South Wales Auditor-General shows that in their system there were 50,000 hospitalisations, with emergency department attendances for acute alcohol problems being steady at around 9,000 a year, with 1,200 deaths. Their audit office estimates that the societal cost of alcohol abuse to New South Wales is \$3.78 billion, or \$1,565 for every household in the state, and this is likely to be similar in Queensland. A suite of measures has been proven to significantly reduce the level of alcohol related assault in Newcastle in New South Wales, and the member for Brisbane Central is currently looking at a range of options that could be tried here in Queensland to help reduce the burden.

There is a strong appetite in our community, particularly amongst health workers and law enforcement agencies, for leadership to change the degrading and dangerous culture of drunkenness, with all its personal and financial costs. Certainly families struggling to make ends meet would not be pleased to know that they were subsidising alcohol intoxication to the tune of some \$1,500 a year. Indeed, instead of tolerating alcohol abuse by our youngsters, a much better use would be as a renewable Queensland produced biofuel in our motor vehicles.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to share these observations on the estimates committee process which illustrate the very strong linkages across the whole of government between health and law and order, and I commend the work of the Attorney-General and his team in everything they are doing to produce a well-ordered and law-abiding group of citizens and, indeed, a broader culture of alcohol avoidance in terms of abuse in our society.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (8.16 pm): It is my pleasure to talk tonight to the committee report. Although I am not on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, the issues it deals with are key focus points for my constituents in Townsville. Having reviewed the committee's report No. 32 and the hearing transcript, I honestly feel assured that the portfolios are well managed by both the Attorney-General and the police minister and have been well provisioned for not only ongoing programs and commitment to law and order and safety but also new initiatives, procurement and acquisitions.

On reviewing the Attorney-General's portfolio, I note specifically for my region the contribution of \$15.9 million for the ongoing expansion and refurbishment of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, which I have visited a number of times with my colleague the member for Thuringowa and the Attorney-General.

Mr Cox: You would not want to be in there.


Mr HATHAWAY: You would not want to be in there. They are no longer holiday camps, I can assure you. Regrettably, youth crime has been a key issue for Townsville. Here we see a government that works both sides of the equation. I am keen to see that the Attorney-General is implementing the government's response to the review of the Youth Justice Act. In all my dealings with the many constituents who have raised youth crime as an issue, I have pointed them to the opportunity for them to have a say. Finally, it seems there will be some appreciation of the issues with youth justice. Sometimes the victims need consideration, and we as a government need to take that into account.

I am also keen to see the Attorney-General's continuing development of a blueprint for the future of youth justice. Probably the best thing relating to North Queensland in this regard is the Attorney-General's commitment to boot camps, for which this year some \$2.4 million has been allocated. Townsville will benefit from its own sentenced youth boot camp. I note that there are already a number of at-risk or intervention boot camps, but this demonstrates most importantly a government that is willing to look at new ways of doing things. Instead of just flogging the old horse and not making any impact, we are willing to take a risk and look at new options to get better outcomes for Queensland.

I welcome the Attorney-General's funding for the continuance of the JP QCAT program and the revitalisation and refocusing of the Justices of the Peace branch on compliance and support. It is clear that the government is not there just to serve our criminals. Indeed, the government is looking at more support for victims of crime—those who have been directly or indirectly affected by violent crime.

Another issue that is key in my area is the ongoing support for the drink-safe precinct trials and evaluations so that people can enjoy Flinders Street East in Townsville in safety. Our government is serious about law and order and community safety, and this is demonstrated by the police minister's support of police officers and emergency services personnel. Indeed, \$63 million is allocated towards new police officers that will produce about 267 new officers this year. Over the last 12 months the Townsville police district has seen an increase in the number of police officers of about 14 per cent and there has been an increase of output through our own North Queensland police academy in that previously in 2011 it produced 42 officers and this year alone it is funded to produce 161 officers.

I note that the member for Rockhampton, the opposition spokesperson for police, voted against police safety when we toughened laws for acts of assault against our police officers. I really do question the importance he places on our serving officers. I also note that he raised in this House the standard of recruits. I have viewed a number of induction parades at the North Queensland academy and note that there are a large number of ex-service personnel. Indeed, it is the richness of our officers who are drawn from all walks of life that actually makes them much better serving officers to the public of Queensland. In wrapping up, I thank the police minister. I also welcome his \$2.8 million injection for a new police catamaran and look forward to seeing that in Townsville in about 2015. Well done on that, Minister. I support the great changes that are happening. The justice and Attorney-General department, the police department and emergency services are in good hands.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (8.21 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 portfolio budget estimates. This estimates hearing was an embarrassment to the government on a number of fronts, but most tellingly was the fact that government members of the committee ran out of questions a short way into the second session. The interesting fact about this is that as a member of the committee you are actually paid extra money to serve on that committee and as chair you are paid even more. It is not very difficult to read the SDS. It is not too difficult to ask the questions and to go through the SDS.

I say to the Attorney-General that I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to examine the Acting Crime and Misconduct Commissioner, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the CEO of Legal Aid Queensland and of course the Public Trustee. It gave us great enjoyment to be able to ask a range of questions to all of these people because we considered—

Mr Bleijie: You asked the Ombudsman, 'What does the Ombudsman do in Queensland?'

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Attorney can have his say later. Staffing at the CMC was again raised as a significant issue at this year's estimates hearing, as it was last year. Some 28 positions have been disestablished. In addition, a further 26 permanent positions were vacant at the CMC as at 30 June 2013. Of these, only nine are currently being backfilled. Similarly, CMC staff gave a concerning analysis to the committee earlier this year in relation to the effect that the new confiscation laws are likely to have on resourcing. The opposition will be carefully scrutinising the budget next year to ensure that funding is increased in line with the workload.

The Attorney-General failed to adequately explain the reasons for the failure of the first boot camp at Kuranda. He was, however, prepared to admit that it fundamentally went wrong, a matter for which he took direct responsibility. The Attorney-General's position on mandatory voter ID for elections did not stand up to scrutiny, nor did his explanation of the increase in the donation disclosure cap to \$12,400. This is a significant reduction in openness when roughly 95 per cent of donations to the LNP and ALP were below \$12,400. The Attorney's explanation of the changes to the

public holidays in Queensland was laughable at best. He consistently explains moving Labour Day because it gives a more even spread of public holidays in the first and second halves of the year. The reality is there has been no change to the number of public holidays in the first and second halves of the year.

Finally, the Attorney-General has also provided advice that many of the initiatives he has announced since becoming Attorney have been funded from a reallocation of resources realised from savings achieved through prudent staff management. It is clear from the budget papers therefore that the staff cuts, at least in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, have largely been to fund election commitments rather than to pay down debt.

Any changes to union accountability laws in Queensland were exposed as being purely politically motivated. The changes to disclosure that apply only to employee and not employer organisations, the creation of the Building Construction Compliance Branch and the abolition of industrial inspectors clearly showed the motivation. As the director-general said—

The Registrar of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission advises that there is one (1) ongoing investigation into the financial administration of the Queensland Retail Traders Association.

I am advised that the registrar has not conducted any other investigation for wrongdoing by any industrial organisation in the past 10 years.



Hon. JM DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—LNP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (8.25 pm): It is a great privilege to speak on the estimates process. I thank the committee chair, the member for Ipswich, for his management of the budget estimates proceedings and the other members of the committee for their fine and very decisive questioning. The estimates process was a pivotal opportunity to discuss the many achievements this government has worked on to date and those that will be presented in the coming year. There is much to highlight within an entire portfolio budget of approximately \$4 billion. The importance of this budget was to continue to provide the best equipment and facilities for the hardworking emergency services staff and the vital volunteers who give of their time throughout this great state in order to help them to perform their everyday duties, even during times of emergency, as we saw earlier this year when Cyclone Oswald crossed the coast.


The Queensland Police budget for 2013-14 highlights a record \$2 billion in operating and \$110.6 million in capital funding—going a long way to revitalising front-line policing, protecting the community and tackling crime. The Police budget sees a continuation of many of the election commitments provided by this government. For example, this year we will see the continuation of our election commitment to provide an additional 1,100 police over four years, with \$63 million provided for an extra 267 officers joining the additional 300 officers who were recruited last year; and \$3 million to continue providing police helicopter services to the Gold Coast and South-East Queensland—a valuable resource for this great state of Queensland. I had the pleasure to officially launch the replacement helicopter with the Premier earlier today at the Surf Life Saving pad—a great iconic partnership between Surf Life Saving and the Queensland Police Service. When you see the red and gold on the beach and the blue of the police, you certainly know that you are in good hands. I also thank the committee for the opportunity to discuss the importance of our police helicopter commitment during the hearing.

There is a further \$1 million as part of our commitment to revitalise Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers. There is also a further \$70.6 million for the Queensland Police Service budget going towards new and upgraded operational equipment. The total Department of Community Safety budget for 2013-14 saw an increase of \$1.925 billion, with \$149.8 million for capital expenses. We have assigned \$21 million towards the commissioning of 155 new and replacement ambulance vehicles, a contribution of 25 more ambulance vehicles than last year. I commend the commissioner of the Queensland Ambulance Service and all of its fine officers. When we came to government, ramping at hospitals in Queensland equated to a bit over 39,000 hours every month. In the first 12 months we have brought that down to less than 1,300 hours every month, and that is a remarkable achievement by those officers.

We have also allocated more urban and rural fire appliances, with 28 new fire appliances and 21 rural appliances for 2013-14. This is an increase of five urban and 11 rural appliances on the number provided last year. These appliances make significant contributions to the everyday duties of our hardworking urban and rural firefighters and the many volunteers who assist them. The SES will receive an additional 27 flood boats to support their duties in emergency situations, with 15 of those flood boats completing the funding provided by the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

I would also like to thank the committee for allowing me the opportunity to detail the emergency management fire and rescue levy. There has been an increasing number of disasters impacting on our state. Therefore, this government has created a levy to ensure a substantial funding base for vital emergency services delivering into the future—unlike the previous government, which had to borrow the money from overseas. Because we did not have our AAA credit rating, we were unable to get the funding from inside Australia to be able to provide for these vital emergency services volunteers.

I thank the committee for highlighting many initiatives in this report and also acknowledge the hard work that the government is doing in delivering services and support within the Police and Community Safety portfolio for all the people of Queensland, not just a minority.

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (8.30 pm): I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate on the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I particularly thank the members of the committee: the member for Ipswich, for his due care and due diligence with respect to chairing the committee process, and all the other members of the committee. Despite the fact, as honourable members have said, that the opposition ran out of questions, I think it was a great estimates committee. I might address that matter firstly.

I have here the report, which I have had an interest in reading this afternoon. In the statement of reservation by the honourable member for Rockhampton he states—

Another issue of concern was the time allocated for questions by the Committee.

I will quote further from his statement of reservation—

This year, as was the case last year, there was no consistent time period allowed for questions and answers by both non-government and government members. In fact, the Chair of the Committee, the Member for Ipswich ... commenced proceedings by saying he would operate on a twenty minute sequence. It was initially refreshing to see that he had taken on board the observations made by the Opposition members in their statement of reservation last year, where ten minutes had been ... insufficient time ... This was the format adopted for the first session, but shortly into the second session, the Committee seemed to change from government to non-government questions on an ad hoc basis. In fact, at one stage, in the middle of questions by the non-government members—

and the rest is history. I saw the opposition leader struggling to reach the end of her 20-minute session. This was only about 2½ hours into it. I saw her struggling to fulfil her 20 minutes—

Mr Nicholls: How long did you have?

Mr BLEIJIE: Six hours. Two and a half hours into the six hours the opposition leader was struggling to fill a 20-minute block—and I saw her scratching around—because I was giving short answers, which took the opposition leader by surprise, of course. Then when the opposition leader stopped and said, ‘Mr Chairman, over to the government members,’ the honourable chair said, quite rightly, ‘Oh, we’re fine for the moment. The government does not have any questions at the minute. Back to you,’ there was an awkward silence. I was sitting there wondering if I should still be there. The opposition leader looked at the member for Bundamba and she did not have any questions. The opposition leader then said, ‘Peter Wellington, over to you.’ So within three hours of the committee hearing of six hours the opposition leader had no questions left and then they had to go to the loony, lefty, loopy Independent member for Nicklin.

So I had a little sign that I put up towards the fourth hour of the estimates hearing saying, ‘Am I wanted anymore?’ because I was not getting any questions. Then in the final two hours of my six-hour estimates hearing the Public Trustee was invited to come up and the opposition leader asked, ‘Public Trustee, can you tell us about the important role the Public Trustee plays in Queensland?’ I said, ‘Hang on, this should be a government question.’ So it was quite uneventful, uninspiring, boring—

Mr Nicholls: I think your answers were good.

Mr BLEIJIE: The answers were exceptionally good, if I had the opportunity to get asked a question. But anyway, life goes on. It was uneventful.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General has an appropriation of about \$800 million a year. The best the opposition could come up with in the first five minutes of the estimates hearing was the question by the member for Bundamba asking why I attended the Chaplain Watch fundraising event in the Valley and my ministerial office paid the \$50 ticket. Out of an \$800 million appropriation, that is the best the opposition could come up with—a \$50 ticket. As a minister, I was invited to an event and my office said, ‘Yes,’ and paid for the event. That \$50 was the biggest issue that the Labor Party could raise with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Mr Nicholls: They were focusing on the issues.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the Treasurer. They were focusing on the big issues of the state.

Mr Nicholls: Did they ask about the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre?

Mr BLEIJIE: They did ask me about the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. I had to set them on the path that, if everything had gone by the book, it would have been open by now. It would have been under budget, of course. But the Labor Party could never do anything on time—

Mr Nicholls: How many years have they promised that?

Mr BLEIJIE: They could never do anything on budget, as the honourable Treasurer says.

The estimates committee hearing was absolutely uneventful. This government has a clear commitment to the people of Queensland. We are getting the basics right. This is a great state with great opportunities. We are rebalancing the scales of justice. We have hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars—millions of dollars—going out to victims of crime groups right around Queensland. I thank all honourable members for their contribution. I thank the honourable Treasurer for the great job that he is doing to try to once and for all get this state back on track so that this state can have the fiscally responsible government that it deserves.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): Order! Attorney-General, during your contribution there were some unparliamentary comments made. I ask that you withdraw them.

Mr BLEIJIE: 'Loony, lefty Independent member for Nicklin'. I withdraw. Just clarifying, those were the words.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Those were the words. If you can withdraw them.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker.


Report adopted.

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is—

That the report of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee be adopted.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (8.36 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the report of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. The recommendation was passed that the committee recommends that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2013 for the committee areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

I want to congratulate the ministers who appeared before the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Minister Cripps, Minister Powell and Minister McVeigh. In the nine months since those ministers had last appeared before the estimates committee you could see how they had grown into their jobs and how their understanding of the issues had definitely improved and how the departments are working to do what this government was elected with a mandate to do. They are cutting red tape, they are improving the management of the Public Service and they are improving the delivery of services. This is what it is all about for this government, and these departments have done that very successfully.

However, it is with a bit of a heavy heart that I reflect on the contempt for the institution of parliament that was shown by some of the other members who were present. It was really disappointing. They were lazy, they were shallow—


A government member: Rude.

Mr RICKUSS: Rude. At times the shallow pool that we are drawing from on the other side of the chamber is very disappointing. It really is. The ineptitude continued, demonstrated by the fact that they did not even realise which department and which portfolio some of their questions should be directed to. It is really disappointing. All I can say to some of the members who were present at the estimates committee hearing is that they should look at some previous estimates committee hearings and look at the estimates committee hearings of some of the other parliaments in Australia. They should also look at how Lawrence Springborg used to examine issues when he was in opposition or how, in the federal sphere, George Brandis examines issues. It might even give them an idea of how

they can question things and look at the real issues—how green tape is being managed, how vegetation is being managed. It is really disappointing when a well-resourced, lazy opposition has to depend on 7.30 and newspaper articles. It is virtually the fourth estate that is the opposition in this chamber.

I find this totally disappointing. Respect for the whole process was also disappointing. Those opposite have raised issues about sandmining on Stradbroke Island. The member for Cleveland had a very strong mandate on the island. He won nearly 70 per cent of the vote. He got over 60 per cent of the vote in some of the booths that he thought he would not win. He went to the election with a mandate of ILUAs, jobs and extended sandmining. That is what was put up as the proposal. For this opposition to be attacking those issues seems totally trivial compared to what was being done in the portfolios. From my understanding, a couple of Labor members from the Quandamooka people have a bit of a grudge in relation to some of these issues. I feel it is disappointing when this lazy, overresourced opposition cannot mount an argument for a day on some of the real issues.

I would like the House to note that the member for Dalrymple, Shane Knuth, rang me up and advised that he could not be here tonight as he has to be away for a funeral. I put on the record his apologies. The ministers' improvements were noticeable. The departments are being managed better and are really delivering services. That has come through in a broad range of the portfolio areas that we looked at. I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (8.41 pm): Can I start by thanking both the parliamentary staff and also the departmental staff who helped with the conduct of estimates. I found their assistance and all of their efforts incredibly fantastic and I commend them for all their efforts. I think we have seen from the contribution from the member for Lockyer just how poorly serviced we are in terms of some of the government members. He is hardly worth the tens of thousands of extra dollars he is getting because of the increase in wages that has been effected by this government.

In relation to the vegetation management issues raised at the estimates committee, what was very clear from questioning by the opposition is that the minister and the department conceded that they had not done any scientific analysis, they had not done any land assessment or vegetation analysis before they had decided to actually take the axe to the Vegetation Management Act in Queensland—not one single shred of scientific evidence before they decided to gut the Vegetation Management Act. The director-general of the department conceded that. He also conceded that it was a reasonable calculation that WWF put out that 700,000 hectares of vegetation would now be available to clearing. He conceded that that was a reasonable calculation. This proves that this is policy driven by ideology pure and simple—no science, no evidence. What is more, it shows that the press release of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines attacking WWF was not only politically motivated but also deliberately misleading.

Earlier today Minister Powell proved how he had an enormous capacity to get up and talk a whole lot of nothing about anything, even stuff outside his portfolio. What is really clear is that that is really how he is managing his department. For the second year in a row we have significant decreases in the department's budget. He conceded the evidence was there that a further 30 positions would be axed from the department. He said it was only 30 positions—not that it was 30 breadwinners, not that it was 30 Queenslanders who had families behind them, not that it was 30 Queenslanders who shopped in local businesses, who sent their kids to school, perhaps paid school fees. He did not concede that. He gave himself a pat on the back for limiting it to 30. Well congratulations, Minister! You can rack one up for the good guys, I suppose.

What was also evident at the estimates committee hearing was that further key environmental responsibilities are actually being taken out of the minister's hands and given to the Deputy Premier. We all know that the Deputy Premier hates anybody—hates anybody—who espouses any sort of objection based on environmental concerns. He thinks that everybody who raises a concern about environmental issues is mad. He thinks they are extreme.

Mr SEENEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Watts): What is your point of order?


Mr SEENEY: Obviously those comments are offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask the member for South Brisbane to withdraw those comments.

Ms TRAD: I withdraw. The environment minister no longer has concurrence responsibility in terms of major development in this state. The ability of his department to set conditions on big development that would affect wetlands, that would affect a whole range of sensitive ecological areas,

has now been handed over to the Deputy Premier through the single agency referral process. Congratulations! There will be no longer in this state a reasonable environmental assessment process for major development.

It is also clear in terms of mine water release that this government is very happy to take a very lax approach and that was probably because it had a secret arrangement with the Queensland Resources Council when it came to lifting royalties and what sort of offsets would be put in place. Not only did the minister come to the estimates committee with a very limited amount of information about mine water release into the Callide Dam; he had to actually wait for departmental officers to come back to him. This is a minister who actually has less responsibility and what he has left he actually cannot look after.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (8.46 pm): I rise this evening to make a short and sensible contribution to the debate in support of the estimates report by the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee as part of the Appropriation Bill. I will start by congratulating all three ministers who appeared before the committee on 19 July 2013, namely the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, and thank them for their straightforward and detailed responses to our many questions on the day. What a busy day it was!

Tonight I will confine most of my remarks, if I can, to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry who is all over his portfolio like a cheap suit. But I suppose that is what happens when your DNA is full of agriculture. He is the man who is putting agriculture—primary industries as some of us in this place would call it—back on a pedestal in Queensland, and not before time. In making a contribution here this evening the minister talked of his capital expenditure program of nearly \$20 million. This will be money well spent across various industry sectors such as the cattle industry, sugar and fisheries which, of course, are vital industries throughout the Mackay-Whitsunday region which I proudly represent in this place.

Back home we are probably best known for coal and cane—not necessarily in that order—not to mention tourism, of course, but our beef industry is significant. Just to quantify that, we actually have about 10 per cent of the beef cattle industry herd in Queensland across the three local government areas of Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac. Needless to say, I am very pleased to note the minister's announcement that \$2 million is being spent to continue the upgrade of the Spyglass Beef Research Station north of Charters Towers. That is good news for the pastoral industry and something I am sure my fellow North Queenslanders on the committee, the member for Thuringowa and the member for Barron River, would concur 100 per cent with, particularly given their intimate knowledge of the cattle industry in the tropics. The minister also mentioned the government's \$11.2 million drought relief package, a package that will surely help our embattled beef producers in the north and the west, remembering that now half of Queensland is drought declared. Of course, that has come after the live cattle exports were banned by federal Labor. We know all about that.

Government members: Shame!

Mr COSTIGAN: Shame indeed. It was 'Aussie' Joe—more like 'Sloppy' Joe—hurting the man on the land and ripping the guts out of this great industry. There is no doubt about that. It reminds me actually of another great federal Labor initiative: scuttling Australia's four surveillance vessels for biosecurity in Northern Australian waters, something the member for Cook, I am sure, is very much across and replacing them with just one vessel. I am sure that is not lost on the people of Northern Australia coming into the federal election on 7 September, when you remember that those vessels are out there to be on the watch for things such as potential threats like foot-and-mouth disease.

The minister gave a reassuring answer to a question posed by the member for Lockyer, our committee chair, in relation to the state's preparedness for a possible FMD outbreak. He said—


We are committed to ensuring that not only is Queensland prepared for foot and mouth disease but, in order to measure that progress, we have set the objective of being the most prepared state in Australia.

I commend the minister for his work in relation to Bovine Johne's Disease. Of course, that has been a huge issue for cattle producers of late. Not only is it a massive issue in Queensland but also it is unprecedented across the land as far as the Cattle Council of Australia is concerned. In his answer, the minister noted that about 170 properties were initially quarantined. I commend Minister McVeigh for his work in getting that number down to around the 40 mark, as I understand it is at this point in time. Minister McVeigh is certainly on the front foot when it comes to biodiversity arrangements. I saw

that firsthand in Mackay this morning. He was in the tropics attending to issues in relation to the sugar industry and an outbreak of red witchweed on some local farms. Obviously that is of great concern to local canegrowers. I say 'well done' to Minister McVeigh for getting on top of that straightaway.

I commend the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection for his outstanding work in relation to the \$10 million allocated to the Great Barrier Reef protection program, which is not lost on the good people of the Whitsundays. It was great to see Minister Powell and Minister Dickson, whose portfolio encompasses national parks, alongside Libby Edge, our great environmental champion, only last week in relation to the Everyone's Environment grants and what Libby is doing to protect our natural habitat in the Whitsundays.

I commend the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister Cripps, for work in his portfolio such as funding NRM groups such as Reef Catchments, which is based in Mackay and now has an office in the Whitsundays, through to his work in exploring the bush with geological surveys. That is important work. I commend the estimates report to the House in support of the Appropriation Bill.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (8.51 pm): I appreciate this opportunity to thank the three ministers involved in the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee hearing in the estimates process: the Hon. Andrew Cripps, the Hon. Dr John McVeigh and the Hon. Andrew Powell. It is important that I point out that these three portfolios are essential not just to the state but also to the government with our plan for the four-pillar economy. Obviously, two of those pillars are agriculture and resources. The synergy with which the three ministers work together on any development that the state needs to go forward is exceptional. I make that point upfront.

I thank the research team led by Rob Hansen. Our committee is blessed to have a team that gives us great knowledge and prepares us, especially for things such as the estimates, to make sure that we ask the questions that need to be asked. I was going to leave this to the end, but in case I run out of time I want to say that, when it comes to asking quality questions, I point to the member for South Brisbane and her consistent questions. Last year she could not get the right minister. I will read from the transcript of this year's estimates. In a question that I put to the chairman at the end of Minister Powell's answers, I said—

Mr Chair, on a matter of clarification, can I ask the minister for a yes or no answer? Minister, you were talking before about the Callide mine releases that have been authorised under an EA into the Callide Dam since 2009, under the previous government.

That is, the Labor government—

Minister, I thought you said that, remarkably, during the 2010-11 wet season more than 4,000 megalitres was released into the Callide Dam and that the previous government did not inform the council due to the high dilution factor. Can you confirm that, please.


The minister's answer was swift. It was, 'Yes.' The consistent questioning on that issue from those opposite was nothing more than an own goal.

I congratulate Minister McVeigh for the way he handles his portfolio and also for his knowledge when answering estimates questions from both us and those opposite. The detail of his answers is exemplary. Really, he was the man who stated, 'If you want answers, I'll give you answers,' which is what he did. I congratulate him on the \$20 million capital expenditure, which is about putting front-line services back into an industry that has always been important to the state and will continue to be important under this Campbell Newman government.

My background is in the cattle and sugarcane industries, which play a big part in North Queensland. I have to say that the minister's professional and measured handling of the BJD outbreak, which occurred almost as soon as he came into his role, was nothing short of brilliant. He copped a lot of flak in the beginning but he has proved already that under an LNP government biosecurity not only is working but also is getting fantastic results. I congratulate the minister for that.

I congratulate Minister Andrew Cripps for his role, especially when it comes to the CSG industry, which is so important to the state and to people in regional towns who were starting to really struggle because the agricultural and other industries that they had lived off were starting to be not so profitable. Recently, we visited Dalby and saw that firsthand. We heard comments that the industry was overwhelmingly welcomed in those parts. I also congratulate the minister for his correction of vegetation management issues, which had been an absolute disgrace under the previous Labor government. It was really making it tough for people to work their own land.

Finally, Andrew Powell has brought the environment back to the front and centre, even though those opposite try to suggest that he has not. He realises its importance for the state's tourism industry. In addition, the government wants to see the state's environment protected for the benefit of our children. What the minister has done in the community through the Everybody's Environment grants proves that it is not just about big industry; it is also about our local communities. We all know about measures to protect the koala, which is an icon of this state. In my part of the world, North Queensland, his crocodile management work was not even looked at or considered by the previous government. I congratulate all three ministers. I look forward to another 12 months of good work in those portfolios.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (8.56 pm): Today I rise to speak on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report in relation to the 2013 estimates hearing. Although nestled in the tropical north of our great state, the people of the electorate of Barron River have a keen interest in agriculture, resources and environment growth in this state. As the member for Barron River, it is a privilege to sit on this committee which presides over a key area that forms a critical element to our government's plan for a four-pillar economy to get this state back on track. The economy of the northern Tablelands is a diverse source of income that stimulates not only the region but also the broader state with its effects felt at even the national level. From agriculture to tourism, the north is home to every aspect that keeps our great state in a position to be competitive in regional trade.

Firstly, I commend Minister Cripps and his department. The minister is truly the farmers' friend. Farmers are great custodians of the Australian landscape. They are the best managers of this environment. Minister Cripps has removed overregulation and he has let farmers manage their land. His knowledge and sound judgement in allowing the Flinders Rivers to be developed has the potential to drought proof Western Queensland.


Another key element of our economy is the cattle industry. For many years that industry has been the lifeblood of rural Queensland. Often, a cattle property will be handed down from one generation to another and cattle producers can endure great hardship with little reward. Often afflicted with external factors that dictate the level of success or failure of our farmers, it is a significant challenge for any government to support an industry that is so important to the state's economy. In late 2012, our state was hit with a serious case of Bovine Johne's Disease. As determined by the Cattle Council of Australia, that outbreak was the largest recorded occurrence in Australian history. What the Hon. John McVeigh has done to counteract that speaks volumes of the man. Through biosecurity support, the cattle industry benefited from a \$2 million allocation over the 2012-13 fiscal year. I stress that that assistance was not full compensation for losses that may have occurred, but the program that has been implemented will ensure that the maximum assistance possible is provided to affected producers, while capping the payment for the year to \$50,000 per producer.

There are many producers who have been affected immediately to a greater amount than \$50,000. This is very much a way of ensuring that this fund is in a position to spread the available assistance, which is the \$2 million placed on the table by the government upfront, across as many affected producers as possible. This level of support is one small step that is part of a larger initiative undertaken by our government to boost confidence in our cattle industry. I commend the minister on the lengths he and his staff have gone to to support our industry despite the challenges created by federal Labor's ban on live cattle exports.

Another area of great concern that directly impacts my electorate and was addressed during these hearings is the prevalence of crocodiles in our local waterways. Consistent with our government's campaign commitments, we have dedicated \$1.46 million to this area in 2013-14 in addition to the \$1.5 million previously committed over four years from 2012-13. This funding will implement the crocodile management plan that will strike a balance between the health, safety and wellbeing of our local population with our ongoing responsibilities around the conservation of protected species and native species.

Efforts are underway to significantly reduce the risk of attack by removing any crocodile that enters, for example, waters around boat ramps or marinas or when a crocodile exhibits unprovoked aggressive behaviour towards humans. Minister Powell is to be commended for his initiative to engage North Queensland in this management plan by setting up a committee and implementing a public-private partnership in this regard. This will make our beaches safer for our nippers who are the future of surf-lifesaving, for our tourists and for our mums and dads who are raising their children in North Queensland. This is a huge step. More than 16 crocodiles have been removed from our waterways in a short time. I commend the minister for this.

I commend the chair, the committee members and Rob Hansen and his team for their work. It is fantastic to be part of a great committee doing great things for this state.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (9.01 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. It was my privilege to be involved in that part of the estimates process which related to the portfolios of the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. I thank the ministers, committee members and staff, both departmental and parliamentary, for their work.

I will address a couple of the key points of this process which have particular relevance to the Maryborough electorate and demonstrate the responsible use of taxpayer funds. The timber industry is one of our key industries and, like the rest of Queensland, the industry locally is facing some fairly tough times. I was very pleased to hear the response of the minister where he indicated the implementation of the timber industry plan, a strategic initiative with a broad direction about access to resources, whether hardwood or softwood. I note also the minister's comments that the government will shortly be releasing the response to the timber industry plan.

This industry needs some surety of access to the resource. The minister advised that access has been opened up to state forests for timber harvesters. I look forward to the government's further expansion of that plan. I note the comments of the member for South Brisbane in her dissenting report. She stated that the previous Labor government put in place a plan for a sustainable timber industry. I can tell members that my advice from those in my local timber industry is that that Labor plan was ensuring the demise of the timber industry, not its sustainability.

Similarly, beekeeping is quite an important primary industry in our area as well as over the rest of Queensland, not only for honey production but also for the pollination of small plant and tree crops. It was pleasing to hear the minister, in response to a question, advise that the LNP government is working to ensure that beekeepers do have access to native timbers in the state forests.

I note the minister's advice that former apiary sites in state forests in the western hardwoods region have now been made available as permanent sites. He further advises that the department is working with beekeepers to identify and establish further apiary sites at suitable locations in other native state forests. Permit fees for beekeepers are also being reviewed. Another of the major primary industries in Maryborough is our sugar industry. Sadly it was hit by floods early in the year and now with bad weather at harvest time.


I note the comments by the minister in relation to the allocation of \$16 million of funding over four years by the government for research and development for the sugar industry. This funding complements the industry's own support of research and development. This research is vitally important to develop new varieties, to increase yield and to research nutrient, disease and weed management for this industry. These are only three of the matters addressed by the minister, but they are important for my community.

One of the major attributes of Maryborough is our history and we are very proud of our wonderful, well preserved historic buildings. It was therefore very pleasing that the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection has placed emphasis on this part of his portfolio. In response to a question the minister advised that there has been refreshment and renewal in the Queensland Heritage Council. I note the appointment of local councillor George Seymour to that council. Further, the minister advises that the council has been out and about in Queensland, in particular in Maryborough, Ipswich and, I have been told, Cooktown. The council is also supporting the open house program in Maryborough, Brisbane and this year Toowoomba.

The Heritage Council is to assist with the review of the Queensland Heritage Strategy which explains the importance of Queensland's cultural heritage and its contribution to our identity. Opportunities will be taken to investigate further funding opportunities. As anyone who owns a heritage property will tell you, the maintenance of these properties is quite expensive.

The environment is high on the radar of many in our community, with a number of groups working to ensure the Mary River in particular is kept in as pristine a condition as possible. Allocation of funding to the Everybody's Environment grants has been beneficial to groups in our area.

All three ministers ably answered the questions put to them at estimates. I believe they did demonstrate that taxpayer funds are being allocated and used appropriately. I commend their work to the House.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.06 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates committee report of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. I place on record my thanks to the committee secretariat and the chair for allowing me to participate in the hearing. My comments will focus on the agriculture portfolio.

The entire government is happy to claim that it has an intense focus on the agriculture sector suggesting that is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. Sadly, we saw from this year's estimate hearing for the budget of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry that this is little more than hot air. The Newman government might be willing to massively cut important regulatory frameworks to benefit some areas of the agriculture sector, but it is not prepared to adequately resource the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry or to invest in forward-thinking research and development projects for the future. The department's budget will fall for the next three financial years which is a funny way of showing commitment to the sector.

The minister revealed that the Newman government had substantially cut funding to the red fire ant eradication program. This jeopardises the fight to eliminate this biosecurity threat. The previous government invested an extra \$6 million on top of the previous government's obligation under the national cost-sharing agreement into the program. The minister cut this funding to just \$1.25 million last financial year. The extra funding will only be increased to approximately \$3 million for this financial year and the next. Over this three-year period, the fire ant eradication program will be unfunded by some \$11 million if the minister continued with the policy settings left by the previous government. In order to keep this major budget shortfall, the minister sought to shift the cost burden onto the general public.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! The member is not taking interjections. Allow him to proceed. I call the member for Mackay.

Mr MULHERIN: The minister tries to pretend that this is a measure to reduce red tape when in reality it will mean unqualified people will be using dangerous chemicals to eradicate insects that have been shown to cause deaths. The minister can only defend these changes to the eradication program by suggesting the previous program was mismanaged. He has continuously made frankly outrageous claims of nepotism and mismanagement that he has never been able to back up with anything resembling evidence. This program has been the most reviewed of all the national cost-sharing programs. It has been independently audited. It has always been an issue to try to get the others states, with the exception of New South Wales, to support this long-term program.


If you look at what the minister has said in recent times, he has had varied views on the successes of the fire ant eradication program in quite a brief period of time. Just a couple of weekends ago he was quoted in the *QWeekend* magazine as saying—

I think my study of the history over the last 10 years is that our efforts in Queensland towards eradication can compare very well, and (are) probably better than elsewhere in the world.

I totally agree with his comments there. We have been able to successfully eradicate fire ants at the Port of Gladstone and also at the Port of Brisbane. I think with the use of technology we will eventually win that war against fire ants, but it will take time and the trick will be to convince southern states, particularly Victoria, to support the efforts of Queensland in its eradication attempts at the ministerial council level.

In relation to the Northern Fisheries Centre, in even more evidence that the Newman government knows the price of everything and the value of nothing, it was confirmed that all research programs funded by DAFF at the Northern Fisheries Centre will be cut. The tropical rock lobster program has already been shut down and there is now a real risk that this research will only be undertaken in South-East Asia and provide no benefit to the people of Queensland. The coral trout program at the centre has already been cut and the grouper program will be wound up very soon. The Newman government has essentially vacated the field when it comes to aquaculture research in North Queensland, and therefore we will lose out on many benefits from developments in tropical fisheries research.

In conclusion, this is a government that may say all the right words to the agriculture sector but will not put its money where its mouth is. It will not properly fund the department or important programs to develop Queensland's research capabilities and biosecurity protections.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (9.11 pm): Despite the minister's best efforts, the opposition did find out a bit more during the estimates hearings for Natural Resources and Mines about the dodgy, dirty deal between this government and a mining company to extend sandmining on North Stradbroke Island. At the hearing the minister denied that a dodgy, dirty deal had been done. The minister did this by claiming that six separate meetings over two months with mining company Sibelco were just his department having regular discussions about the extension of sandmining. However, it was revealed in an answer to a question taken on notice at the hearing that at least four of these meetings were undertaken with no departmental officers present at all. The minister at the hearing said that the process being run with Sibelco 'happens all the time'. I really hope this is not the case as it is very concerning that meetings are taking place between a political staffer, a lobbyist and a mining company about 'the making or amendment of legislation' without the input of the department.

It also raises very serious questions about whether a cash for legislation deal has been done between this government and Sibelco—a company that initially failed to declare \$91,840 in campaign support to the Premier's electorate of Ashgrove last year. It is telling that the lobbying firm involved—Rowland—has since removed the extension of sandmining on North Stradbroke Island from their website, where it was detailed as a successful example of lobbying activities.


All involved know that this dodgy, dirty deal is morally noxious. It is an example of a company buying legislation, and it is abhorrent. It is disheartening that the government decided to restrict access to the documents related to these meetings at the estimates hearing. They are happy to hand documents over to a mining company and to a lobbying firm but not to the people of Queensland for scrutiny.

The minister's attitude towards meeting with the local native title holders on North Stradbroke Island—who will be impacted by any decision—was also extremely disappointing. It is clear that if you are up against a multinational company that has bankrolled the Premier then you are of little consequence to this Newman LNP government.

It was also obvious from the answers provided at the hearings that the government has no sound policy rationale for amendments made to the Vegetation Management Act. The minister still refuses to release the Crown Law review that was used as a justification for these amendments. This indicates that the decision was made in response to political rather than policy decisions. The director-general initially described the World Wildlife Fund estimates that up to 700,000 hectares of land could be cleared from these changes as 'reasonable'.

Remarkably, the minister refused to accept any responsibility for the jobs lost in the mining industry from the LNP's attempt at a \$1.64 billion royalty hike. The Queensland Resources Council has stated that because of the LNP's royalty hike Queensland is now the highest taxing coal jurisdiction globally and in a survey found that all coal producers expected to cut costs in response. Yet the Minister for Mines—or so he claims—has nothing to do with this government's attack on mining jobs.

Disappointingly, the minister also failed to undertake to fill in the mines at Collingwood Park even though he knows that new technologies have been developed recently that enabled Main Roads to fix the void underneath the Ipswich Motorway. I also note—and the minister is very shy on this too—that the Queensland miners memorial that we undertook to build and to have open by September 2013 has not even started, let alone almost finished. He kept that one very quiet. Miners like 'Digger' Murphy, who is aged in his 90s, wanted to see this memorial built, and other miners around Queensland wanted to see it built as well. So shame on you, Minister, for a job done shockingly.

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (9.16 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to spell out just how the Newman government is working to protect and promote Queensland's environment. Unlike the previous Labor government's flawed model of managing the environment—referred to as DERM—the Environment and Heritage Protection portfolio is doing exactly what it says it will, and that is to protect not only our environment but also our built heritage.

The Newman government has drawn a line of accountability in the environment portfolio. We are seeking to be more transparent. We are not allowing the lines to be muddied, because we all know what happens if there is poor accountability and a lack of transparency. You have mismanagement and poor administration, and you have a \$1.2 billion payroll bungle.

We will continue to do more with less in EHP. We will not shy away from these facts because, as the Treasurer and the Premier and I have said, bloated government is not the answer. Throwing taxpayers' dollars to govern is not the answer. Expecting that the public sector could sustain eight per cent growth year in and year out is clearly not the answer. How we do business is the answer. Being smarter and more agile and by adopting a well thought out risk management approach is how you achieve far better outcomes—both environmental outcomes and economic outcomes.

Unlike Labor, this government does not seek to bury business under a bundle of bureaucratic processes. Instead, the Newman government is taking a customer focused approach. In my department we now ask, 'How can we help you?'—not 'How can we stop you, delay you or frustrate you?' With some \$18 billion worth of projects under assessment by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, it is vital that we get the approval settings right and cut through the myriad nonsense green-tape barriers that were put in place by the previous tired Labor government.

Another way this government is assisting the people of Queensland is by being open and transparent. No longer is complicated data hidden on departmental databases. Instead, information is available on our website for everyone to access. It is somewhat disturbing then that the member for South Brisbane continues to posture and fabricate untruths around the issue of mine water releases.

Despite trying to explain it to the member on numerous occasions, including providing departmental officers face to face to both her and the member for Rockhampton, the member for South Brisbane continues to weave a web of exaggeration and hysteria, continues to speculate and to exaggerate to score cheap political points and would do well to dwell on the fact that it was indeed her government that oversaw some 20 years of mining approvals in the Fitzroy Basin—20 years of overseeing the regulatory framework that led to legacy water becoming the issue that it has.

What does the member for South Brisbane do? She provides misleading and exaggerated responses that suggest I have neglected the issue. I strongly, categorically and definitively object to this. Far from that, the ones who have neglected this issue are those opposite. Let me provide a simple factual and reasonable summary on the issue of Callide Dam as raised by the member for South Brisbane. The Callide mine has been authorised under its EA to release into Callide Dam since 2009. During the 2012-13 wet season there have been some non-compliant releases from the mine. Those releases were not authorised under any tool and they were due to exceptional rainfall in the catchment. We have issued four PINs for these non-compliant releases.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr POWELL: Let me get to that, member for South Brisbane. The total volume of water released in the dam was 500 megalitres through two separate releases that occurred between 25 January—that is, ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald—and 21 April. That is 0.3 per cent of the total water volume in the dam. Not all mine water releases from Callide mine end up in Callide Dam. The remainder of releases were downstream into Callide Creek. Only those releases from Dunn Creek Dam end up in the dam.

In relation to the volume of non-compliant releases, it is very difficult to calculate but only a small proportion of the volume was non-compliant. Callide Dam holds around 136,000 megalitres. It is important to note that in 2010-11 when Labor was in power more than 4,000 megalitres was released into the Callide Dam and the previous government did not inform the council due to the high dilution factor. The EA conditions have not changed to allow any additional releases.

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.21 pm): The LNP Newman government is working hand in hand with primary industries throughout our state because we recognise agriculture as one of the four pillars of our economy. Contrast that with Labor, which did not even see agriculture as important enough to have its own department. Well, we do. Since being elected, the LNP government has established a stand-alone department—a Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry truly focused on customer service, supporting an efficient, innovative, resilient and profitable sector.

With that in mind, it was an honour to present to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee this year. I thank the chair and the members of the committee for their queries and consideration of my responses. I note that the member for South Brisbane in putting forward a dissenting report suggested that my answers were too longwinded. Can I point out to the House that I find that interesting because, firstly, she was missing in action for my part of estimates this year for the second year in a row but, more particularly, I point out that I make absolutely no excuse—

Ms TRAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand that a member cannot refer to a member's absence and I ask him to withdraw.

Dr McVEIGH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise for referring to the member's absence.

Ms TRAD: That was a qualified withdrawal.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for South Brisbane, please allow me the courtesy of putting it to the minister. I have put it to the minister and I understand the minister has withdrawn reference to your absence. I call the minister.


Dr McVEIGH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. More particularly, I make absolutely no excuse for wanting to know everything about my portfolio. I am passionate about agriculture, and I am more than willing to share in great detail our activities in line with our Queensland agriculture strategy. Equally, I note the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in suggesting that we were lacking in terms of our department. Again, I make the point that under Labor there was not even a department of agriculture.

He suggested that the addressing of fire ants under Labor was more comprehensive than ours, but I make the point that blindly throwing money at a problem with no plan achieved exactly what Labor did with this program. They ignored the engagement of community, as we have addressed more recently. Noted in the *Courier-Mail* editorial of 13 July, 'Residents best to conquer fire ant infestation'. They have ignored the comments of whistleblowers that I have listened to. They have ignored the recent significant change in management and, most particularly, they ignored the results that are on the board—15½ thousand hectares more in 2012-13 for \$3.7 million less than Labor's last year.

It has been a tough year for many in agriculture—floods, bushfires and droughts combined with various biosecurity issues. Even under such adversity our primary producers continue to prove their resilience. My department continues to engage with our producers, be it through research in the cane industry, the grain industry or our great beef industry.

The 2013-14 budget includes a strong capital expenditure program of almost \$20 million. There is \$4.5 million to upgrade the department's research and operating facilities, \$2 million to upgrade Spyglass Beef Research Facility and significant other millions of dollars for the Health and Food Sciences Precinct at Coopers Plains, the fisheries and boat equipment replacement program and \$1 million for new and replacement heavy plant and equipment including trucks, tractors and necessary machinery across our research properties.

I point out that there is \$3 million for farm robotics to help boost productivity and reduce inputs. To beef producers hit by BJD, there is \$2 million in seed funding and a \$3 million loan to be matched by a dollar-for-dollar producer voluntary levy. There are 10 front-line positions in the regions including two new beef extension officers, the whole-of-government drought relief package of up to \$11.2 million, our \$9 million inshore net buyback program and the 30-year agriculture strategy. I again thank the committee for its consideration. I congratulate my colleagues Ministers Cripps and Powell for their appearance before the same committee, and I appreciate my department's ongoing fearless advice.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (9.27 pm): Before I make a few remarks about the proceedings of the estimates committee for the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, I would like to point out that this week marks the 19th anniversary of the Moura mine disaster in which 11 miners perished. That tragic incident is a reminder of the importance of mine safety in the Queensland resources sector. It is unfortunate that opposition and crossbench members of this committee still fail to grasp precisely what my department does and fail to recognise the work we are doing to rebuild Queensland after years of Labor neglect. We are utilising our natural resources to grow the agriculture and resources sector of our economy to provide jobs and opportunities for Queenslanders, particularly regional and rural Queenslanders, in a sustainable way.

Despite the significant steps forward taken by my department over the last year, the member for Dalrymple is still complaining about the process for water allocation on the Flinders and Gilbert rivers. Apparently it did not happen quickly enough and apparently we did not provide enough water. I have made this point countless times, but it seems to have been ignored or misunderstood by the member for Dalrymple so I will make it again. One of the first things that I did as minister was release all of the available water in the current Gulf Resource Operations Plan. The process that was undertaken to release all of the water in the general reserve for the Flinders and Gilbert was

transparent, open, fair and accountable. The Newman government has achieved more in north-west Queensland in 16 months than previous Labor governments did in the previous decade. I urge the member for Dalrymple to open his eyes to the benefits this government is delivering for north-west Queenslanders through initiatives that north-west Queenslanders support and have endorsed strongly.

It is unfortunate that the member for Bundamba pursued a line of ill-informed questioning on the issues of North Stradbroke Island. The staged performance of the member for Bundamba implied that Sibelco enjoyed preferential access to me and that ministerial staffers were regularly meeting with lobbying firms to discuss mining operations on North Stradbroke Island. These assertions are simply not true and, unfortunately, the facts have been overshadowed by Labor's politically motivated scaremongering.

I have had two meetings with Sibelco as minister and I have also met with the Quandamooka people. I was very disappointed to hear the assertions of the member for Bundamba given this government's work to ensure a better outcome for the North Stradbroke Island community. I said it during the estimates committee hearing and I will say it again for the benefit of the member for Bundamba: there have been no dirty deals between the government and Sibelco. Prior to the election the LNP clearly committed to putting in place an alternative set of arrangements for the economic transition of North Stradbroke Island, and we have continued to strive for that benefit for the community. This policy has been positive and strongly endorsed by the local community, and the election outcome in the electorate of Cleveland is testimony to that.

It is equally unfortunate that the member for South Brisbane still fails to understand the importance of this government's new vegetation management framework. She simply does not care about the circumstances of regional and rural Queenslanders. She does not care about agriculture in Queensland. I am pleased that the member for Bundamba raised the issue of estimates in relation to the types of vegetation that may or may not be affected by the changes and the comparisons that were drawn by her and reflected on by the director-general during the proceedings.

What the member for South Brisbane has done again today has drawn to the attention of the House and the Queensland public that the Labor Party did absolutely no science, planning or estimates of their own in 2009 when they imposed the additional regulations on regrowth vegetation in Queensland, because they just did a dirty preference deal with the Greens. Those opposite have exposed that fact again tonight, because the amendments in relation to regrowth vegetation simply remove the 2009 amendments imposed on rural and regional Queensland by Labor except that we are not taking away those protections in North Queensland in reef catchments. The amendments we have introduced do not mean that all of the vegetation will be cleared; it depends on a range of criteria that I have outlined in terms of the sustainability of that framework, in terms of the absence of alternative areas for the property or the activity proposed, the access to sufficient water if irrigated agriculture is proposed and the suitability of the land that is involved. These are very significant changes for Queensland and I am proud to support regional and rural Queensland.

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

Education and Innovation Committee

Report

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Education and Innovation Committee be adopted.

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.32 pm): I was very proud to play a role in the Education and Innovation Committee, which was to examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2013 for the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, Minister Langbroek, and in the portfolio of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, Minister Walker. May I sincerely thank both those ministers for their assistance, their hard work and the responses to what were quite deep, in-depth questions. I believe it was a very productive day and certainly both ministers were able to outline to the committee the vision and the significant achievements of the Newman government in the first 18 months of government. Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentations.

May I also recognise and thank the many departmental officers who attended. Although many of them were not called upon to respond, we certainly appreciated their presence there. Of course, I thank the members of the committee and the other members who attended. This is a committee that works very well together and all are enthusiastic about the important work of this committee. I must also put on record the wonderful work that the research staff do and express our thanks to Bernice Watson, Emily, Carolyn and Greg for keeping us all on the right track.


Education is central to the Newman government, with policies designed to instil high standards and achieve better student outcomes. As the minister outlined, the centrepiece of this policy platform is Great Teachers = Great Results to which the government has committed \$537 million. This policy focuses on teachers setting high standards and investing in improving teacher quality. The government acknowledges how important teachers are and this policy will also give school leaders more autonomy and cut red tape, allowing them to make more of their own decisions.

As the minister outlined, everything this government is doing is focused on improving student outcomes. It is disgraceful the way Kevin Rudd's government has treated Queensland. He was quite happy to allow Victoria and the other states to sign up to special deals for this precious Gonski but not so Queensland. Queensland asked for three simple things that would provide all Queensland students with a better educational outcome. But, as always, playing politics is much more important to Labor than actually delivering for the betterment of the community and, particularly, Queensland—and to think Kevin Rudd is a Queenslander!

Under the Newman government's Great Teachers = Great Results program, quality teachers will be acknowledged and supported. The minister particularly pointed out that quality teachers deserve to be rewarded not only in salary but also through professional recognition and career progression. As he said, teachers are our most important resource, and student outcomes are directly related to the quality of instruction or training that they receive. I am sure everybody in this chamber can look back on their own education, be it at school or later, and remember teachers who were our mentors and inspiration. Teachers have an enormous influence on our youth which is why they must be supported, respected and given the type of professional development that this government will deliver. It is disappointing that the Queensland Teachers Union is slow to realise that this is the case.

Minister Walker outlined the great initiatives in the area of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts that the government is delivering. It was interesting to hear him say in his opening statement that the components of his portfolio are intrinsically linked; all areas require lateral thinking, forward thinking and creativity, and I thought that was pretty smart because it is so true. Science, innovation and information technology are the keys to our future, and it is whizzing along at an enormous rate. When we consider the vision for the Queensland Plan, which is looking ahead for 30 years, and when we look back on the previous 30 years, it is just amazing to see how far and how fast we have emerged: the internet, mobile phones, health, space travel—the list is endless. I can remember it, too, although not everyone in this chamber can. The Newman government is certainly committed to the vision for the future of Queensland, and that was well outlined by the minister. He mentioned things like the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research and the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine in Townsville, the opening of which I was honoured to attend. That came about as an election commitment of \$42.2 million to combat tropical diseases.

(Time expired)

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.37 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Education and Innovation Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 portfolio budget estimates. May I firstly thank our research staff and the parliamentary staff for their assistance throughout the hearing and also our chair, the member for Burdekin. I should mention that, because our Leader of the Opposition is the shadow minister, she took the lead in this portfolio, so I have just a few comments to make.

At the outset I would like to seek some further clarification from the minister regarding his answer during estimates to my question regarding weekend detention for students. During the hearing I referred to question on notice No. 385 from the member for Nicklin. The member for Nicklin wanted to know if specific funding would be available to meet the full costs of weekend detention or if the school will have to meet the full cost from the existing school budget. In his answer to that question on notice, the minister stated—


I have been advised by my Department that resources and processes are already in place to support schools to make local decisions about dealing with disciplinary issues.

An article in the *Queensland Times* dated 28 April stated—

He was confident most of teachers would be willing to 'step up' to staff the Saturday detentions, for which they would be paid.

Minister, for clarification I simply ask: is the money to pay teachers for weekend detention to come from existing school budgets, or will there be extra specific funding to pay the teachers?

During the estimates process the minister also revealed that \$331,436 was spent on an advertising campaign to promote Great Teachers = Great Results; however, the 2013-14 budget for that unwelcome policy has only a total funding of \$1.257 million. I question why the LNP government believes that spending one quarter of the budget amount on advertising is value for money for Queensland taxpayers and their children. I hope that the minister will come forth with answers.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (9.41 pm): It is my pleasure after this year's estimates to support the adoption of the report of the Education and Innovation Committee. It was a pleasure to participate as part of this committee. At the outset I must express my gratitude for the cooperation of all of the members of the committee, including the chair, Rosemary Menkens, member for Burdekin. I also express my thanks to the ministers who appeared before the committee and their respective DGs and other officers, all of whom conducted themselves, in my view, with the appropriate dignity and transparency that was expected. I acknowledge the work done by Ms Bernice Watson, Ms Emily Booth and Ms Carolyn Heffernan, our newest member, Gregory Thompson, and all of the research officers.

The portfolios covered included those of the Department of Education, Training and Employment and the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. These are very important economic portfolios. All of these portfolios are vital to the economic wellbeing and growth of our state. The other portfolios are also very important because they relate to the future economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our citizens, particularly in relation to education, skills and training. The portfolios covered by this committee's responsibilities are broad and interesting, but they are also vital in terms of the interests of Queensland. Education is key to the government's belief in the attainment of social justice and its belief that every Queenslander has the right to fulfil their potential in life. The expenditure and commitments in the budget highlight the government's commitment to delivering for those young and impressionable in our community.

One of the most important challenges that we face in this term of parliament is the training of our young people. The figures that are coming out of the Wide Bay-Burnett area in particular and across Queensland in terms of the skilled workforce we require are deliverable with action. I welcome the reforms and legislation delivered and introduced in this House.

In some areas in Queensland we have a high youth unemployment rate. That is why the investment of up to \$86 million over six years to support 10,000 additional apprentices and the investment of \$10 million to fund 500 university scholarships for women is welcomed.

In terms of my electorate, I was very pleased that the relevant ministers made reference to the review of schooling in Queensland. We welcome the Queensland Schools Plan Commission's review of the need for state high schools across Queensland. Our children are our most vulnerable Queenslanders. It was pleasing to receive clear and important policies on what is being done by the ministers to help provide a strong future for them. The Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund will allow state school parents and citizens organisations to apply for up to \$160,000 to fix existing priority maintenance issues at their schools and provide appropriate learning environments for our students.


The funding for the Gonski reforms proposed by the federal Labor government which was discussed at estimates comes by taking away money from our local universities. We did not want the funding for our local kindergartens to be cut. The federal government's funding will only continue until December 2014, and then it stops. In last Friday's pre-election economic statement, the federal Labor government cut \$242 million in funding for apprenticeships and traineeships. In contrast, the Queensland government knows that real differences to our education system are made in the classroom, not the bureaucracy. Our approach is to provide timely and targeted investment in practical measures to improve education through committing \$835 million over five years in additional funding.

In addition to Great Teachers = Great Results and the almost \$6 billion a year already invested in education, the recent Queensland budget also provides for an increase in education expenditure of 6.26 per cent. The Great Teachers = Great Results direct action plan would build on the strength of Queensland's existing school funding model and extend the government's reform agenda to focus on the most important piece of the education system—the teacher. This is about concentrating funding

on policies backed with research and challenging the notion that higher funding in itself guarantees success. It is clear that education is central to the economic prosperity of our great state and it creates opportunities for every Queensland student. Teachers play a critical role in the lives of Queensland children by providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve success in their futures. The initiative consists of 15 action items, including a structured annual performance process, mentoring for beginning teachers, accelerated progression and paid postgraduate study for high performing teachers and fast tracking autonomy initiatives for schools.

The areas of responsibility for the minister for the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts are administered through the department and a number of statutory authorities and entities. The statutory authorities are the Queensland Art Gallery; Queensland Museum; Queensland Performing Arts Trust; Queensland Theatre Company; and the State Library of Queensland. The two entities are the Queensland Government Chief Information Office and the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist. The four companies supported by the Arts portfolio are the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts, Major Brisbane Festival, Screen Queensland and the Queensland Music Festival.

As part of the committee it was pleasing to be able to review the budget highlights of the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I have enjoyed working with the committee members. Some of them are a little bit more difficult than others. But I do want to acknowledge the members for Woodridge and Condamine and the bipartisan spirit of our committee during work and estimates. The committee system is valuable and needs to be treated with respect. I again congratulate the minister's staff and look forward to the results of this budget.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (9.46 pm): I wish to thank both ministers and their departments for their informative responses to the committee on Tuesday, 23 July. I also wish to thank my committee chair Rosemary Menkens, my fellow committee members and research staff.

The world is continuously changing, and we are buffeted by a never-ending stream of information through changing technology and globalisation. I would like to quote Peter Drucker, an individual who contributed to the philosophical and practical foundations of the modern business corporation. He said—

Today knowledge has power. It controls access to opportunity and advancement.

We need to keep pace with our changing world, and we need to be proactive to help our educators craft the minds of the next generation. Failure to do so is no option. Under the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative, the Newman government is committed to raising the professional standards of the state teaching workforce. This can be done by pairing new teachers entering into the profession with experienced teachers who have a proven track record. Another key aspect of Great Teachers = Great Results is supporting our school leaders and teachers to undertake a graduation program in a relevant field of endeavour. This creates a new layer of efficiency when it comes to moulding the minds of the next generation. It allows for best teaching practices and the assimilation of new technologies into the classroom.


Independent state schools are another cornerstone of Great Teachers = Great Results. This creates a flexible environment and allows principals to make decisions that best suit their local communities. I should add that this includes a high degree of accountability; we do not just set the school free. The department will work in collaboration with the schools to maximise learning outcomes. This is a great policy that will lift teaching standards through a proactive approach and give schools more flexibility to meet the demands of a continually changing world.

This government will invest \$507 million over five years on top of the \$6 billion annual current spending on education—of a total of \$11.4 billion for this portfolio. This government is getting on with the job and supporting our great education facilities. Yesterday I had the honour of visiting one of the absolutely fantastic educational facilities in my electorate. With my federal colleague Mr Bert van Manen, the member for Forde, we attended the opening of new facilities at the Coomera Anglican College. This college has to be one of the best private schools in Queensland. I should add that the college was founded by the late Ivan Gibbs and opened in 1997. Ivan Gibbs was a state government minister for 10 years, yet he regarded the creation of the Coomera Anglican College as his greatest achievement—a school which was certainly very dear to his heart.

This government is getting on with the job of building education facilities to meet future demands. I thank the department for providing additional classrooms for Norfolk Village State School, a new car park for Cedar Creek State School, much needed funding for Gaven State School to install covered walkways, and new car-parking facilities for Windaroo Valley State High School.

Preparing students to meet the demands of the current and future job markets is paramount for any forward-thinking government. On 1 July 2013 TAFE Queensland became a new independent statutory body to meet the demands of vocational education and training. This has given TAFE the flexibility to operate in an efficient and effective manner by moving from a supply driven to a demand driven model to achieve real job outcomes. Training individuals in courses with limited employment outcomes only constrains suitable career pathways and limits the economy. The Newman government is committed to building a four-pillar economy and will meet the challenges this entails. A commercially focused TAFE Queensland with the flexibility to deliver services, reduce costs and streamline training programs will certainly train the next generation of workers.

The future is our youth. Preparing them for challenges ahead is crucial to maintain our high living standards. Focusing and developing our economic strengths through efficiencies in education and developing business focused policies only enhances employment prospects. I thank the minister, my fellow committee members and the committee chair, Rosemary Menkens. I am very proud to be on the education committee.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (9.51 pm): At the outset I would like to thank my fellow members of the committee. The education committee is one of the best committees I have served on in my 13 years in this chamber. In that time I have never not been on a committee. It is a very good committee led by the member for Burdekin, who does a very good job.

At the estimates hearing we were able to question the minister in detail. That is what is so good about the estimates process: it is the one occasion members get a fair bit of time to question the minister in detail. That opportunity is usually lacking, because members get the chance to ask only one question each parliamentary sitting day. It was good to be able to talk about the closure of schools in my electorate and surrounding electorates. I will say that the minister did answer the questions that I asked to the best of his ability.

I have spoken many times before about the schools in my electorate—Wyreema and Charlton—and in the neighbouring electorate of Toowoomba South. I have invited the minister to the electorate to meet with the people of Wyreema. Surely, even with his busy schedule, he can afford the time. I have said in this House that it will not be a hostile meeting. The people of Wyreema want to talk to the minister face to face. I would personally sit beside the minister and make sure no hostility was directed at him. It would be a genuine meeting at which the minister could actually see what that little district is all about.

That district is about to expand mightily, but its school has been put on one of the lists for school closures. At estimates I compared it to the Highfields area, where they are building new schools. It would be absolutely horrific to see a school closed and then be faced in three or four years time with the need to open another school in the very same area. How embarrassing!

Who would have thought the Liberal National Party would be into closing schools? I simply cannot comprehend that this is happening. I simply cannot comprehend the fact that the people of Queensland are facing this under this government, which they trusted enough to elect to give them the status they govern with today. Now they are turning their backs on rural Queensland, simply because the National Party has been totally absorbed into the Liberal Party. That is what we are seeing. The bush has been totally rejected in the education department.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr HOPPER: The member for Kingaroy has a bit coming her way, too. She may well interject, but there are a few surprises in store for her, believe you me.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! I would ask the member for Condamine—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango! I would ask the member for Condamine to refer to members by their proper titles and to use the correct electorate names.

Mr HOPPER: The member for Nanango has a bit coming her way as well.


In response to a question the Minister for Education stated that consultancy fees were \$56,165, yet the director-general stated that they would be \$1.749 million. That equates to the sale of probably three country schools. So here we are talking about selling off nine schools, yet the consultancy fees equate to the proceeds of the sale of three schools. This morning the minister said in this House that

all money would be going back into the education department. Well, why would you sell schools just to put money back into the education department? I will hold this government accountable in that regard. The proceeds will go back into consolidated revenue. There is no doubt. The money from the sale of these schools will go back into consolidated revenue and they will sell schools. There is absolutely no doubt.

I do hold the Minister for Education in high esteem. He would be one of the most brilliant ministers to sit on that side of the House. When I was a member of the LNP I totally supported him before the coup—when the member for Callide and the member for Clayfield took over.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Condamine, I am not sure that that is entirely relevant to the estimates debate. I would ask that you return to the estimates debate and the appropriation bills, please.

Mr HOPPER: I will. The minister was removed as Leader of the Opposition and made Minister for Education. It was a total coup to bring in Campbell Newman. Now we see what is happening in Queensland. They are going to sell and sack.

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (9.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the report of the committee and begin by acknowledging my colleagues on the education, innovation and the arts committee: the chair, Rosemary Menkens, member for Burdekin; the deputy chair, Desley Scott, member for Woodridge; and the honourable members for Albert, Burnett, Lytton and Condamine—Mark Boothman, Steve Bennett, Neil Symes and Ray Hopper. I also acknowledge those members in attendance by the grace of the committee and their contribution to the estimates hearing. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the committee research officers, the secretariat and of course the Hansard team. I recognise the honourable Minister Langbroek, Minister for Education, Training and Employment, his director-general, Dr Watterston, the assistant directors-general, the CEO of TAFE Queensland, and the staff that made themselves available for the committee's inquiry.

I note Minister Langbroek's commitment to improving student outcomes. May I say how refreshing it was to see a fundamental shift in the strategic focus on attaining quality student outcomes. I speak of course to the recognition and acknowledgement of teachers and the important role they play in shaping our future. The government's Great Teachers = Great Results will see the investment of an additional \$537 million over five years. It is fundamentally about creating a culture of recognition and opportunity with a greater degree of autonomy and the ability to meet the varied needs of the school community.

I am pleased to see that Minister Langbroek and the Queensland government remain committed to addressing the appalling maintenance backlog issues across Queensland schools with the continued investment of \$100 million in the 2013-14 budget.


Of course, education is not limited to the classroom and does not necessarily stop at the school gate. On that basis, I look forward to seeing the rollout of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities VET five-year action plan that will see \$300 million being put back into the VET system.

I note the concern raised in estimates by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the travelling show school—indeed the ongoing concern, as this is a matter that was addressed in the estimates hearing last year. It seems to me that there is no loss of opportunity for students to obtain an education while living a life on the show circuit. I note that education is on offer, and I understand that a very high level of education is available to any child that should so require schooling through distance education. I thank the director-general and the minister for clarifying that funding of \$210,000 was provided to transition those students to distance education, in addition to funds from the school's former parents and citizens association.

It was also a great pleasure to welcome the honourable Minister Walker, Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, to the committee's estimates hearing. I acknowledge the director-general, Mr Garner, the deputy directors-general, the assistant directors-general, the chief financial officer and Queensland's Chief Scientist. I would also extend an acknowledgement to the executive directors and/or CEOs in attendance for the Queensland Art Gallery, the Queensland Museum, QPAC, the Queensland Theatre Company, Screen Queensland and the State Library.

Minister Walker demonstrated a commitment to investing in Queensland's future with a focus on research and development by funding and delivering the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine and also investing approximately \$9 million towards the Clem Jones Centre for Ageing Dementia Research. This represents a combined investment of over \$50 million.

With regard to ICT, I must say that I maintain no envy for the minister given the task ahead. To say there will be challenges for government in addressing the issue of more than 100 high-risk programs presenting major financial and technical problems may well be an understatement. I was, however, pleased to see that Minister Walker's department had a clear strategy for identifying the risks through the whole-of-government ICT audit and has developed an ICT strategy that plans to rollout a more efficient, effective system with a greater degree of transparency and accountability for the provision of government IT services. I may have mentioned to Minister Walker my appreciation for the arts in the small and varied ways in which I try as a father to install an appreciation of the arts in my children. The key of course is accessibility to arts and culture, and may I say I was delighted to hear the minister's announcement of the new arts investment framework that will make it easier for the arts to access grant funding. I will finish by commending the minister for his commitment to ensuring that the arts are accessible to the regions via his investment in various regional arts programs.

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.00 pm): From the outset, I thank members of the committee and the chair of the Education and Innovation Committee, the member for Burdekin, for doing such a fine job of chairing the committee in a very fair process. I will give credit where credit is due and she handled herself extremely well. I rise to speak on the report of the Education and Innovation Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 portfolio budget estimates. I was concerned by allegations of bullying and intimidation of persons who merely seek to engage in the democratic process by participating in protests and expressing opposition to decisions of the government. I have written to the director-general providing further information, as invited, and requesting that he investigate the concerns contained therein.

The proposed closure of eight Queensland schools was the focus of questioning from opposition members at the estimates hearing. It was reported on 20 July 2013 that the Premier had said—

We have not shut one school to date.

As the minister well knows, the closure of the travelling show school had been gazetted by him last year. The minister's only response was—

I think the honourable member had a chance to ask the Premier that last week.

Unfortunately, at the time of the Premier's estimates hearing, the Premier had not made that comment. When answering questions about the realisation of \$70 million from proposed asset sales when explaining how the shortfall of \$32 million would be met, the director-general said—


There is certainly an opportunity for us to consider other surplus land.

I therefore take this opportunity to invite the minister to give his assurance that this response from the director-general is accurate and only surplus land is being considered for sale at this stage. If not, perhaps he could clarify.

The estimates hearing also saw the farce of the release of the Schools Planning Commission report, and the minister and the director-general clearly demonstrated their lack of knowledge of the contents of the report. Significant problems were identified with the process of identifying schools for closure. The government has put the cart before the horse and considered where schools should be closed before it considered the potential population growth and growth in the school demand in those areas. In relation to the Fortitude Valley State School site, the maps released by the commission show an estimated population growth in this region of two per cent or more over the next 20 years. In addition, the deputy director-general clearly indicated that the two closest schools to Fortitude Valley—Brisbane Central and New Farm—have enrolments that are close to the built environment capacity at the present time. The same situation exists at Toowoomba South State School where the projected population growth will be one per cent per annum and the Charlton and Wyreema areas will experience a growth of two per cent or more per annum.

Funding for early years education is an important part of the responsibility of this government. Increasing participation in kindergarten is fundamental to improving education outcomes for Queensland children. Failure to reach the target rate under the national partnership agreement for 2012 of 86 per cent means we are behind the eight ball in achieving 95 per cent by 2013. What concerns me is the effect failing to reach the target will have on federal government funding. The advice from the department is that Queensland's 2012 performance may influence post NP ECE arrangements and funding. I urge the minister to reassure the parliament that the failure by his government to reach the target and his statement during the estimates hearing will have no impact on potential post arrangements and funding.

Staffing is of course a continued concern for the opposition. The member for Woodridge asked the minister to explain why the SDS shows an increase of 398 full-time equivalents but the SDS highlights claims an increase of 724 teachers and teacher aides. This is apparently because some teachers such as resource teachers in high schools have been asked to go back into the classroom. The budget estimates process showed a minister and director-general who are not across the substantive detail of their portfolio and an ad hoc approach to administration of education that is unequalled, and the minister continues to reject the extra funding offered by the federal government under the Better Schools Plan.

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (10.05 pm): Tonight I rise to contribute to the work conducted by the parliamentary committee for education, innovation and the arts through the estimates hearing. The 2013-14 state budget will help to assist the Newman government's commitment to make Queensland the best place to educate a child in Australia, with the first stages of Great Teachers = Great Results as well as an additional 724 new teachers to be employed by the state to educate Queensland kids across the state. Some key highlights the Newman government can be proud of are, for instance, delivering \$537 million over the next five years to implement the Great Teachers = Great Results initiative which will assist Queensland teachers in professional excellence as well as providing state schools with greater autonomy to deal with issues, including strengthening discipline.

Following the 2012 budget the Newman government provided stage 2 of the school maintenance backlog scheme, with a further \$100 million to correct a wrong left by the former Labor government in maintaining local school buildings in this year's budget. The Lytton electorate received its fair share of education funding to help in providing greater opportunities to local schoolkids on the bayside, including investing in Darling Point Special School in participating in the Independent Public Schools initiative which has given the school more flexibility and decision making to provide the best resources for children living with disabilities. There is also approximately \$4.5 million funding to construct brand-new buildings at Brisbane Bayside State College to forward plan for year 7 to go into high school. Also, Wondall Heights State School will get its fair share of the four-year program of rolling out full-time teacher aides. Additionally, Lytton schools will benefit from stage 2 of the school maintenance boost funding as outlined in this year's budget.


Labor will jump up and down over the Queensland government not signing up to the Gonski reforms, but I say that you should pick up the phone to Canberra and demand that you want Queensland kids to receive the same deal as Victorian kids. It is only fair. How many schools in Lytton were closed down by the Labor Party? Four! Four, but they will not say that to the *Courier-Mail*, will they?

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr SYMES: We have a plan.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Member for Lytton, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SYMES: Turning to innovation, it will be welcomed by locals in the Wynnum North area that the Newman government will establish a long-term monitoring station for investigating the emissions profile of coal trains in South-East Queensland travelling to the port of Brisbane. The arts minister should also be congratulated on the release of the Arts for All Queenslanders strategy which aims to grow the arts sector. The Brisbane bayside has strong art councils, businesses and a local artistic community which would welcome any policy that a government has to grow the sector and improve Queensland's reputation in the wider arts community whilst having a focus on cultural tourism in this great state. I thank the other members of the committee, the committee staff and staff of the departments who gave input throughout the estimates hearing. I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (10.09 pm): Can I also start as the Leader of the Opposition started her speech and thank the chair, the member for Burdekin, Mrs Rosemary Menkens, for her expert chairing during the committee's proceedings.

Ms Palaszczuk: Yes, she was very fair.

Ms TRAD: She was very fair, in fact. Members of the opposition have lots of different committees from which to judge that by. What has become really clear in the Service Delivery Statements, particularly in the arts sector, is that the poor leadership from the previous minister has really left the department in a very vulnerable position. Her systematic vilification of the arts and cultural sector during her very short stint as minister has had quite a deleterious effect on the arts sector in Queensland. For that she should hang her head in shame. It is obvious that the current arts

minister, the Hon. Ian Walker, has quite a big job ahead of him trying to shoulder this significant burden that was left to him by the previous minister. But as was expressed in this year's budget, with further cuts in this year's budget in the arts sector, I am unsure how that is to be achieved.


I want to draw particular attention to Screen Queensland, which is of concern, specifically to the opposition. At the estimates committee the Chief Executive Officer of Screen Queensland, Mr Brian Lowe—who was elevated to the position of CEO under this government—admitted that there was absolutely no foreign film project investment in Queensland last year. So there was no production investment in Queensland last year. So it went from an average of about \$52 million down to about \$21 million in the last budget and to zero dollars in this budget. Quite frankly, I think that is a shocking outcome. This organisation receives \$19 million from the state government and it has zero to show for it.

But when asked about foreign film productions that Screen Queensland is bidding for, I asked particularly about the production of *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*—the old Jules Verne favourite. To that the CEO of Screen Queensland, Mr Lowe, said that he was quite optimistic about securing that foreign film production in Queensland. He must have missed the story in the industry news website called Indiewire that reported on 17 July that the director, David Fincher, had moved on from the project and that Disney had gone absolutely stone cold on the project months ago. But Mr Lowe remained optimistic about the project and getting the project to Queensland. I think that is indicative of the calibre of the person who we have running Screen Queensland.

I want to express my deep concern that the Service Delivery Statements have been gutted of performance measurements. By the minister's own admission, 42 measures have been discontinued. For a government that purports, through an abundance of rhetoric, to be open and accountable, to no longer be reporting on significant measures such as how many visitors go to the State Library, how many visitors go to the Queensland Museum, how many regional tours are funded by this government—and the list goes on and on and on—is an absolute outrage. This government is prepared to hide its very, very poor performance by axing performance measures. This is a disgrace and they will be judged for it.

On a number of occasions in this House the Minister for Education has said that the proposal to build accommodation at Brisbane State High School so that it can accept year 7 into high school is a project that has been given \$40 million. But the government's own capital statement has only \$35 million allocated to that project. I would like the minister to explain where the missing \$5 million is, whether the minister expects that that \$5 million will be given—

(Time expired)


 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.14 pm): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and the chair, the member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, for allowing me to attend the estimates committee hearing and to ask questions of the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. I would like to congratulate the member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, on the way in which she conducted herself in her role as chair of this committee. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee and the secretariat of the committee for their assistance.

Unlike his predecessor at last year's estimates committee hearing, this minister was able to advise the committee that he was the minister ultimately responsible for all IT projects across the government. In fact, I think the new minister, Ian Walker, is a breath of fresh air in this portfolio area after his predecessor. Notwithstanding the fact that the minister accepted overall responsibility, there is still some confusion surrounding when responsibility for an IT project transfers from the line agency managing that project to the minister and his department. The minister advised further that he would also be responsible for the success or failure of all high-risk IT projects across government. By way of clarification, the director-general was able to define high-risk projects as those with a monetary value of more than \$2 million, although costs would not be the sole determining factor in all cases. The opposition does not consider the lines of responsibility of reporting that have been proposed are sufficiently clear. Although the \$2 million threshold provides some clarity for when the minister and his department will assume responsibility for risky IT projects, there is still confusion surrounding the responsibility for cheaper or low-risk IT initiatives.

In relation to IT jobs, the opposition questioned the Newman government's acceptance of the Costello recommendations that will lead to further job losses in the Public Service. The minister was asked how many jobs would be lost as a result of the government's acceptance of recommendation 149 to sell CITEC within two years. The minister was not able to provide any clarity or assurance that

the decision to sell CITEC would not result in further job losses. In the past and again at this estimates committee hearing the minister has tried to assure both government and non-government IT workers that there would be plenty of jobs in the private sector in Queensland as a result of the Queensland government's increasing need to contract IT services. When confronted with a recent report indicating that Telstra would be sending IT jobs in Australia to India, the minister could not guarantee that IT jobs outsourced from the public to the private sector would remain in Australia. Additionally, the minister would not guarantee that the government would not directly contract with overseas operators itself when acquiring IT services in the future. Public servants working in IT are rightly concerned that their jobs will be outsourced to the private sector by this government. Once they have been outsourced, there is nothing to prevent those jobs from being sent overseas.

At the estimates committee hearing the minister was presented with a briefing note written by his department in October 2012 for his predecessor which stated that there was no new science funding in the last financial year. The minister was unable to adequately explain whether there was any new investment in science by the Newman government, which is a cause of great concern to the opposition and to Queenslanders more broadly. The minister confirmed in questions posed to him that only \$60.724 million is budgeted for the delivery of science services by his department in 2013-14, which represents a cut of almost \$6 million from last year. That was reportedly because of ongoing restructure and organisational savings. But the minister did not confirm that some projects had been ceased because of the funding cuts. The opposition is seriously concerned that this government is not investing enough in science and innovation. For Queensland's long-term economic success, we need more investment in science and innovation to drive the next phase of Queensland's economic growth.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (10.18 pm): Can I begin by thanking committee staff and committee members for their hard work and professionalism and the committee chair, the member for Burdekin, for her chairmanship on the day. I commenced the estimates hearing by saying that the Newman government has a relentless focus on high standards and that we do not shy away from that fact on this side of the House. I would like to thank those members of the committee who engaged in the estimates process to discover more about the range of policies that this government has implemented in my portfolio to improve student outcomes in our schools and our training facilities. In schools we are focused on driving improved student outcomes by lifting the quality of the teachers at the front of the classroom, by giving schools the freedom to make their own decisions that are best for their local communities and by improving the level of behaviour in the classroom. I do not intend to answer all the questions that have been raised here by the opposition in this debate when they had five hours to do it on the day, but I will say to the member for Woodridge that a parliamentary answer to a question on notice trumps an article in the *Queensland Times*.


We are also fixing our infrastructure by cleaning up the mess left by those opposite through a \$292 million maintenance backlog, as well as planning for the future through the establishment of the Schools Planning Commission and the construction of 11 new schools, one at Highfields and 10 through a public private partnership. I also thank those members interested in the training portfolio. The release in June of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities VET Action Plan outlined the blueprint for a once-in-a-lifetime reform of the sector. The simple facts are that in Queensland we face significant economic challenges, not least of all the state of Queensland's finances. Even the good aspects of the Queensland economy, the bits that are still going strong despite the recklessness of those opposite, are facing economic challenges. In the mining sector we are facing skills shortages. As an economic lesson to those opposite, when there are skills shortages there is a lag in productivity. One of the ways that we can address this is by training Queenslanders in those qualifications that are needed in the economy. If we fill those skills shortages we will boost productivity and participation in the workforce and reap the resultant economic benefits.

There are a couple of matters that I would like to clear up from the committee hearing. There was some confusion when discussing the difference between growth and demand in relation to our new Schools Planning Commission. I note the Leader of the Opposition raised some of those issues both at the hearing and tonight in this debate. We have released the growth data for statistical area 2 level across the state. This information is up on the Government Statistician's website. The important information is demand. This is where we take the data, talk to the non-government sectors about their capacity and plans and talk to councils about where they are planning on approving developments or zoning changes. We have done this for three areas around the state: Caloundra South, Townsville and metropolitan north. Three more will follow soon: metropolitan south and Ipswich, Toowoomba and

Sunshine Coast hinterland. It is not good enough to take the maps, as the opposition leader did on the day, and interpret that into something to do with the debate about potential school closures. They are two separate processes.

The other clarification is that during the committee hearing I said in relation to accreditation arrangements for trainers and assessors that 'we will make sure that everyone is registered'. By way of clarification, our VET five-year action plan outlines at action 2.7 that accreditation arrangements for trainers and assessors will be voluntary.

I noted in my opening that I hoped the committee would focus on improving student outcomes rather than engaging in political sound bites and faux indignation. I would like to thank those members of the committee who did that. Unfortunately Labor members did not heed my warning, as they were more interested in interjecting with media grabs and pre-rehearsed lines than genuinely inquiring into the programs and initiatives that we have introduced into Queensland schools to improve student outcomes. That brings me to report No. 17 of the Education and Innovation Committee. This opposition will say and do anything to get media coverage, both on the day of estimates hearings and even subsequently. We hear from them misrepresentations and mistruths in their dissenting report. In fact, tonight the member for Woodridge has asked questions about advertising. The federal government is spending I think \$50 million on trying to sell the Gonski plans in the lead-up to the election. Kevin Rudd said in his previous iteration as Prime Minister or as opposition leader that he believed government advertising should stop in the three months leading up to an election. What has he done over the last couple of weeks? Spend millions on the New Guinea plan to send people to other countries. Do not give me that faux outrage from the opposition. I see other outrageous things in this report. They have acknowledged that we are increasing staffing by 724 teachers and teacher aides. This is a dissenting report that really is not worth the paper it is written on.

 **Hon. IB WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (10.23 pm): I start by thanking the committee for its time and consideration, the chair Rosemary Menkens, member for Burdekin, and all those who made the arrangements and provided support for this process. I will confine my comments to the statement of reservation put forward by those opposite and address the issues that they have raised there. I will, in the course of doing so, reiterate some key points made to the committee by me and my department.

I remind the opposition members that in the interests of greater transparency and accountability the Newman government fully outlined the extent of fiscal repair savings measures and other funding adjustments made to the departments this year. That is detailed in budget paper No. 4 2012-13. In relation to information technology, in contrast to the previous government's arrangements, accountability for ICT investment is now clear. We can see from the Health payroll inquiry just how unclear and unsatisfactory it was under those opposite. It is clear under this government. I am responsible for setting the government's policy and vision for ICT. I will also have co-responsibility for all significant and at-risk ICT investments. The implementation of investments that fall into these categories will be overseen by the relevant department's minister. However, no investment decision will go ahead until my department has given approval.

Significant and at-risk ICT investments will now be regularly reported by agencies through a directors-general council and then through me to cabinet. The ICT accountability framework that establishes these clear and transparent points of accountability and responsibility is outlined in the ICT strategy which we have published and we further elaborated in the government's ICT action plan. A strategic assessment of the divestment options for CITEC is currently underway. However, as I have consistently maintained, there are no immediate staffing implications as a result of this activity. The government is determined to use ICT to deliver better quality services to Queenslanders and to achieve this the government may leverage the agility and innovation of local ICT providers or contract services from vendors that operate in the global marketplace. As I have repeatedly stressed, our focus first and foremost is on delivering value for money ICT solutions for Queenslanders, something which was sadly lacking under the previous government.

In the area of science and innovation, the Newman government has funded \$6.5 million for the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine to commence construction of the Townsville facility in conjunction with James Cook University. That is the first instalment of the Newman government's \$42 million commitment to strengthen Queensland's tropical health defences. It was explained to the committee that changes to funding for science delivery services were mainly due to employee savings and the conclusion of limited-life funding for science projects—that is, projects funded to their contractual completion. The science delivery area of my department continues to

undertake work in a number of areas, including monitoring the natural environment for other Queensland government departments because, unlike those opposite, this government acts as one—we work together.

In the area of the arts, Arts Queensland's budget has fallen \$6.6 million from \$108.8 million in 2012-13 to \$102.2 million in 2013-14. That is due to the net effect of ongoing savings delivered from the organisational restructure and the streamlining of grants delivery, end of limited-life grants and project funding. Offsetting this is the grants that we are providing for Playing Queensland—Boost to Touring to get arts to regional and rural Queensland and the Super Star funds which equate to \$1.5 million in 2013-14. Boost to Touring funding has delivered significant increases in rural and regional arts performances. I think that is a great thing for Queensland.

Insofar as foreign film production is concerned, all Australian states are experiencing a downturn. That is hardly surprising given the global financial crisis and the strength of the Australian dollar and what that means to the less favourable exchange rate for US productions and therefore increasing costs to producers. But we are still working hard to secure more foreign investment in what remains a strong domestic Queensland film industry. I make no apologies for one issue that is raised and that is trying to secure our fair share of Australia Council for the Arts funding. We do need to press for a better deal for Queensland which has 20 per cent of the population of Australia but gets 10 per cent of arts council funding. That is not fair. As Queensland's arts minister I will continue to fight for Queensland's right in this regard.

The member for South Brisbane made some comments about myself and my predecessor and the state of the arts industry. She need not worry. I can happily table tonight for the information of the House the August edition of *Boom*, the *Courier-Mail's* publication, which contains the article 'Pitch perfect. Queensland's arts leaders are lifting their industry into the box seat', about the arts staging a comeback. The Newman government is strongly supportive of arts and the results are there for all to see.

Tabled paper: Article from Boom magazine titled 'The Arts staging a comeback' [\[3167\]](#).


Report adopted.

Health and Community Services Committee

Report

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Order! The question is—

That the report of the Health the Community Services Committee be adopted.

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (10.29 pm): There are many things I could speak about in the House tonight in relation to the estimates hearings for the Health and Community Services Committee. However, I will concentrate on only one particular issue. I am not talking about the unprovoked and unwarranted personal attack on me by the member for Bundamba in a press release issued the day after estimates. I am speaking about the reprehensible and abhorrent attempt by the member for Bundamba to discredit the impeccable character of the Chairman of the Metro North Hospital and Health Service Board. I am completely appalled that a member of such longstanding in this place as the member for Bundamba would try such a grubby tactic.

Major General Paul Alexander joined the Army in 1976 and completed his medical training at the University of Melbourne in 1978. Following several years of clinical training in Victorian hospitals, he commenced the first of several regimental appointments as a regimental medical officer, an RMO, at the 3rd Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. This was followed by several years working as an RMO in Papua New Guinea with the PNG Defence Force. He then served as the RMO for the Special Air Service Regiment for three years and completed SAS selection during this tenure.


In 1988, Major General Alexander took a period of postgraduate medical training in the UK in the areas of sports medicine and tropical medicine, as well as undertaking several military attachments with UK medical units. On return to Australia, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and appointed as Commanding Officer of the 11th Field Ambulance and subsequently as Commanding Officer of the 1st Military Hospital at Yeronga. Three years were then spent in the US Army as the Australian Army exchange officer for the US Army Medical Department, where he was employed in the area of capabilities, combat, doctrine and doctrine development and was involved in the redeployment of US Army battlefield hospital systems.

On return to Australia, Major General Alexander was promoted to colonel and posted to Headquarters 1st Division as the Senior Medical Officer. During this period, he was deployed with the internal peacekeeping force to Bougainville on Operation Belisi. He transferred to the Army Reserve in 1998 and subsequently assumed the position of the Director of Reserve Health Services for the Army in Queensland. During this period, he deployed as the public health officer for the UN peacekeeping force in East Timor. He was promoted to brigadier in January 2004 and assumed the position of Assistant Surgeon General ADF Army.

Major General Alexander continued to work in clinical practices and was a partner in a large group medical practice in Queensland, undertaking the duties of managing partner. He was active in primary healthcare policy development as the Chairman of the Redcliffe Division of General Practice. Major General Alexander has been actively involved in risk management and legal medicine. He is a fellow of the Australian College of Legal Medicine, a fellow of the Australian College of Medicine Administration and also a fellow of the Australian College of Tropical Medicine.

Major General Alexander was promoted to the rank of major general on 25 March to 2008 and recommenced full-time service. Major General Alexander was appointed Commander Joint Health and Surgeon General Australian Defence Force on 4 August 2008. Joint Health Command was established in August 2008 as being responsible for leading the defence health services reform program. Major General Alexander was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia on 26 January 2011.

I wish to extend to Major General Alexander my deepest gratitude for his service to our country and for his willingness to continue to serve our community. I think he is an outstanding example of service for anyone to aspire to. As a community, not only do we owe him a deep debt of gratitude, but also we are very lucky to have a man of his integrity, experience and capability leading health service delivery in the north metro area. Dr Alexander, you, sir, have my most sincere thanks.

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.33 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Health and Community Services Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 portfolio budget estimates. The estimates hearing was an opportunity for members of parliament to question ministers and senior officials about the performance of the government on the provision of essential front-line services in health. Clarity in this process was hampered by the minister's sudden, time-consuming and bizarre interest in immigration policy and the health of the people of Papua New Guinea, neither of which, by the way, feature in the budget papers, yet the chair, the honourable member for Kallangur, let the minister rip. Why? Because the federal election is coming! Clarity was achieved, however, despite the minister's verbal spin and his indecision. What has become clear is the betrayal of the people of Queensland by this Newman LNP government. This government promised to 'revitalise front-line services'. 'Oh yeah?', say the people of Queensland. It has consciously and systematically sought to destroy the free public health and hospital services built and paid for by generations of hardworking Queenslanders.

Yesterday afternoon, a despicable example of this wanton destruction was made painfully clear to the clinical staff and teachers of the Barrett Adolescent Centre. Despite years of successful mental health treatment for our most vulnerable young people, the minister has refused to maintain this essential front-line service beyond the beginning of 2014. The Barrett Adolescent Centre is the only extended adolescent residential treatment facility with an integrated special school in this state. It has saved the lives of hundreds of young people with severe mental illnesses such as compulsive self-harm, depression and suicidal behaviours. The minister has falsely claimed that the previous Labor government intended to close the Barrett Adolescent Centre. If he wants, I am happy to provide the minister with the architectural plans for the new \$10 million building that we planned to build adjacent to the Redlands Hospital. There is no other service provider in Queensland, public, private or community run, that can currently deliver a model of residential adolescent mental health care that integrates a special school and a day-care program. This despicable decision by this government may cost lives and the responsibility for that lies squarely with this Minister for Health.

The minister has crowed on and on about the reduction in ambulance ramping. For the record, I remind the minister that the Metropolitan Emergency Department Access Initiative was undertaken by the previous Labor government and that achieving the national emergency access targets was only possible with additional funds from the federal Labor government. The minister should not be so cock-a-hoop about the disastrous elective surgery waiting lists under his government, as Queensland

is now the worst performing state in the country. Minister, where are the 40,000 additional outpatient appointments the LNP promised in its election campaign? They are nowhere to be found! This budget has capped specialist outpatient services by 70,000 appointments. That is another betrayal of the trust of the Queensland voters.

Let us look at the paltry performance of this government on quality health and hospital services. It is a disgrace. The people of Queensland will not be fooled and will never be fooled by this government's jargon called contestability and outsourcing, because if it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, it is LNP Newman privatisation! Today the minister says only new public hospitals will be privatised and they are the Gold Coast Hospital, the new children's hospital and the Sunshine Coast Hospital. It is disgraceful. What did the LNP members do? They stayed silent. They shut their mouths in a silence of conspiracy.

Let us talk about the porkies that have been told this afternoon about the health payroll. It was a failed stunt. That is why they got up very quickly and shut the debate down.


Ms Trad: They guillotined their own debate.

Mrs MILLER: They guillotined their own debate. What clowns are those MPs! This evening, I table the answer to question on notice No. 6 in relation to the \$1.3 billion. It states that it is \$1 billion for normal operating costs over seven years. That is what it is.

Tabled paper: Government response to Health and Community Services Committee 2013 Estimates Pre-hearing Question on Notice No. 6 [\[3168\]](#).

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! The time has expired. Member for Bundamba, please resume your seat.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (10.38 pm): I rise to speak on the report on the Health and Community Services Committee's consideration of the 2013-14 budget estimates. I thank the Minister for Health for addressing the committee. The minister has significant challenges in the wake of the federal Labor government's budget cuts to health and I applaud his achievements at a time when Labor has seen fit to pull the rug out from under all Queenslanders who expect their federal government to support their health and hospital requirements. I thank the minister for his support for the Robina Hospital, a hospital that has been the subject of ridiculous innuendos from the Queensland Nurses Union. The QNU has been spreading mistruths about the future of the hospital, creating unwarranted concern for the staff and local community.

This of course is the same QNU that failed to stand up for its members in the wake of the payroll debacle. These are important issues. It was extremely disappointing that the member for Bundamba's behaviour did not reflect the importance of the issues discussed. The honourable member spent much of the initial hearing interrupting the director-general when he was trying to outline the budgetary challenges that the department has faced in planning for the 2013-14 budgetary year, and no wonder. In a favour to her federal Labor mates she was trying to prevent the director-general from outlining the funding ripped from Health in Queensland by the Labor government as they face an election where their legacy will be under substantial and justified scrutiny.

When looking at the most recent midyear economic and fiscal outlook, it is clear that Queensland's funding from the federal government is approximately \$485 million worse off under Labor over the forward estimates. Meanwhile, the most recent Queensland budget delivered a total of \$12.326 billion for Health, which was a \$1.28 billion increase over and above the level of expenditure under the former Labor government. In the face of this lack of support from Canberra, the minister has delivered substantial improvements: the best financial performance Queensland Health has ever had; the best emergency department performance it has ever had; and the lowest state-wide in-hospital mortality rate the system has ever had.


Our compromised border between mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea sees the state out of pocket in terms of the costs of providing health services to PNG nationals with compensation from the Commonwealth for its failure to secure our borders falling significantly short. We continue to bear the brunt of the cost of the Labor government's inability to do what is surely one of its most vital functions—that is, maintaining the integrity of our borders. The most recent figures are yet to be released. I encourage the Commonwealth to step up and ensure the state is adequately compensated.

I would also like to thank the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services whom I look forward to hosting and introducing to some of the great community service organisations in the Mudgeeraba electorate on her upcoming visit to the Gold Coast. The member for Bundamba once again embarrassed herself by attempting to elicit private and confidential information from the minister during estimates, with the minister of course maintaining the privacy of the family in question. Not only was it improper, but an attempt to use the private information of one family for political gain is just tacky and distasteful.

I also thank the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for his continued support for the Springbrook community. The initiatives that he has been introducing during his tenure demonstrate an understanding of communities like Springbrook and its needs—an attribute sorely lacking in his predecessor 'Carbon Kate'. His predecessor sought to gut the Springbrook community of its economy and in a quest to deliver preferences from the Greens to the ALP delivered a strategy that if it had continued would have resulted in the decimation of an historic and vibrant community. Thankfully, though, the Springbrook community is strong, is resilient and is committed to the mountain's future. I thank them for toughing it out when their survival was truly at risk.

I know that the Springbrook community want more support from their government. I know that it is coming. I have strong confidence in the minister's ability and his desire to deliver that support. We will address the initiatives of the previous government which sought to shut down the Springbrook community. I thank the minister for his support for Mudgeeraba's local sport clubs and sportspeople through the Get in the Game initiative. These groups truly help to maintain the sense of community that is so distinctive within my electorate.

I thank the ministers who addressed the committee for their commitment to openness and their passion for their areas of responsibility. It is clear that we as a government are committed to tackling the policy challenges ahead and to restoring financial responsibility to the government in Queensland.

 **Mr DAVIES** (Capalaba—LNP) (10.43 pm): I am very proud to rise tonight to commend the 2013-14 budget estimates report No. 25 to the House. I also wish to commend all four ministers for their thorough command of their ministerial responsibilities and the task of repairing their respective ministerial portfolios from what can only be described as the train wreck that existed under the previous regime. They have actually repaired them to the point where they are well on the way to being world's best practice.

The Newman government's achievements in the portfolios of Health, Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, which fall under the responsibility of the Health and Community Services Committee, are good news for the people of Queensland and for the people of my electorate of Capalaba. The report clearly outlines that the Newman government is delivering real outcomes and real benefits for real people.


In Health we have seen an increase in funding of over 11.6 per cent which includes \$5.8 million to provide cochlear implants—real outcomes. It includes \$28.3 million over four years for additional hospital in home services—real outcomes. Add to this the recent news that Queensland emergency department waiting times are now the lowest in Australia—real outcomes.

In the area of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services—an area for which I have a real passion—again we see a very significant increase in funding with a total budget of over \$2.5 billion, an increase of \$16 million on the 2012-13 budget and a huge increase in the shameful budget under the Bligh government. Included in this budget are initiatives such as \$55 million over four years to provide assistance for up to 12,000 young people with a disability leaving school—real outcomes for Queenslanders and real outcomes for some of the most deserving people in my electorate. There is also \$117 million over the next four years to provide support for over 226 young adults exiting the care of the state. It is not ALP rhetoric but real outcomes.

Finally, the portfolio of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing has seen a significant increase in its budget of \$17 million, lifting the total budget to over \$366 million. For my electorate of Capalaba the most telling initiative in this budget is the \$23 million in further funding for the Get in the Game program. I commend the minister for it. This program seeks to encourage our young people to be involved in sport. The continuation of this initiative and innovative program is most welcome by the mums and dads and young people of Capalaba—real outcomes for real people.

In closing, given that I am moving to a new committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank firstly the secretariat—Sue Cawcutt and her team—for their amazing support and at times patience with us. Secondly, I commend both the past and present chairmen of the HCSC, Peter

Dowling and Trevor Ruthenberg respectively, for their first-class leadership. Finally, to all my fellow committee members—and even you, Jo—I say that I have truly enjoyed our working together to see real outcomes, such as Hummingbird House, come to fruition. This is a real outcome for real people with real needs. That is why I joined the parliament. I commend the report to the House.

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—UAP) (10.47 pm): I think the Health estimates for the health minister was a real awakening for a person who feels they are very much at the top of their game. I say so because the Minister for Health seemed almost shocked that he was taken to task on issues as diverse as HIV screening and what is really occurring in the Torres Strait and, rather amazingly, the minister's apparent ignorance of his own lack of caution on matters regarding the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Consistently, the minister seemed to want to use the almost random figures which he had either rote learned or guesstimated to embellish what he said was happening here in Queensland. There were three critical reports tabled. One, which I have outlined, was on the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and two were on the Gold Coast University Hospital.

The critical figure the minister failed to state but were in the redacted KPMG Sunshine Coast University Hospital report was a recurrent expenditure budget for this year of \$653 million with an increase in the future. In another breath he launched into a caustic dispute raving on about the failings of the Health payroll system. He could not quite see the most incongruous comparison going on between his own statement of what had just occurred in this payroll dispute and the idea that Queensland Health would rashly go ahead and decide they could be in charge of a completely outsourced public hospital.

I also found, interestingly enough, earlier on the Deputy Premier's criticisms of the failures of non-government members' estimates questions laughable. It was not what I saw in my estimates process hearing. In contrast to what this very indignant, close-minded person was actually saying, I thought that what I was seeing at the estimates hearing was exactly the opposite. But the minister himself was interesting. He opened up and talked about the horde of refugees that is going to be flooding in from New Guinea and the Torres Strait island communities, and that that had already begun.


He recounted a tale which I suspect was entirely dubious about a man of Middle Eastern descent who at various times was either HIV positive or HIV negative and indeed did have TB. Thankfully he did not have the multidrug-resistant version of this disease, but he linked this to the death of a PNG woman who subsequently died in Cairns from the multidrug-resistant disease and who was effectively unresponsive to treatment. I think at various times all federal parties were responsible for looking after these issues.

The sudden problem of potential refugees swimming, rowing or dingy riding the straits from Daru is the result of Kevin Rudd's plan to solve illegal immigration to Australia. This is probably one of the most important departments, yet this went on for quite a while. It was a time-wasting, politically irrelevant discussion and it became a major part of what is a very short time in which to discuss a \$12.3 billion budget. Some of the other things were mentioned by the members. I am not saying that there were not things discussed that were relevant, but we really do not have enough time to get involved in these long rants.

Irrespective of whether the federal government is terrible—and certainly the former Labor government and the current one are not doing a very good job—certainly this issue of cutting federal funds which went on and on and on was really not critical to what we were trying to achieve in looking at individual budgets carefully. It was absolutely disgraceful, I thought, for a former, very careful, probing, long-serving former National Party member to have degenerated into exactly the type of minister he routinely castigated for the very same things he spent years being critical of.

In between these small snippets about Moura Hospital, which were very commendable, and a strange opportunistic screening program for HIV, which I do not think will make any difference because opportunistic screening does not work, and in spite of comments in the report of the committee, there was absolutely nothing about comparative efficiencies which I actually did ask about. I think I was met with muted looks. I was told that I would get the information. I am still waiting. I doubt any will ever be found. There seemed to be a strong attempt to distance themselves from the HQCC, their staff and the corporate knowledge that certainly comes after seven years. I have to say that I expected a lot better from this minister.

(Time expired)

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (10.52 pm): I rise in the House this evening to overview the Health and Community Services Committee estimates hearing of the Appropriation Bill 2013. I listened with great interest earlier this afternoon while, during the debate about openness and accountability in government, those opposite seem to again look like kangaroos in a spotlight. It reminded me of the precious moment during the estimates hearing when openness and accountability again seemed to be too difficult to grasp. It is in fact a completely alien concept for those opposite. I refer of course to that moment which no doubt will feature on blooper tapes for centuries to come, as outlined on pages 48 and 49 of the transcript. It goes like this—and I will try my best but I will be a few octaves lower I am sure—

Mr SPRINGBORG: ... I am more than happy to seek leave of the committee to table the redacted version of that as well, Mr Chairman ...

CHAIR: Is leave granted for that document to be tabled? Leave is granted. Thank you, Minister.

Mrs MILLER: I have a follow-up question, Minister, in relation to your spirit of openness and accountability in talking about KPMG. Minister, will you table, please, the KPMG reports for the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the Gold Coast University Hospital?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Actually, I just—

CHAIR: He just tabled them.


The discussion continues for a few minutes. But still not entirely convinced that a government could actually undertake actions of such openness and accountability, Mrs Miller goes on to say, 'So they have both been tabled today?' The chair says, 'All three.' The minister says, 'All three.' Mrs Miller says, 'I am just asking.' So they were completely baffled that openness and accountability would be so freely offered by a governing party. Earlier tonight we again witnessed the stubborn determination of those opposite and the length to which they will protest when broaching this particular subject.

The estimates process across all portfolio areas, however, did highlight some very important programs for the state of Queensland and, indeed, the constituents of Ferny Grove. Health, as well as being entertaining, was very informative, and funding such as the \$5.8 million to the cochlear implants program or the \$147 million for the maintenance backlog program will ensure that we continue to chip away at the legacy of deficiencies we inherited. Of great personal interest too was the great works being undertaken at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research, particularly in relation to skin cancer and their study of the role of vitamin D in disease prevention.

It was encouraging to hear of the continued progress being made in the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services in the transition of services from block funded models through to the Your Life Your Choice program, to the national DisabilityCare and the self-directed funding model. It is also worth mentioning again my gratitude for the services provided by Communities personnel in the aftermath of the Australia Day storms and their compassionate response to the Mount Glorious and Mount Nebo communities.

Minister Elmes highlighted again our government's commitment to the Family Responsibilities Commission and the extension of the program through to December 2014. The Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing outlined the great benefits of the Get in the Game program and the tripling of the funding for that program. There are many individual sporting groups throughout the Ferny Grove electorate that have to date benefited through this program, and I am looking forward to many other successes in this area in coming months.

In closing, I would like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Kallangur; my fellow committee members; and, of course, the outstanding secretariat staff, headed by Research Director Sue Cawcutt, for the continued support we receive.

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (10.57 pm): I rise this evening to provide a brief report to the House on issues relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services examined by the Health and Community Services Committee. And I would like to thank the parliamentary staff who assisted, as well as the committee.

While everyone can view the opposition's concerns about the minister's performance and how the budget will affect the Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services portfolio in our detailed statement of reservations, I would like to quote a section of the Queensland Council of Social Services statement in their budget commentary which sums up the budget well—


This budget, however, does not put Queensland in a strong position to support vulnerable Queenslanders for the long-term, or lead the way in delivering high quality prevention and early intervention services to reduce demand on 'crisis' services ...

One of the areas of deep concern is the level of grant funding. Last year we saw the Newman government strip \$259.7 million from the budget for grants to community organisations with more to come in this financial year and in years to come. When asked to provide a list of organisations that would be funded—or, more importantly, defunded—in this financial year, the minister refused to release any details. Yet she was prepared to release similar information in the previous year. This begs the question: what is the minister hiding?

It was the confession by the chief financial officer of the minister's department that revealed the true colours of this minister and her LNP government. With an extensive list of capital works projects, he went on to deliver quite a list just delayed by the Newman government such as the Cherbourg Safe Haven, the Mornington Island Safe Haven Women's Shelter, the Coen Safe Haven Non-Government Organisation Staff Accommodation, the Doomadgee Men's Space and the Torres Strait Services for Indigenous Communities Safe Houses Program. All of these projects have been deferred from last year to this financial year and beyond, and it is deeply concerning and distressing to learn that many of the capital works projects that have been deferred are located in Indigenous communities.

Turning to child safety, I note the opposition was disappointed that questions to the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian were not allowed to be put in relation to the impacts of the recent Carmody report, which will most likely see the hardworking commission disbanded and closed. The opposition will continue to monitor the actions of this slash and burn government in this space to ensure that the best interests of all parties concerned are maintained.

Finally, I would like to touch on the disabilities sector. I note that the Queensland government, after being dragged kicking and screaming, has finally signed the NDIS now known as DisabilityCare Australia. I was at Reddacliffe Place when the minister declared earlier in her career that it was not of interest. I am sorry; she is wrong. We on this side of the House have always believed in the value of the NDIS and DisabilityCare Australia and wonder why it took so long for the Newman LNP government to support it. I note that recently Western Australian has finally signed on and will receive a trial site in coming years. Overall the opposition and Queenslanders are disappointed with the minister's budget. We will actively continue to monitor this space to ensure that all Queenslanders receive a fair go and are supported into the future.

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.02 pm): I rise to speak on issues relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, which was examined by the Health and Community Services Committee. As the opposition outlined in our statement of reservation, it was disappointing that only 55 minutes was allocated to examine the minister's entire portfolio including the Family Responsibilities Commission.

What was made clear during the estimates hearing was that the minister actively chewed up time with a long opening statement and by providing longer than necessary answers to government dorothea dixons to avoid scrutiny from non-government members. For example, in relation to the Cape York Welfare Reform trial the minister tried to backtrack and claim that he always had the intention to continue funding for the Cape York Welfare Reform trial. But this is not supported by the minister's action to issue a press release defunding the trial that made no mention of future plans. Considering that the minister during the estimates hearing stated—


I take a great deal of notice, obviously, of what the boss tells me to do. Can I say for the benefit of Hansard that he is always right.

Given that no satisfactory answer was provided, it begs the question: was the Premier involved? Did the Premier ring the minister in the Neville Bonner Building and tell him to fix his mistake and continue the funding? Was this after Tony Abbott called the Premier to demand that funding for the trial continue? This would be plausible then but maybe not so much now that Tony Abbott and Warren Truss do not want to be seen anywhere near any member of the Newman government. If the Premier is always right, as the minister says, then the Premier's claims about alcohol management plans on 6 February 2013, reported in the *Townsville Bulletin*, are quite disturbing. The Premier was quoted as saying, 'Mr Newman said they had not worked to reduce alcohol-related violence.' However, in the same article it stated, 'Glen Elmes later said there were signs the plans had been effective in reducing crime and boosting school attendance.' Queensland has a minister who backflipped on the important issue of the Cape York Welfare Reform trial, one day defunding it and the next day having an epiphany and continuing funding, and a Premier and minister

who are clearly at odds on the effectiveness of AMPs. For the record, the Queensland opposition supports the alcohol management plans as necessary at this time. We also support a review of the current AMPs and will look at any potential change that may occur to ensure that the best interests of vulnerable community members, in particular, women, children and the elderly, remain at the fore.

Finally, it is deeply disappointing to see that the minister has not made any progress on one of his 2012 promises regarding a stand-alone Indigenous justice strategy. Up to this time there has been no tangible policy or strategy document released by the minister, despite a comprehensive review and widespread consultation being undertaken to develop a new Indigenous justice strategy called Just Futures, launched in December 2011, approximately three months prior to the LNP taking office. It is concerning that the Newman government has merely pushed aside and swept under the carpet the tremendous work that was undertaken in this space by stakeholders and many hardworking public servants within the department for it seems no other reason than it was a Labor Party strategy. His original commitment from last year's Service Delivery Statement said, 'In 2012-13, the department will develop a revised whole-of-government Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice strategy.' It did not say that it would develop Indigenous justice strategic measures that would be part of other whole-of-government plans.

I urge the minister to stand up for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders who deserve a stand-alone action plan for this important area even if it means using Just Futures as a solid starting point. The opposition was unfortunately unable to question the minister about the multicultural aspects of his portfolio due to the time period allocated to his entire portfolio. If I had more time I would have asked why the member for Woodridge, as the longest serving state MP in the Logan area, was actively excluded from discussions held at the summit which involved other local representatives including local LNP members and why the document produced after the summit contained multiple pictures of LNP members and LNP messages but not a mention of the member for Woodridge, who was at the summit for the entire duration. In summing up, the Labor opposition will continue to monitor both the ATSI and multicultural affairs portfolios to ensure Queenslanders are getting what they deserve.

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.06 pm): Can I start by thanking committee members for their examination of the expenditures of the department of health, particularly the government members who clearly and concisely understood that there had been a record budget delivered by the Newman government—\$12.3 billion, which is \$1.2 billion more than when we came to government in Queensland about 16 months ago. No doubt people understood that against a backdrop of the Commonwealth government initially promising a far greater expenditure commitment to Queensland than what it ultimately delivered.

As the honourable member for Bundamba found out when she thought she was off on some sort of gotcha moment with the director-general, he clearly indicated that, yes, there was an expenditure increase from the Commonwealth but not as much as they initially committed to Queensland. Indeed, there had been a significant reduction resulting in a midyear budget clawback which had a real impact on the ability of the hospital and health services to be able to deliver those services.

Notwithstanding that, our hospital and health services have met their budget, have delivered 101 per cent of contracted activity and have delivered record improvements with regard to emergency department performance. We also have the lowest median wait times for elective surgery in Australia, and we have improved in five out of the six categories in that area in the last 12 months despite the efforts of 'Dolores Umbridge' from Bundamba and Labor's 'Ministry of Magic' where she runs around saying, 'Everything like magic would have been just okay if the Labor Party had stayed in power in Queensland.' This is despite the fact that they had almost 20 years to achieve absolutely nothing in the state of Queensland other than a situation of absolute and complete privation. She is even trying to claim now that it was the Labor Party which addressed the issues in our emergency department because they conceived MEDAI. It conceived the committee that put it together but it did nothing about the implementation of it. It did nothing to put it in place.

We heard the honourable member for Bundamba a little while ago talk about how our free public hospital system in this state was under threat. Guess who is the only person in this parliament today who put the free public hospital system under threat? The honourable member for Bundamba when she was the apprentice to Gordon Nuttall, as he mentored her to a very high achievement

today. She was the assistant minister when they commissioned this report from the Allen Consulting Group on 17 March 2006 which made recommendations for the then Beattie government to consider including a universal co-payment set at \$50 for same-day admissions and \$100 for overnight admissions and public hospital admissions.

That is not something the LNP would even countenance, let alone look at or commission a report on. Let us look at what they also considered with regard to public hospital outpatient services—a co-payment of \$30 per visit. This was under the stewardship of the honourable member for Bundamba, the ‘Dolores Umbridge’ of the Labor Party’s ‘Ministry of Magic’. This is what she said when she concocted this report under the stewardship of Gordon Nuttall with regard to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, ‘Option A: PTSS as a last resort subsidy’. So they were actually considering abolishing that. At the same time we have actually increased it significantly.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. The minister said that I concocted a report. That is untrue and false.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! What is your point of order?

Mrs MILLER: The minister said that I concocted a report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundamba, what is your point of order?

Mrs MILLER: It is untrue and I ask him to withdraw that statement. It is untrue and offensive and I ask him to withdraw it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seat, please, member for Bundamba. Minister, please withdraw your comment.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I withdraw. I simply say that she coincidentally happened to be the assistant minister at the time that this particular report miraculously appeared in the department of health. I will leave it to the people of this parliament to decide whether or not she was there and whether she had any part of it.

I turn now to contestability. The honourable member was so concerned about contestability and outsourcing that in the last year of the previous Labor government, as she sat on the backbench as the member for Bundamba, they increased outsourcing to the record level of \$980 million, almost 10 per cent of the Queensland state budget.


Mr Nicholls: No smart comments now?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Exactly! What they say and what they do are two completely different things. Let us look at the issue of cochlear implants. We have put \$5.8 million towards completely eliminating the adult waiting list. What did this mob opposite do? When it came to voting for it, they actually voted against it. They voted against giving Queenslanders the gift of hearing. What worse thing could she possibly do in this place?

(Time expired)

Mrs Miller interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba. Order!


 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (11.11 pm): I thank the Health and Community Services Committee for the examination of the budget estimates in relation to my portfolio. It was a great opportunity to highlight the achievements of my department so far in this term of government and outline some of the government’s plans for the future in National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. In the portfolio of Racing I had the great pleasure of outlining the government’s commitment to rejuvenating country racing. I have been to a number of country race meetings across the state and heard reports from many others that they are seeing crowds of the like they have never seen before. In particular, at St George I met a man who had been attending race days for 75 years and he told me that that was the biggest race crowd he had ever seen. This is a great endorsement of the government’s commitment not only to racing in Queensland but also in support of our regional communities and economies. During the committee’s hearing the issue of printing betting tickets was raised and the acting CEO of Racing Queensland, Adam Carter, advised that the issue was being looked into. I would like to advise the House that this matter has been given due attention and that Racing Queensland has now clarified the rules so that there can be no further confusion.

In Sport and Recreation I was pleased to outline for the committee the great success that has been had so far in the government's landmark Get in the Game program. The first round of Get in the Game saw over 12,000 Get Started vouchers issued to children and young people to assist their families with the payment of sport and registration fees and equipment. This is just another way this government is cutting the cost of living for families and increasing participation, with 23 per cent of those issued with vouchers reporting that they have never participated in organised sport before. This great commitment continues with round 2 of Get Started. Even though it opened just a few weeks ago, already 7,000 vouchers have been issued. Of those, more than 1,500 have been redeemed by sport and recreation clubs throughout Queensland. The overwhelming response to the first round of the program, which also includes Get Going and Get Playing grants, saw the government increase its \$16 million election commitment to \$47.8 million over three years. Round 2 of Get Going and Get Playing open next week, 15 August and Get Started is already open. I encourage all members to go back to their electorates and work with the local sporting community groups and let them know how to get involved in this great initiative.

During the hearing I also outlined for the committee the ministerial advisory committee that I have established to increase participation in sport for women and girls chaired by Professor Doune Macdonald. I look forward to continuing to update the members of this House about the great work this committee is undertaking.

In National Parks I had the pleasure of outlining some of the ways this government is increasing access to national parks and ensuring they are effectively managed so that they are available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders. I do thank the member for Bundamba for her comments in her statement of reservation to the committee's report that this will be the greenest government that Queensland has ever seen. We are committed to bringing Queenslanders, interstate visitors and international tourists into our national parks so that they can gain a greater appreciation of our environment and learn to care for it. In the past year the government has outlined its vision to make Queensland a world leader in ecotourism by 2020. Our commitment to growing ecotourism and tourism as a key pillar of Queensland's four-pillar economy is demonstrated by: landmark changes to the Nature Conservation Act to allow ecotourism facilities to be located within our national parks; a draft ecotourism plan, which outlines the government's plan to work in partnership with industry to deliver world-class experiences and best practice sustainable ecotourism; and an expression of interest process, which is open from now until the end of September, to hear the great ideas and innovation that the Queensland tourism industry has to offer to showcase our unique natural environment. I outlined some of the ways we are delivering more effective management of our national parks and other protected areas, with over \$25 million of capital works projects for the next year. I also outlined the government's commitment to retaining the cardinal principle of national park management.

I would like to thank the committee and, in particular, the chairman and member for Kallangur, for the scrutiny of my portfolio. I also thank the parliamentary staff, members and the staff of my office and the department for the work they have done throughout the estimates committee process. I would like to thank all of the ministers and LNP backbenchers for the hard work they are doing. We know we have to knock the debt down. Through the guidance of the Treasurer and the Premier, we will succeed where Labor failed.

 **Hon. TE DAVIS** (Aspley—LNP) (Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) (11.17 pm): I start by thanking the Health and Community Services Committee for their examination of my portfolio during the estimates hearing. Specifically, I would like to make mention of the committee chair, Mr Trevor Ruthenberg and member for Kallangur, for his stewardship and the manner in which he conducted the hearing. I would also like to thank my departmental officers and ministerial staff for their work and preparation for the hearing.

I was very appreciative of the work undertaken by most of the committee members during the examination. However, I would like to express my disappointment in the opposition regarding the hearing. I find it astonishing that former government members chose not to ask sensible questions relevant to the budget papers or department programs. It seemed that the only papers that the opposition used when dreaming up their questions were those papers published by News Limited.

Estimates committee hearings are an important part of the parliamentary process and my department has been working hard to make a positive difference in the lives of many vulnerable Queenslanders. I can only assume the opposition was so embarrassed about their performance in

government that they were unable to ask any meaningful questions. Conversely, I am very proud that the Newman government is investing in Queenslanders and delivering programs to make a real difference in the quality of their lives.

For the 2013-14 financial year my portfolio has been allocated \$2.86 billion. This includes an increase in Disability Services to assist Queenslanders with a disability, their families and their carers. This 4.7 per cent increase to Disability Services brings this portion of my portfolio budget to \$1.43 billion. I look forward to continuing to deliver for people with a disability through our government's \$868 million commitment to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The first \$25 million of these funds is delivered in this budget, a year earlier than our original promise of 2014-15. This investment will help Queensland to prepare for DisabilityCare from 1 July 2016 with the full scheme commencing on 1 July 2019.


I would like to share some of my portfolio budget highlights with the House. We have invested \$55 million over four years to provide assistance for up to 1,200 young people with a disability who are leaving school. This is an important time of transition for young people with a disability and their families as they plan for the next stage of their life and independence. There is \$26.4 million over four years to provide support for people with spinal cord injuries to leave the spinal injuries unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

We know it can be very daunting when families first learn that their son or daughter has a disability or a developmental delay, and that is why we launched Parent Connect. It is about helping parents when they need it most because we know that strong and targeted early intervention services can greatly improve the quality of life of children with a disability and help strengthen and support their families. This funding in the budget will link parents with local services, guiding them through and helping them to get the care that they need.

There is also \$25.1 million over four years to help foster and kinship carers alleviate some of the costs of caring for a child in their care. Foster and kinship carers are the cornerstone of the child protection system here in Queensland, and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank them for the very important and valuable role that they undertake in caring for Queensland children who are unable to live at home.

We are also investing \$117.2 million over four years to support young adults with a disability who are exiting state care. There is also \$5 million over two years to continue to support the communities in Bundaberg and North Burnett that were impacted by ex-Tropical Cyclone Oswald. I was there recently, and I can tell you that the funding was enthusiastically received by the mayors of both Bundaberg and North Burnett regional councils. The funding is going to help support community-led recovery initiatives, individual and family counselling support and also a community health service. These budget commitments will deliver services to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders.

In closing, I acknowledge the stellar work of the Treasurer as he continues the massive task of getting Queensland back in the black, having been left with the former government's dreadful financial legacy. This is a great state with great opportunity, and we will continue to work hard for some of Queensland's most vulnerable people.

 **Hon. GW ELMES** (Noosa—LNP) (Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and Minister Assisting the Premier) (11.22 pm): Thank you for the opportunity to reply to the estimates committee report for the portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs. At the outset I thank the chair of the Health and Community Services Committee, the honourable member for Kallangur, for his diligence and the competent conduct of the hearing.

The estimates process in my situation showed a lack of understanding by some members of the committee about the activities covered by my portfolio. These are revealed in the statements of reservation lodged by the member for Bundamba on behalf of the opposition and also by the member for Gaven. I will just deal with the member for Gaven first. He asked during the committee hearing about the provision of fresh water for Torres Strait Islander communities, and I told him at the outset that the provision of water was not something that came within my portfolio responsibilities. I had to repeat that twice more and advise him that that was the case. I advised him again tonight that the responsibility lies with Minister McArdle, but more particularly Minister Crisafulli. The member compounded his lack of understanding by noting in his statement of reservation that I did not understand the responsibility for the provision of fresh water. There is only one of us here who understands their responsibility in that particular regard.

I will now deal with the opposition's misleading statement of reservation which was made by the member for Bundamba. Some of the following may have been avoided if the author of the statement of reservation had actually been at the hearing and taken part. Unfortunately, she missed it for the second year in a row. The statement complains that I opted to deliver a lengthy opening address. It was the same standard five-minute address that was allowed to all ministers. The opposition's inability to ask cohesive, relevant questions led the member for Bundamba to the erroneous conclusion that I was keen to avoid non-government members' questions. I can assure the members of this House that I have absolutely no fear whatsoever of any question that comes to me at any time by a member other than those on my side. A perusal of *Hansard* shows that non-government members were able to ask 19 questions during the process, compared to only three from government members. I was pleased to take opposition questions, but I was disappointed that they were asked with negativity rather than a genuine sense of inquiry. I am also sorry if non-government members thought my answers were too long. The member for Bundamba's statement asserts that the opposition had prepared a series of questions to the minister 'on multicultural affairs, but didn't have time to ask them'. The only reason the opposition did not have time to ask these alleged questions is because the member for Mulgrave used his allocated time for multicultural affairs to ask for more Indigenous related questions.

The other estimates opportunity that the opposition had to inquire about multicultural affairs was questions on notice, and again they demonstrated a lack of interest in the area. Not only was there not one question on notice about multicultural affairs, but they could not even come up with their quota of ten questions. They only had seven questions on notice, and one of those again was within the local government portfolio. The only committee members to ask questions about multiculturalism, whether on notice or in the hearing, were government members.

One observation I would share with the opposition is that I did not have enough time to talk about the many great things initiated by this government and undertaken by my department, so I will use what time I have left to mention some of the initiatives that I did not get a chance to canvass during the hearing.

The Newman government's Indigenous agenda is focused on ensuring that state government programs and funding are directed towards improving the stability and sustainability of Indigenous communities. Some of the areas where we have already made progress include: negotiating agreements with mining, construction, agricultural and tourism companies for Indigenous employment opportunities; creating options for homeownership on Indigenous land; and working with Indigenous councils to implement their community plans. Employment, sustainable enterprise and land tenure reform to provide improved options for homeownership are high on my list as a means for Indigenous people to achieve better outcomes.

One of the principal mechanisms for realising those priorities will be through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander economic participation framework currently being developed. The Queensland government is committed to removing the barriers for homeownership on Indigenous land and removing bureaucratic roadblocks to give a fairer deal for home and land ownership for Indigenous Queenslanders—

(Time expired)


Report adopted.

Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee

Report

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): The question is—

That the report of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee be adopted.

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (11.28 pm): I will start by saying that I am looking forward to making this brief contribution in reply to the estimates. I have the honour of going first tonight because the member for Warrego, the chairman of the committee, is ill. The committee had a running cricket theme, so I will say that we have reversed the batting order because he has pulled up stumps early.

The reason my contribution is brief is because the estimates for my part of the portfolio fell very, very flat, and it did so for the second year in a row because yet again the only questions that I received from those opposite centred on just one of the state's 73 local governments. I would love to

take questions on all local councils and the recovery in general, but it seems that there is only one council that is fixed in the minds of those opposite, particularly the member for Mackay. It is interesting that when they were in government there was a lot of interest centred on Brisbane, and not much has changed now that they are in opposition. It is a great disappointment to me that I had to sit there and field questions on absolutely trivial matters when so much is going on in my portfolio.

They proved it with their plodding, misdirected questions that uncovered not one new fact about the council's financial position for the second year in a row. As anyone who has taken the time to look at the state's local government books knows, Brisbane City Council is well down the list of councils for debt per capita and its financial outlook is strong. That is the end of the story.

Mr Nicholls: QTC said that, didn't they?

Mr CRISAFULLI: QTC did say that. But it became obvious as time wore on that Labor's questions were predominantly written by their colleagues in BCC. They had absolutely no interest whatsoever.

Mr Nicholls: Nothing has changed. When they were in BCC the questions were written by the people up here.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Indeed. The truth is: this will be a huge year for local government in Queensland as we rebuild from the natural disasters and ensure that this year truly is the year of delivery. There is \$4 billion set aside in this year's SDS for the state's recovery. That certainly is not insignificant. Of that, \$80 million will be spent through the betterment fund. That is a component I am particularly proud of and will continue to talk about in this House. That is about not just replacing assets like for like but building them stronger for the next time around. It will break the dumb cycle of replacing like for like. This fund marks a change in culture, and we have set an agenda for the rest of Australia to follow. Still, it was not groundbreaking enough to attract a single question from those opposite. Instead I was asked—

... are you able to advise when a profit is expected for Legacy Way?

Back in the real world, councils are achieving a cracking pace in their recovery efforts. Something that is being reflected in local governments around the state is the speed of the recovery, council by council. I mentioned the fantastic efforts of Bundaberg in turning around their application. I would like to think that a lot of it has to do with the close working relationship that has developed between these two levels of government. I am particularly proud of what has been done, but there is a mountain of work to go this year. Instead, I was asked—

... are you concerned about the level of debt at the Brisbane City Council ...?


That question came after I articulated exactly what I have said this evening. Anyone who knows or cares about Queensland's local governments—not just Brisbane—would know that there were real issues in the past two financial years with councils being able to deliver on the ground. That is why it is so important this year that we set goals and deliver, as 57 councils rebound from the events of 2013. The cynical way the previous state government administered grants certainly did not help councils with their delivery. That is something we have changed this year. I was at pains to explain that in the SDS. It will be delivered differently this year. Did that rate a question? No. Instead, I was asked—

There was a meeting that occurred between the QTC, the Treasurer and the council. Did you attend ...?

I am sure my colleagues and those opposite get the drift. Despite my love for local government across the state, after this year's estimates hearing even I have to admit defeat when it comes to Labor lifting its gaze from George Street, where—you guessed it—Brisbane City Council's office is.

I conclude by thanking the chairman for his stewardship of the committee; all members, including the member for Mackay who asked questions on behalf of the opposition; those involved in the process; and those staff from the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

(Time expired)

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (11.32 pm): The residents of the electorate of Springwood are the people I have in mind as I give this speech tonight. Some of the issues that are important to my constituents include the high cost of electricity and water and access to good education and health

care, especially care for family members with disabilities. Loss of time due to traffic congestion also features in their thinking. Another matter on the minds of many residents who have invested in solar energy panels has been whether or not they will lose the benefits they currently have. I will move quickly through these issues, as time available is limited.

Even though there is enormous pressure on our budget, we have averted a resident uprising by honouring the commitment given by the previous government to pay solar panel owners 44c per kilowatt hour fed into the electricity grid. Significantly, the Premier and the Minister for Energy and Water Supply have made commitments not to impose a levy on solar panels for the maintenance of the electricity network. These two commitments are extremely important to many in my electorate.

Some \$27.137 million is currently being spent on the construction of an extra southbound lane for the M1 motorway through Springwood, and further easing of traffic congestion will be achieved when the upgrade of the busway and Gateway merge with the M1 is completed.


With respect to personal safety and security for Queenslanders, the Premier made clear earlier today that the extra 300 police officers achieved last financial year are in fact a net increase, which significantly adds to the police numbers in Springwood. This is welcomed by many, and the increase in police numbers this year is expected to be 267 above attrition.

Regarding access to good education, I have enjoyed positive feedback from school principals who, with increased funding, are making good progress on the backlog of maintenance works on their school buildings, making the most of up to \$160,000 per school. Our increase in funding for education this year amounted to more than six per cent.

I have been surprised to witness homelessness in the Springwood electorate and continue to work with the Hon. Tim Mander, Minister for Housing and Public Works, to help boost the provision of housing. Considering the cost of transport, let us remember the relief we are providing to commuters by halving the 15 per cent per annum fare increases faced under Labor. I personally continue to help individuals in the Springwood electorate needing urgent medical care to access the services they require, and there are many in this situation.

I want to put on the record my grave concern about the fiscal position that the government finds itself in due to the reckless losses incurred by successive Labor governments. Just one reason for this concern is the fact that, notwithstanding the colossal work being done, we would have to increase our annual spending by 500 per cent to meet the needs of all those with disabilities across the state. This powerfully illustrates that increasing costs are far outstripping the rate of revenue increase.

In closing, let us ponder the fact that if the LNP government had the use of the \$1.6 billion that goes each year on paying just the interest bill on the general government debt left us by Labor we would be able to meet a great deal more of the needs of Queenslanders. Finally, I thank the Hon. Tim Nicholls, Treasurer and Minister for Trade, for the work he has put in over a long period to bring down this budget. I also pay tribute to the chair of our committee, Mr Howard Hobbs, and Kate McGuckin and the team that support her so well and work with us month in, month out.

 **Mr MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.37 pm): I would like to place on record my thanks to the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee for allowing me to participate in the examination of the portfolio of the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. I would like to thank the chair, Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, and other members of his committee, government and non-government, as well as the secretariat for the support they gave the committee throughout the duration of the hearing.

My comments relate to the portfolio of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. Firstly, it is of some concern that the minister refused to engage with questions about the issue of debt accrued by Brisbane City Council. Despite being the minister responsible for the financial sustainability of local councils in Queensland, the minister did not seem concerned about the level of debt being carried by Brisbane City Council—a council whose financial direction was determined in the past by the current Premier and the current Treasurer when they were councillors.

The Queensland Treasury Corporation half-yearly report to December 2012 details that, despite having only 25 per cent of the state population, Brisbane City Council has 33 per cent of all local government debt in Queensland, worth \$2.04 billion. The QTC review also revealed that the debt for Brisbane City Council is projected to increase from \$389.188 million in the financial year 2009 to \$2.415 billion this financial year—an increase of 521 per cent. In comparison, the projection for

state government debt under the previous government was an increase of 84 per cent over the same period. This significant and increasing level of debt raises questions as to the ability of the Premier and Treasurer as economic managers, as both have been responsible in recent times for the budget of Brisbane City Council.


I will now address the matter of deamalgamation which has been poorly handled by the minister. In particular, the minister was asked about his decision to override the recommendations of the Boundaries Commissioner and allow certain local government areas to proceed to a poll despite Queensland Treasury Corporation assessing their prospects of financial viability as doubtful. Additionally, in the case of Rockhampton Regional Council, its residents were not allowed to vote on the deamalgamation proposal even though it will leave their council financially vulnerable. QTC recommended that the remaining Rockhampton Regional Council has been evaluated as being unsustainable. A deamalgamation would result in an unwarranted financial burden on ratepayers. In this case, a poll is not recommended. Needless to say, the minister ignored this recommendation. The minister argued that, because the previous government had not conducted votes on amalgamations, the Newman government was excused from giving affected Queenslanders a say. Notwithstanding his rhetoric about giving everyone a say about deamalgamation, the hypocrisy of his argument seemed to be lost on the minister. With respect to the residents of Kuranda and the surrounding communities in the new Mareeba regional council, the minister agreed to meet with residents further to discuss their concerns but only if they agreed to remain as part of the new Mareeba local government area. The minister has therefore refused to reconsider their request to remain a part of the Tablelands Regional Council.

Another issue raised with the minister was the erosion of Gold Coast beaches. The minister confirmed under questioning that he had discussed this issue of beaches with the mayor of the Gold Coast. He also confirmed that the state government would not be considering any financial assistance to council in order to repair the ongoing damage. This means that ratepayers will shoulder the full burden of having to continually repair Gold Coast beaches.

With regard to the government's reconstruction efforts, the minister showed obvious concern when questioned about deadlines. However, he was not able to articulate any strategies that were being employed by the government to ensure that the deadline for reconstruction projects would be met. The minister also confirmed that \$5.2 billion had been received to date from the Commonwealth for reconstruction. The minister raised the issue of \$725 million in Commonwealth funding for reconstruction work that had not yet been paid. The CEO of the Reconstruction Authority confirmed that the Queensland Auditor-General had not fully signed off on the projects for which that funding was sought and had in fact provided a qualified audit. The opposition would once again like to place on record its thanks and congratulations to the staff of the Reconstruction Authority for their professional and diligent management of the reconstruction process.

Finally—this is a bit academic—the minister was asked about the proposed referendum to recognise local government in the Australian Constitution. In particular, he could not provide a satisfactory response as to why the Newman government had changed its mind and withdrawn support for the referendum. Overall, the minister—

(Time expired)

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (11.42 pm): Today I rise to make some comments on issues relating to the portfolio of the Minister for Housing and Public Works, in particular the Housing part of the portfolio. Things for public housing tenants right across Queensland have not been the same since this Newman LNP government took office. Since 24 March 2012 those opposite have charted a course to destroy the public housing system in this state as we know it. They sent letters to social housing tenants, instilling fear into the community. They tried—

Mr Grimwade: That's rubbish, and you know it!

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection.

Mr Grimwade: Good! It's rubbish!

Mrs MILLER: No, it is not. So you are saying that Dr Bruce Flegg did not send letters to public housing tenants in this state?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order!

Mrs MILLER: Is that what you are saying?

Mr Grimwade: No.

Mrs MILLER: Well, he did.

Mr Grimwade interjected.

Mrs MILLER: He did. You would not know what you are talking about! They tried to flog—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: When I call 'order', I mean order. It is your position, member for Bundamba, to look at the Speaker. I do not want conversations between members. You must direct your responses through the chair, through the Speaker. I call the member for Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: Thank you so much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure people in my electorate will enjoy my speech on YouTube. They tried to flog off three government owned caravan parks to the private sector, they have stopped funding of the TAAS and CAMRA programs and now they have launched their next assault under the pretext of the Housing 2020 Strategy. The minister claims that he wants to prevent people from entering the social housing market and assist them in entering the private rental market. In fact, he wants to assist 250,000—that is, 250,000—people enter or remain in the private housing market. This, however, is not going to work and is just another example of policy on the run by the minister who is floundering with his ministerial responsibilities.

He knows that residents on low incomes or on government benefits will struggle to meet the criteria put forward by the minister to enter the private rental market. As I explained at estimates, private real estate agents have advised me—many of them—that they simply cannot offer tenancies to people who are on pensions or on other social benefits because they simply cannot afford it. Tenants and real estate agents say to me, 'What planet is the minister circling around?', and tenants say to me, 'It's like ground control to Major Tom.' They just cannot believe what is happening. They think you are in outer space. It is deeply concerning that the minister has formed the view that people receiving government benefits can transition over easily into the private sector, but clearly that is not right.

Ms Bates: They should get a job first!

Mrs MILLER: I take that interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba—

Ms Trad: The ex-minister.

Mrs MILLER:—the ex-minister—that they need to get a job first. Let me tell you: when we had Skilling Queenslanders for Work going, they were going to get a job.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, I understand the heightened debate, but it does not serve us to continue to argue across the chamber.

Mrs MILLER: In relation to that cheeky comment from the failed minister who is now sitting on the ministerial bench over there trying to get back, may I just say that Minister Mander is clearly out of touch with the community. The minister reckons he is all about trying to get people into a house, but we know that that is not right—because he is the worst landlord in the country, because he stopped funding for the TAAS service which, during its high point, gave over 100,000 pieces of advice every year to help people every day in Queensland get into homes and off the streets. But what did he do? He stopped the TAAS program—in Ipswich, may I add—and put people out of work and closed the office—right in the heart of Ipswich and all around Queensland. But what is he doing with the money? He is funding more housing projects, and we understand up to 20 more units. But while he is investing in these housing units, which is welcome, the minister has failed to adequately explain why a service that assisted tens of thousands of people was cut for an alternative that will benefit, at most, several dozen people.

The minister is just out of his depth. We know that. In fact, I was at a meeting for several hours in the member for Murrumba's electorate. I was there for the whole morning and they told me lots of stories about their lack of service in the electorate in relation to housing, but I will let that go for another day. I will just let it go for another day because, as Mr Deputy Speaker said, it is getting late.

(Time expired)


Mrs Smith: Where's Jerry Springer—Jerry Springer?

Mrs Miller interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Morayfield.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the member for Bundamba. On the next occasion, I will take the next step. I warn the member for Bundamba under 253A. I call the member for Morayfield.


 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (11.48 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I hope that also goes on the end of her YouTube clip when she puts it on her Facebook page. I want to talk very briefly about the experience at this year's estimates. I start by acknowledging the secretariat staff who do a wonderful job for us in the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee and of course our chairman, Mr Howard Hobbs from Warrego, who is absent tonight because he is ill.

The first portfolio that we examined at the estimates committee hearing was the Transport portfolio. Last year when I stood here and spoke about some of the issues we examined in the Transport and Main Roads portfolio I referred to the wasteful expenditure on a number of items, such as backpacks sitting on shelves and electronic sockets for cars that were not being used. This year we touched on a number of other issues. There are a number of projects in my electorate that I want to touch on tonight that will benefit greatly from this year's budget and next year's as well. One of those is the extra \$5.2 million that has been added to the budget to finish the first stage of the upgrade of Morayfield Road in my electorate. This is a major piece of infrastructure that is necessary for the growth that is occurring in my region.

When I delivered my speech on the budget in this place, when it came to the portfolio of Transport and Main Roads I spoke about a number of projects. My electorate has really benefited from this year's budget. Some of those projects include \$1 million for a bus interchange at Morayfield Shopping Centre. The bus interchange at Morayfield is inadequate and is the result of poor planning by the previous government. But we have a plan now, with \$1 million being committed to get the ball rolling. Most recently, at the Burpengary Railway Station the Assistant Minister for Public Transport, Mr Steve Minnikin, and I announced \$150,000 for the upgrade of that station. That funding will make a massive difference to that train station, which again had suffered from poor planning. The station had a car park, but there was no entrance from there to the platform for commuters. The commitment for a free journey once you have had nine journeys on the public transport network and halving Labor's fare increase—it wanted to put up fares by 15 per cent every year—have resulted in regular mum-and-dad commuters in my electorate being \$695 to \$747 a year better off.

I know my time is short, but I want to touch on the Housing 2020 Strategy, which was announced by the Minister for Housing. This is great news because, contrary to what the member for Bundamba said tonight, it will deliver 12,000 additional homes. When the Newman government came to power it was estimated that there were around 32,000 people—or just a bit higher than that—on the public housing waiting list. As of today there are about 22,000 people on that waiting list. In my electorate, when I became the member there were 831 people on the public housing waiting list. Now, there are only 325 people on that list. So we are making important inroads into the waiting list. Of course, as part of that strategy to build additional homes with the money we have saved in the portfolio recently we announced a new development right across the road from my electorate office of 17 one- and two-bedroom units. My hat goes off to the department. The great things that the minister is doing in his portfolio was well touched on during the estimates committee hearing.

The last portfolio that my estimates committee examined was that of Local Government. In keeping with the cricket and the sporting theme that was present throughout the estimates committee hearing on that particular day—and the minister mentioned the sporting rhetoric in his speech previously—I think the minister hit the opposition for six. When we started talking about betterment funding, which is one of the highlights of the Local Government budget this year, to be perfectly honest that really stumped the opposition members on the committee. At the moment I am working with the Moreton Bay Regional Council on a number of betterment projects that will really benefit the people in my electorate. No doubt, some announcements of those projects will be made in this parliament at some stage in the near future. My hat goes off to the minister. He has done a great job in the Local Government portfolio. When I speak to the mayor of my area and to other mayors as I travel around Queensland as part of this portfolio, often they tell me that they have a better relationship now with this state government than they have ever had for probably two decades under the previous government. I commend this report to the House.


 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—UAP) (11.53 pm): As a member of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee, it is only right to begin by acknowledging the chair, Mr Howard Hobbs; the deputy chair, Mrs Desley Scott and also the dedicated and competent committee staff members along with all the other committee members. I also wish to acknowledge the commitment and

professionalism of all the departmental staff who contributed and supported each of the ministers appearing before the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee on 25 July. Each of the ministers spoke on a range of matters relevant to their respective areas of responsibility and, to give credit where credit is due, none more competently than the Hon. David Crisafulli, the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience.

In relation to the portfolio of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, there is no doubt that the Hon. Minister Crisafulli has a very challenging role in terms of community recovery and resilience. But the importance of his responsibilities in relation to overseeing the financial stability of local governments should not be ignored. Legitimate concerns were raised about the latest credit review of the Brisbane City Council by the Queensland Treasury Corporation. The Brisbane City Council is Australia's largest council and that review reveals that debt is projected to increase from \$389.188 million in 2009 to \$2.45 billion this financial year—an increase of 521 per cent. Essentially, that is a debt that was initiated by the now Premier of Queensland. The financial viability of our state's local governments as well as community recovery and resilience is a challenge that will extend well into the future and the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee will maintain a strong interest in all relevant areas.

I turn to the portfolio of Transport and Main Roads. Among other important road safety and transport infrastructure projects, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads confirmed that the federal opposition leader has maintained the coalition's position to not fund the Cross River Rail. The minister also expressed dissatisfaction with the terms being offered by the current federal ALP government. Ultimately, the state government must accept responsibility for delivering this important piece of public transport infrastructure. The project, along with critical improvements to the Bruce Highway, are key issues for Queenslanders and political solutions, especially to improve public transport and road safety, must be achieved. The people of Queensland are rightly growing tired of the political impasses on these important projects.

In terms of the portfolio of Housing and Public Works, I reiterate my appreciation of the challenges relating to housing and public works, particularly public housing. In my view, the Minister for Public Housing has a critical role in terms of meeting the housing needs of Queensland's most vulnerable and in preventing homelessness. I wish to put it on the record that I do not believe that the abolition of the tenant advice and advocacy service program was the right decision to make. In my view, the matter was poorly considered and it serves to illustrate that the Newman government needs to become better informed about front-line service delivery. Although recognising the importance of financial responsibility, the government simply cannot overlook its social responsibilities, especially for our most vulnerable.

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (11.57 pm): Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee and the chair, the member for Warrego, for allowing me to attend the estimates committee hearing and ask questions of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Regarding Queensland Rail, I asked the minister a series of questions about the former chair and then candidate for the CEO position, Mr Glen Dawe, who has since been appointed CEO. The minister said more than once that he was supportive of the appointment process that was in train, but in reality the government was hatching a scheme to get their mate over the line. The board did not recommend Mr Dawe's appointment. It said that other candidates would do a better job—other candidates plural. But despite the fact that its last intervention in hand-picking a transport senior executive, Mr Caltabiano, was such a spectacular failure, the government again politicised the appointment process and chose the old mate who it wanted for the \$600,000 a year job.


One would have thought the government had learned its lesson, but obviously not. This is the same man who oversaw the lowest rail patronage figures in more than five years and the same man who oversaw the sacking of hundreds of rail workers, including staff in customer service, rail safety, rail operations and network staff. I am sure Queensland Rail can expect more of the same under the new CEO, or even worse. If those who knew him best of all would not have selected him for the position, but the government did, then we can be sure that we are in for colourful days ahead.

When it comes to rail infrastructure, the Newman government is dudding Queenslanders again by refusing to sign up to Cross River Rail. Despite the fact that Minister Emerson is willing to accept a 50 per cent concessional treatment from Tony Abbott for the Bruce Highway, he will not accept the same deal from the federal government for Cross River Rail even though the deal is exactly what the minister asked for.

I am calling on the minister to sign up to Cross River Rail because a potential Abbott government will never, ever fund urban rail projects. I would respectfully suggest that the minister's energies are better placed convincing his federal colleagues in the coalition to support Cross River Rail rather than whipping up political hysteria over a 100 per cent GST concessional arrangement which was never on the table.

Looking now at public transport, this minister has delivered the lowest patronage figures for the TransLink network since 2007-08. You have to go back more than five years to get lower patronage figures. That is even after he flogged off more than five million free trips last year that have cost taxpayers millions more than the government budgeted for. The minister will not stop at giving away free trips to boost his patronage numbers. Oh no. The government has this excellent idea that it will now compel all Queensland Rail staff to carry go cards to count the multiple trips that they do on a daily basis in their patronage figures without even being paid for. Even after all that, he is only forecasting an increase of 300,000 trips next year. It is also worth noting that the forecast patronage figures for 2013-14 do not even add up correctly in the budget papers. The forecast of 118 million bus trips, 51.07 million train trips and 12.8 million ferry trips adds up to 182.27 million trips, not the 176.4 million as listed. I would like to invite the minister to correct the record and tell us which of the figures he got wrong—the overall forecast or the individual mode forecasts.

The facts are that this government has recorded the lowest ever figures for affordability on all public transport modes since it was elected. The minister has raved about all that the government is doing to make public transport more affordable, but the facts are that affordability has nosedived under this government and the LNP's promise to deliver a brand-new fare structure by July this year was a dud. The LNP does not have any real plans to increase affordability, patronage or public transport infrastructure and it does not know what it is doing on public transport. Its policy to cut costs and slash bus routes was shelved after a massive public backlash. Now it is just drifting without a policy plan for transport hoping no-one will notice.


 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (12.01 am): In my capacity as shadow minister for main roads, I rise to voice the opposition's concerns about the Newman government's dismal record on roads funding. First let us deal with the thorny issue of the Bruce Highway and the government's election promise to spend an additional \$1 billion on this critical highway over a decade. It is a big promise. But the government's performance so far tells us that it is one that they have failed to deliver on. When he was questioned at estimates, the minister could not point to this extra money that was promised by the Newman government. When he was asked about the government's endorsement of the federal opposition's promise to lavish \$6.7 billion on the Bruce, which would mean the state government chipping in with the small matter of \$1.8 billion, the minister was equally secretive. He did not commit to increasing the level of state funding, despite wholeheartedly endorsing Tony Abbott's plan. This just goes to show that those statements were political and made in the best interests of the Liberal Party in mind and not Queenslanders. The minister could not explain whether all the money that his party claims will be spent on the highway was additional or new or what the government calls base funding. That is because it is not new funding. It is mostly money that Labor has already committed to spending.

The government's record on road funding to date is one that they should be ashamed of. The backbenchers come in here and bleat the lines that have been given to them by the minister about how everything is rosy and they are investing more in roads. But here are the facts: maintenance spending on the national network last year was \$218 million. This year it will be \$148.3 million—a cut of \$69.7 million. Total funding for the national network last year, excluding National Disaster Relief Recovery Arrangement funding, was \$1.568 billion. This year it will be \$1.258 billion—a cut of \$310 million. Maybe the state network will fare better. Do not hold your breath. Total funding for the state network last year, excluding disaster funding, was \$1.813 billion. This year it will be \$1.652 billion—a cut of \$161.6 million. And finally let us consider the amount this government is directing towards construction and projects spending. It was \$1.293 billion last year. This year it will be \$1.07 billion—a cut of \$223 million. That is at least \$764.3 million less that will be spent on Queensland roads this year than in the previous 12 months. So much for investing in roads and investing in regional Queensland. At this rate what were previously serviceable roads will deteriorate.

This government is sowing the seeds for more and more problems on our road network by cutting maintenance spending. Not exactly a forward thinking government. I am sure those who live in Far North Queensland like me would like to know why the Newman government believes they are

worthy of a \$180 million cut in the amount spent on their national and state road network in 2013-14. Similarly, I am sure that councils up and down the state would be grateful for an explanation of the decision to cut more than \$20 million from the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, not just this year but last year, too. For the record, under the previous Labor government the amount of funding to assist local councils under TIDS was more than \$65 million while for the last two years under the Newman government spending has fallen to \$43.5 million, placing additional funding pressure on councils. Is it too much to ask for a commitment to at least increase spending on the scheme each year to keep pace with rising construction costs? Better still, restore TIDS funding to the level it was during the last Labor administration.

I also want to place on record the opposition's serious concern that RoadTek's ability to respond to natural disasters has been compromised by the Newman government's addiction to job slashing. At estimates it was confirmed that 522 jobs have been shed at RoadTek since the Newman government took office. How can the minister seriously believe that RoadTek's ability to respond to natural disasters has not been diminished, especially in regional areas, by this massive round of job cuts? We all know that the minister is determined to destroy RoadTek in South-East Queensland and outsource its operations in the rest of Queensland. The Costello report tells us that much. This government has done to the roads budget what it has done to the rest of the Public Service—it has slashed it. It is simply not good enough and we will be holding the government to account each and every day as Queensland's road infrastructure unfortunately gets worse under the LNP.

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (12.06 am): I start tonight by saying thank you to the staff involved in the transport committee, particularly the chairman, Howard Hobbs, for his efforts during the hearing. We are proud of our record in terms of roads in this budget. Let me point out that in our QTRIP budget for the next two years we are spending \$10.3 billion, which is \$2 billion more than the previous government was planning to spend in those two years. That is \$2 billion more on vital roads and bridges across our community from the Gold Coast to Cape York. Importantly, we will preserve our QTRIP budget even with the impact of Tropical Cyclone Oswald. Those devastating events of Australia Day this year saw about 5,000 kilometres of our road network damaged in the aftermath of that tropical cyclone costing about \$900 million to repair. But even with the \$900 million bill for the impact of Oswald we have been able to maintain our QTRIP budget and program. Many communities would have been understanding if we had to wind back or defer projects to pay for the cost of recovery after Oswald. We have not had to do that. Through the savings measures that we have put in place by making sure that the department works more efficiently we have been able to pay for the impact of Oswald while maintaining the QTRIP program.


I am particularly proud of our work on the Bruce Highway. This budget includes \$153 million this year alone for the Bruce Highway. That is excluding NDRRA money. Let us not forget that this is a federal road, and I was very proud to be with Tony Abbott in Mackay when he announced that the coalition was promising to spend \$6.7 million on the Bruce Highway over the next 10 years—a record spending on the Bruce Highway—which will see a massive number of projects from the Sunshine Coast all the way up through North Queensland, as well as \$1 billion on the Gateway north upgrade. That commitment from the coalition to continue the traditional 80-20 split is something that federal Labor is walking away from already on Cooroy-Curra, on the Indooroopilly motorway and the Warrego Highway where they are now saying they only want to spend 50 per cent on federal roads.

This budget included \$350 million over two years for our Road Safety Action Plan. I am very proud of that as the core of our budget. An allocation of \$350 million to our Road Safety Action Plan means it is the most significant road safety program this state has ever seen. We are maintaining our freeze on family car registrations for this term. On public transport, we are continuing to halve Labor's planned 15 per cent fare increases and we have our very successful free trips after nine journeys on go card. We have announced the moving forward of the off-peak fares from nine o'clock to 8.30 as part of our ongoing battle to make public transport as affordable as possible. The reality is that we still have to pay for Labor's debt and deficit, but we have found \$200 million in savings.

A government member interjected.

Mr EMERSON: That is exactly right. As the member for Redlands just mentioned, the magnificent SMBI initiative is important for his local area. As we promised, we have brought the southern Moreton Bay islands under the go card system.

Finally, I mention briefly the concerns about the Gold Coast light rail project. We are committed to that project, as we have said, but it was concerning to find out that Labor's business case used figures that were three years out of date. The latest patronage figures show that we will be losing \$23 million every year for the next 15 years under that project. That means that it is \$300 million short. That is another case of Labor's bungling, waste and mismanagement of projects.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works) (12.11 am): It is with great pleasure that I speak on the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's report on the estimates hearing. I appreciate the support of my director-general, Neil Castles, and all the staff of the department who assisted me in my first estimates hearing. I also thank the committee, particularly the chairman, the member for Warrego, and all the hardworking members of the committee who made the process so much better.

I express my disappointment at the statement of reservation that was tabled by the members of the opposition. Quite bluntly, the statement of reservation was full of nonsense arguments and nonsense premises, which was typified tonight by the statements made by the member for Bundamba. The member for Bundamba talks about instilling fear in people. I do not know about my colleagues, but when I wake up in the morning the first thing I think about is how I will serve the people of Queensland. I am sure that when the member for Bundamba wakes up in the morning she thinks, 'Who will I scare today? What fear campaign will I begin today?'

Let us go through the list of fear campaigns that the member for Bundamba has been responsible for in the past 12 months. We start with the tenants of government owned caravan parks. She started a fear campaign that they would be kicked out of their caravan parks. That was absolute nonsense. We have secured the tenure for the caravan park tenants. Their future is secure. They have no need to worry, despite the fear campaign of the member for Bundamba. Who was the next group of vulnerable people the member for Bundamba decided to scare? It was the nursing home residents. Eventide was going to close down. The whole place was going to close down according to the member for Bundamba. That was absolute nonsense. Despite that, she continued with her fear campaign. Who was the next group of vulnerable Queenslanders she decided to scare? Public housing tenants. She told them that they are going to be managed by real estate agents in the future. That is absolute nonsense. Again, she is scaring people for no reason at all. The final group of people she is trying to scare are those in the private rental market. Again, she is instilling fear in those people whom she claims to represent. It is total and absolute hypocrisy.

I am honoured to be part of a government that is committed to overhauling the social housing sector. We have a plan. We have a blueprint for the future. I would love to talk to members of the House a little more about what that will look like over the next six or seven years. The Housing 2020 Strategy states that we will build 12,000 additional dwellings over the next six or seven years, totally revitalising the sector. We recognise that community housing organisations are the best organisations to manage social housing. They are local, they are more responsive and they are more holistic. We are committed to transferring the management of 90 per cent of our tenancies by 2020.

We are also committed to removing the thought that people have in their heads that public housing means access for life. We will divert 250,000 people away from the social housing sector, providing pathways for them to be able to survive in the private rental market and helping them to become more reliant and more resilient in the future. Those are the types of things that we are committed to.

As well as that, we are committed to the homeless, the vulnerable people in our community who need help. We will build more supported accommodation facilities: a 40-bed facility in Cairns, a 40-bed facility in Townsville and a 20-bed facility in Redcliffe. We will partner with the non-government organisations in 10 projects to provide more supported facilities. We will extend the number of homes available through the Street to Home program for homeless people. Those are practical solutions. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says that he is committed to the homeless sector. He talks the talk, but he does not back it up with action. The current federal government will not commit to homelessness funding beyond the middle of next year, putting the vulnerable at risk. Community organisations in the homelessness space are wondering whether they have a future. Kevin Rudd, put your money where your mouth is.

Report adopted.

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (12.17 am): I move—

That the bills be now read a third time.

Question put—that the bills be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (12.18 am): I move—

That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.

Question put—That the long titles of the bills be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. TJ NICHOLLS (Clayfield—LNP) (Acting Manager of Government Business) (12.18 am): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Children's Hospital

 **Ms TRAD** (South Brisbane—ALP) (12.18 am): I rise on a matter that is very important not only in my electorate, as it is located in my electorate, but also to Queensland families right across the state. I rise in relation to the Queensland Children's Hospital, a world-class hospital that was conceived and initiated by the former Labor government.


It is a social, medical project that was lobbied and campaigned for for many years by paediatric specialists who found themselves scattered all over Brisbane and providing specialist services to children in need in different hospitals throughout the region. Quite frankly this was not a very good situation. It was one that placed unnecessary burdens on families who were already struggling with looking after and caring for children with some of the most complex medical needs that we probably will never have to experience. Labor's vision was to build a world-class, completely integrated public, tertiary hospital delivered on the traditional model. That is that all services within the hospital would be provided publicly, would be provided free and would be in a state run facility.

Now this government has made the recent announcement that it intends to invite the private sector into the hospital to provide services on a for-profit basis. That is right; private companies will be allowed to tender for contracts to deliver services that are provided through the Queensland Children's Hospital. Quite frankly, I find this decision completely and utterly disgraceful—that the people of Queensland should build a world-class, well-equipped, award-winning designed hospital for private, for-profit providers to come in and make a buck out of Queensland sickest children.

My question to the health minister is: how many of these potential private providers who will be coming in to make a profit in the Queensland Children's Hospital are part of the Q Health forum that the health minister attends? Will Ramsay Health Care, which we know has been a big donor to the LNP in the past, be tendering for services? Have they been members of the Q Health forum? These are questions that I think Queenslanders deserve answers to.

(Time expired)

Bruce Highway; Disability Services

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (12.21 am): It is with pleasure that I stand this evening to discuss a couple of issues that are very pertinent to the electorate of Glass House. Firstly, yesterday I had the privilege of tabling two petitions—one a paper petition and the other an e-petition—on behalf of the residents of the Sunshine

Coast regarding the Bruce Highway. There were some 1,736 signatures on the e-petition and nearly 1,200 on the paper petition. That is nearly 3,000 signatures all up. The petition stated that Sunshine Coast residents and the business community ask—

... the State Government to make the entire Sunshine Coast to Caboolture stretch of the Bruce Highway a priority section for six lanes in lobbying for Federal funding. The petitioners request the House take into consideration the important role the Sunshine Coast plays as a tourist destination for the betterment of the Queensland tourism industry.

It was with particular pleasure that I tabled that petition because not long before I did so the federal coalition made a very significant announcement regarding the Bruce Highway. A significant part of that announcement related to my part of the Bruce Highway north of Caboolture. The federal coalition has announced \$8½ billion worth of funding towards the Bruce Highway. As we just heard from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, that will be 80-20 funding as per the standard rules for the Bruce Highway.


Some \$3.3 billion of that will go to the area north of Pine Rivers and south of Gympie. The Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway stage 1 will receive \$200 million in funding. The Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway stage 2 planning and design will receive \$50 million. The Caboolture to Caloundra upgrade will receive \$122 million. The Pine Rivers to Caloundra interchange will receive \$8 million. The Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway stage 1 final construction will receive \$141 million. The Caboolture to Sunshine Motorway stage 2 will receive \$743 million. The Maroochydore Road interchange upgrade stage 1 will receive \$187 million. The Gateway Motorway to Caboolture upgrade will receive \$105 million. I commend the federal coalition on this. This is what a grown-up government in Canberra will deliver for the people of Queensland. This is what a grown-up government will deliver for the people of the Sunshine Coast and for the Bruce Highway.

In the time remaining I want to touch on a very pleasant visit I had with the Minister for Disability Services to Lavally Lodge. It is a wonderful service provider in the Glasshouse Mountains area. It was poignant that not too long after that I bumped into a constituent Candice Stingel who mentioned to me the importance of the NDIS and our signing up to it. Unfortunately, Candice has two children who have fragile X syndrome. It was with pride that I wore a special orange ribbon on Monday, 22 July in recognition of the fragile X syndrome, the most common inherited cause of intellectual disability and cognitive impairment worldwide. I commend her as a mother. I look forward to working with her and others who are in this situation to ensure that we can continue to provide the best of disability services.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Pine Rivers, I would ask members to please keep their conversations down or take them outside. I call the member for Pine Rivers.

BrisBricks Pine Rivers Lego Expo

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (12.25 am): One of the great privileges of serving the Pine Rivers community in this role is the opportunity to organise major events that provide outstanding benefits for my local community. It was my great pleasure to recently host and sponsor the inaugural BrisBricks Pine Rivers Lego Expo at the Strathpine Community Centre. As many members know, I am a big fan of the little plastic brick from Denmark, but I am equally a fan of the benefits that Lego brought to the Pine Rivers community on 15 and 16 June this year.

The inaugural Pine Rivers expo saw almost 7,000 people attend over the weekend. Many attendees were local, however some came from as far as Gympie, Toowoomba, Tweed Heads, Cleveland, Kingaroy and Glen Innes to attend the expo. This fantastic attendance, which exceeded all expectations, enabled benefits to flow on to many parts of the Pine Rivers community.

Local accommodation providers were stretched to capacity with exhibitors and attendees staying for the weekend. Several local businesses had opportunities to sponsor the expo and gain widespread exposure for their businesses across South-East Queensland and beyond. Other local businesses had the opportunity to sell goods at the expo and reported excellent sales across the weekend.

Proceeds from admission fees benefitted the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre. It was my pleasure last week to hand over, along with representatives of BrisBricks, a cheque for \$13,000 to the neighbourhood centre. This donation will go towards funding the Kids Friends Mentoring Program—a


program designed to link at-risk youth with adult mentors. It is a valuable program and this donation will be enough to fund that program for at least the next 12 months. Prior to the 2012 election I committed to finding funding for this program, and I am pleased to be able to say that I have delivered on that commitment.

Two local primary schools had the opportunity to run a sausage sizzle at the expo and between them they raised \$4,000 for their student councils and parents and citizens associations. The absolute highlight of the weekend though was the closed session for children with autism and their families. Around 170 people attended this session and parents and carers were truly appreciative of the opportunity to bring their children to a safe environment, to enjoy the Lego displays and to build their own creations. Minister Davis attended this session and was able to see firsthand the amazing impact it had on those families.

It was also an honour for the federal member for Dickson, the Hon. Peter Dutton, and I to sponsor the autism community session and to refund the entry fees to everyone who attended the session. The BrisBricks Pine Rivers Lego Expo delivered on my commitment to boost tourism in Pine Rivers. It also delivered on my commitment to assist families with cost-of-living pressures by providing a cost-effective, entertaining day out for families.

The expo will be returning on the June long weekend in 2014. I look forward to it becoming an annual event on the Pine Rivers calendar. This expo is yet another example of how I am working hard every day to build a better Pine Rivers.

Queensland Health, Payroll System

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (12.28 am): On Tuesday Premier Newman told parliament that this week would be all about the Hon. Richard Chesterman's report into the Queensland Health payroll system. We heard about the far-reaching investigative powers of the inquiry, about the witnesses who were called and the requests for information that were issued. Then today we saw the Premier have his government bring forward a motion calling on the opposition to produce diaries of former Labor ministers claiming they were necessary so the government could get to the bottom of the Health payroll debacle. The *Hansard* records show that the Chesterman inquiry saw no merit in the production of this material and did not call for the production of the diaries the Newman government now believes are so important that it needs a formal motion of this parliament to require their production.

My view is that if there were any merit in the study of these diaries the Chesterman inquiry would have requested their production. I understand the commission of inquiry has already cost Queensland taxpayers over \$5 million. I cannot believe that after spending \$5 million of Queensland taxpayers' money on an inquiry into the failed Health payroll system the Newman government now believes the commission did not ask the right questions and this parliament has to ask these further questions.

The *Hansard* record also shows that, while the government was talking about the need for open and transparent government, this Newman government did not want to hear the views of some non-government members during the debate about the production of the diaries. I believe that if the Newman government were fair dinkum about having a debate on the implications of the Chesterman report the government would have been willing and keen to hear the views of non-government members.


Let the record show that the member for Gaven, the member for Bundamba and other non-government members were not able to participate in the debate because the Manager of Government Business was recognised by the Acting Speaker when he jumped to his feet at the same time as I understand the member for Gaven was on his feet, and the actions of the Manager of Government business effectively closed down the debate on the motion. This is not the behaviour of a government that wants to have open and transparent government. This is the behaviour of a government that wants no opposition and no criticism, and that is the reason I voted against the government's motion.

Mr Bleijie: You always vote against the government because you're a member of the Labor Party—once Labor, always Labor.

Mr Wellington: And you're a puppet.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. I warn the Attorney-General and the member for Nicklin. I call the member for Toowoomba North.

National Tree Day

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (12.31 am): I wish to bring to the attention of the House some of the activities that were undertaken in the electorate of Toowoomba North in relation to National Tree Day. One of the visits I made was to a local school, Rockville State School, where I had the great pleasure of meeting a couple of the school leaders and planting a tree. The tree was a tuckeroo tree and forms part of the school's bush tucker garden.


School leaders Adam Marshall and Shaellen Tanzer both helped me in the planting of the tree. How I ended up with the tree was by going to one of my local nurseries, Antscapes in Mort Street, where my friend Tony works. He advised that the tuckeroo tree would be perfect for a bush garden at the school. So I went along to the school and we planted the tree. But I want to add a little more about the school at Rockville.

It runs a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, which was put in there by my Rotary Club a few years ago. It was a great thrill for me to get back to the school and have the principal, Simon Flint, show me around and run through the different activities that the children now undertake as part of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program. I really hope the tree that I had the privilege of planting in the ground that day adds some adventurous foods for them in the future when it starts to bear fruit.

In addition to that, I had the opportunity to go to one of the escarpment parks, Redwood Park, on the edge of the range, right near where the current roadworks are being undertaken. There has been a lot of talk with various people in the community of Toowoomba in relation to the roadworks clearing all the trees. Obviously the roadworks have a lot of dirt to move out—400,000 cubic metres. But I assured the people at Redwood Park, including Hugh and Sue Krenske, that we would be planting some native trees on the site of the roadworks when they are finished, and that will actually form a really good connection for birds and butterflies and other things in the area with Redwood Park, where I had the privilege of getting involved with some of the local volunteers who had gone down there to plant over 600 native trees. That particular park is starting to be rehabilitated after having substantial damage done to it by weeds and then that was compounded by the flood event of 2011, ripping out some of the bridges and paths and other things.

National Tree Day was a great event in Toowoomba North, and I really appreciate all of the local people who got involved with the day.

Australian Chamber Music Festival

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (12.34 am): Tonight I would like to take the opportunity to highlight another significant event on Townsville's calendar—the 23rd Australian Festival of Chamber Music, held from 26 July to 3 August. The AFCM is a 10-day international festival held in Townsville and Cairns. The festival focuses on chamber music but also features tours of regional and remote Australia, fine food, master classes for musicians and a lecture series by international scientists themed around the Great Barrier Reef.

This is the festival's 23rd year since it started in 1991, and it has developed a national and international reputation for the quality of its performers, performances and programming. Forty-five artists appeared this year of which 12 are based overseas, and there were more than 30 events.

The program commences with Chefs in the North, which was hosted this year by chef Maggie Beer. I was fortunate to be able to attend the dinner representing the Hon. Jann Stuckey MP, the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games. It was a night to remember—relaxing with a five-course dinner of food and wine, while soaking up the classical sounds of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. Other program highlights included the morning, afternoon and evening concert series, as well as a concert/cruise to Radical Bay on Magnetic Island, the Winterschool and the Virginia Chadwick Memorial Reef Talk featuring Great Barrier Reef research presentations and chamber music.


Audience numbers are now more than 13,000 of which 55 per cent to 60 per cent come from interstate, and 75 per cent of those from interstate stay five nights or more in hotel and holiday apartment accommodation in our area. The festival has an 85 per cent return rate.

ABC Classic FM broadcast the concerts direct or by delayed broadcast from Townsville each year, and more than 16 of the events are broadcast with an average listening audience per concert of 75,000 to 85,000 listeners. So, with 28 days of online streaming, the AFCM figures come to more than 1.5 million people listening.

Given the success of the festival in past years, the event was elevated to Queensland major events status by Tourism and Events Queensland, which supports and recognises the ability of home-grown events like this one to deliver significant tourism outcomes in Queensland.

I would like to acknowledge the good efforts of the Chair of the AFCM, Jenny Bott AO; the General Manager, Sue Hackett; and the Artistic Director, Piers Lane—and say, 'Bravo, well done!'

Broadwater Electorate, Shorebirds

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (12.36 am): It gives me great pleasure to rise this morning to update the House on some of the great events that we celebrated in the Broadwater electorate during the budget break. One of the great things that I was able to do back in July on the 22nd was join many members of the bird-watching community of the Gold Coast in unveiling a sign that talked about the beautiful shorebirds that we have in the Broadwater on the magnificent Gold Coast. It was great to see the culmination of such a long period of hard work on behalf of Bob Westerman, who is locally known as the 'bird man' on the Gold Coast.

I had the great opportunity to go out into the Broadwater with Bob and have a look at the roosts that we have on the many sand islands in the Broadwater. It is quite interesting actually when you consider that there are so many migratory birds that come from as far away as Mongolia and Siberia and they decide to make my piece of paradise, my beautiful little part of the world, their home for a couple of months of the year—and it is indeed paradise.


It was a great pleasure to join with the local councillor Margaret Grummitt, who has also worked very hard to make sure that we recognise the fantastic wildlife that we have in our community. If I could just name some of the migratory birds: there are the eastern and the beach stone-curlews; the whimbrels; the bar-tailed Godwits; the pied oystercatcher; the silver gulls; the crested, caspian, common and little terns; the cormorants; the red capped plover; and the egrets.

One of the things that I said before cutting the ribbon was that I think it is fantastic that on the Gold Coast we have beautiful wildlife in the Broadwater and we have the fantastic hinterland. I want to make sure that I as the local member see that my future children and grandchildren are able to enjoy the waterways and the beautiful Broadwater as much I was able to when I was growing up.

Bob and his many friends in the bird-watching community have worked long and hard to make sure that they can put this sign up. So I encourage all members when they go to the Gold Coast—because, of course, they would love to go to the beautiful Broadwater electorate—to go to Harley Park at Labrador and to the boat ramp there and they will see this magnificent sign. It will give them an opportunity to really see the beautiful wildlife that we have in our Broadwater.

I thank Bob not only for taking me out to have a look at the birds but also for highlighting the magnificent wildlife and the magnificent creatures that we have in our society. If it had not been for the 'bird man' I would not have known they were there, but now members of our community and visitors will know because we have that sign there.

Youth Justice

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—UAP) (12.39 am): Youth justice in Queensland needs an evidence based response. For too long politicians of all persuasions have preferred the populist tough-on-crime approach. It just does not work and research backs this up. Most recently it has been perpetuated by the Attorney-General, evidently relying upon the Newman government's so-called Safer Streets Crime Action Plan to develop youth justice reforms.

As a former detective, I comprehend the trauma caused by crime—not only youth crime but also victims of crime. I also understand the importance of ensuring that people feel safe in their community, but this can only be achieved by applying research in evidence based policies and policing practices. It really is time to end the ineffective populist political approach being propagated by self-serving and ill-informed politicians. This can easily be exposed by contrasting just some of the Attorney-General's most recent youth justice initiatives with validated research.

With regard to making it an offence for a child to breach bail, a New South Wales study found the juvenile remand population grew between 2007 and 2008 by 32 per cent following changes to the Bail Act 1978. These changes restricted the number of applications for bail that could be made by juveniles as well as encouraging police enforcement of bail laws. No evidence was found to suggest that the growth in the number of juveniles remanded in custody helped reduce property crimes.


In terms of naming and shaming youth offenders, research shows that the public labelling of juvenile offenders can lead to greater involvement with deviant peers and higher rates of criminal behaviour. Public labelling has also been linked to negative educational and professional outcomes for juveniles.

In terms of automatically transferring offenders from adult prisons when they turn 17 years of age, a longitudinal study of 59 juvenile offenders in the United States found 60 per cent of these juvenile offenders who spent time in adult prisons returned to prison, most within three years of release. Furthermore, in 2005 US statistics reported that 21 per cent of victims of inmate on inmate sexual violence in jails were young offenders under the age of 18. That is one in five. While this figure dropped to 13 per cent in 2006, it remains a concerning high percentage of victims considering that only one per cent of inmates are juveniles in the United States. Furthermore, in the United States youth have the highest suicide rates in prison.

This is just a snapshot of some of the outcomes that can be expected through the Attorney-General's and the Newman government's so-called tough-on-crime approach to youth justice. Accordingly, I encourage the Attorney-General and other members of the Newman government to adopt a more professional approach to law and order before implementing purely populist policies, perhaps by visiting the Griffith University's Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security or the University of Queensland's Policing and Security Research Program in the Institute for Social Science Research.

(Time expired)


Algester Electorate

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algester—LNP) (12.43 am): The Algester electorate has hosted a number of ministers over the last few weeks. I welcome visits from ministers so that I can showcase my wonderful electorate of Algester. I had the pleasure to welcome the Hon. Campbell Newman MP, Premier of Queensland, to St John's College to join with the school community in celebrating and officially opening the school's new auditorium. I know from talking to the headmistress of the college, Mrs Suzanne Bain, that the Premier's visit was welcomed and appreciated by the board, the teaching staff, students and the wider school community. The Premier spoke to the assembly about leadership, and he was very well received.

Grand Avenue State School was chosen to be the launch site for the national Canteen Week. For the second time in as many months the school welcomed the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, the Minister for Education, to do the honours. As well as the minister, Olympic gold medallist Natalie Cook gave beach volleyball lessons to a very eager group of young children. It was a great morning for a great cause to recognise the many volunteers who man our school tuckshops and contribute to their children's schooling.

The member for Logan and I welcomed the Minister for Police, the Hon. Jack Dempsey, to Browns Plains Police Station in the Algester electorate to launch the myPolice Logan blog. The member for Logan and I were joined by Mayor Parker, councillors from Logan City Council, senior police and representatives from local Neighbourhood Watch groups. I want to put on record my thanks to all the people who made these visits possible from St John's College, Grand Avenue State School and Browns Plains Police Station. I also thank the staff of the Premier's office and the education and police ministers' offices as I know their time is at a premium, particularly with their busy diaries. I welcome visits to the Algester electorate by ministers, and I am looking forward to hosting Minister Elmes in the not-too-distant future.

Murrumba Electorate; Member for Redcliffe; Mikelsons, Mr A and Mrs M

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (12.46 am): I wish to speak about a good place—Murrumba—where it is my job to play a part in making it a great place.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr GULLEY: I will talk about you soon, member for Kawana. It is an exciting place with the announcement of Thesis as the successful tenderer for the Moreton Bay Rail Link—with my good friend the member for Kallangur—with construction commencing on the Costco site, Australia's largest Bunnings under construction at North Lakes, a new school announced for Griffin, a new bus interchange for Deception Bay, and cycle lanes for Anzac Avenue just to name a few projects. I thank the Assistant Minister for Public Transport.

Mr Minnikin: You're welcome.

Mr GULLEY: I want to thank the Attorney-General for attending a local JP training forum. JPs are real community champions and I note three long-serving JPs being William Leiseang, Joanne Murray and Richard A Hooper. I also thank the Attorney-General for accompanying me to Redcliffe to visit Chameleon Housing and Youth Space. I also thank the education minister for making himself available to meet the local principals and P&F presidents to discuss their views on education.

Let's talk about the member for Redcliffe, Mr Scott Driscoll. For history's sake, the member turned up at 8.10 last night, interacted with no-one, looked at his phone the entire time, made no contribution and slinked out at 9.35 pm. If I may pass a message on to the member from his constituents who talk to me regularly and seek my assistance, you are not wanted. They have lost confidence in you. They have not seen you since Anzac Day. They describe you as a farce and a disgrace, and do not want you as their member anymore. On a lighter side, if that is the right phrase, at least your goons are not ringing me anymore to tell me to move my car if I park in Redcliffe.

Talking of the unscrupulous, I want to talk about Aivis and Mandy Mikelsons from Aivis & Mandy Leaflet Distribution, operating in north Brisbane. During the 2012 campaign I met with Aivis, who looked me in the eye, took my flyers and money, but alas nothing was delivered. In conferring with my fellow candidates, I found I was not alone in getting ripped off by this thief. Just to confirm that this was politically motivated theft, who did I find handing out Dean Wells how-to-vote cards on election day? That is right: Aivis Mikelsons smugly standing next to the Deception Bay ALP chairman. But wait, there is more: this is not a politically naive family. Their son is Labor councillor John Mikelsons from Kogarah Council, a graduate of the school of political ethics called Sussex Street.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight and for the grace and dignity in which you conduct your role. Lastly, thank you to Angie, Judy and Margaret for staying up late tonight to assist us in the chamber.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.49 am (Thursday).

ATTENDANCE

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