



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 13 February 2014

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THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2014

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petitions, lodged by the honourable members indicated—

Albany Creek State School, Speed Limit

Hon. Mander, from 175 petitioners, requesting the House to rezone Albany Creek Road, outside Albany Creek State School, to 40 km per hour and install flashing signage [\[4498\]](#).

Crime, Penalty; Ayr and Home Hill, Police Resources

Mrs Menkens, from 551 petitioners, requesting the House to strengthen the laws to ensure perpetrators such as break and enter offenders are adequately brought to justice and for more frontline police to be allocated to Ayr and Home Hill [\[4499\]](#).

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL PAPER

Revocation of State Forest Areas

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.32 am): I lay upon the table of the House a proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation of that proposal.

Tabled paper. Proposal under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 and a brief explanation—Herberton Range State Forest (SF194) and Kelvin State Forest (SF179) [\[4500\]](#).

NOTICE OF MOTION

Revocation of State Forest Areas

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.32 am): I give notice that, after the expiration of at least 14 days as provided in the Forestry Act 1959, I will move—

- (1) That this House requests the Governor in Council to revoke by regulation under section 26 of the Forestry Act 1959 the setting apart and declaration as State Forest of the areas as set out in the Proposal tabled by me in the House today viz

Description of areas to be revoked

Herberton Range State Forest (SF194)	Area described as lot 100 on SP252390 and containing an area of 2.547 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "A".
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Kelvin State Forest (SF179)	Area described as lots 1 to 8 on SP241757 and containing an area of 79.66 hectares as illustrated on the attached sketch marked "B".
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- (2) That Madam Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament forward a copy of this resolution to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for submission to the Governor in Council."

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Drought

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (9.33 am): This government is determined to help Queensland graziers impacted by one of the worst droughts on record. More than 65 per cent of Queensland is now drought declared across 26 local government areas. Last month I travelled to Longreach with the Minister for Agriculture, John McVeigh, and the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, and visited Sam and Belinda Coxon at their property Kateroy, outside Longreach. I saw firsthand the heartbreaking scenes of waterholes and dams dried up, of almost no feed in the paddocks and animals that are dying or in very poor condition. Sam and Belinda's situation is typical of what is happening to many hardworking farming families across the state. They are resilient people who understand the challenges of life on the land. But, faced with a second failed wet season, they are doing it tough. Apart from battling the weather, they have also had to deal with the fallout of Labor's ridiculous suspension of the live cattle trade, low cattle prices and the high Aussie dollar.

We promised to make agriculture one of the four pillars of our economy, so we are doing everything we can to support producers and rural communities that have been struggling for the past year. This is why we have announced an extra \$20 million in support packages and initiatives to deal with the persistent drought conditions. This is in addition to the \$11.2 million package we announced last May, taking our total funding commitment to more than \$31 million. This new package includes an extra \$13 million for the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme, DRAS. This will help meet the demand for freight subsidies and provide additional support for the Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme. We have also committed a further \$5 million for land rental rebates and will assist with fee relief for water licences. We are also providing \$2 million in community support for helping people under stress, assistance for organising community events and training resources for community leaders.

We are acting now to put these additional measures in place for the remainder of the financial year. We are also closely working with the federal government to develop additional assistance packages for producers. We cannot afford to wait and hope for the best. Queensland is crying out for drought-breaking rain. While the government cannot control the weather, we can offer support to help those Queensland producers who are doing it tough.

Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal

 **Hon. JW SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning) (9.36 am): In November 2012 the state government entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Gold Coast City Council to investigate a proposal initiated by the successful mayoral candidate to establish a cruise ship terminal in the Southport Broadwater. We have consistently stated that the state government was willing to participate in this assessment process to ensure the proposed developments were subject to a rigorous assessment and evaluation in every respect, and we did so on the basis that there would be no ongoing financial cost or material risk to the state.

If this project were to proceed using state land, it would need to be built to world-class standards and funded by the private sector. The assessment of private sector proposals submitted as part of the EOI process carried out jointly by officers of my department and the Gold Coast City Council is now complete. As part of the comprehensive assessment process, separate independent consultants have confirmed that, while it would be technically possible to establish a cruise ship terminal in the Broadwater, the capital and operational costs of the terminal and the associated dredging would need to be extensively cross-subsidised by income derived from other developments.

The joint assessment panel has assessed all submitted proposals and identified only one 'possible proponent' to undertake the development of a cruise ship terminal in the Broadwater. This possible proponent is the ASF Consortium and no other proposals for a cruise ship terminal will be further considered by the state government. This consortium has identified a large-scale residential and resort development, together with a casino, as being necessary to cross-subsidise the construction and operational cost of a cruise ship terminal.

The scale of the residential and resort development being proposed has the potential to have considerable impact on existing infrastructure as well as Gold Coast business and property markets. It is therefore necessary, we believe, for the Gold Coast City Council to undertake extensive community consultation and provide the state government an indication of the extent of community support before state land will be made available for the scale of development being proposed.

The separate independent consultants contracted as part of this process have identified a number of other outstanding issues that need to be addressed before the project can proceed any further. Foremost among these issues is the need to conduct preliminary environmental studies to update existing but outdated information regarding the impacts of the capital and maintenance dredging that would be necessary for cruise ships to access the Broadwater. The Gold Coast City Council, in conjunction with the possible proponent, will need to fund and complete these preliminary environmental studies as well as address the list of outstanding issues identified by the independent consultants during the assessment process. These issues have been clearly identified in a letter that I have sent to the Gold Coast Mayor, Mr Tom Tate, and I table a copy of that letter for the information of members in the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 12 February 2014, from the Deputy Premier, Hon. Jeff Seeney, to the Gold Coast mayor, Mr Tom Tate, regarding the proposed Gold Coast cruise ship terminal [\[4501\]](#).

In relation to the requirement for a casino licence, my department is currently conducting an EOI process for the allocation of gaming licences to compliment the successful establishment of an internationally competitive integrated resort development in Queensland. The ASF Consortium is free to participate in that EOI process if binding agreement can be reached that any gaming licence granted would be conditional on the prior establishment and ongoing operation of a successful cruise ship terminal. However, I have advised Mayor Tate and the proponent that the current proposal for a temporary casino on The Spit will not be supported in any way by this government.

In summary, the state government understands the potential economic benefits that a cruise ship terminal could deliver to the Gold Coast and to Queensland's tourism industry. The significant challenges in proceeding with such a project have now been clearly identified by a comprehensive assessment process. It is now time for the people of the Gold Coast to engage with their council to determine the future of this proposal.

Education

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (9.40 am): As the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, I would like to outline to the House how improving student outcomes continues to be the top priority for Queensland schools and the Newman government. Everything this government does in education is aimed at achieving better student outcomes. There have been some groundbreaking reforms in the education sector since the Newman government came to office. For years school communities, teachers and principals have been crying out for government to trust them—trust them to understand the unique education and learning needs of their schools, and trust them to manage school funding in areas that will deliver improved literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Unlike those opposite, the Newman government trusts school principals, trusts teachers and trusts school communities to manage their schools. That is why we have empowered schools to boost teacher quality through the \$537 million Great Teachers = Great Results direct action plan. Trust is why we have introduced new measures to strengthen a school's capacity to discipline students. Trust is why we are moving to reduce paperwork and red tape for all state schools this year as we work with schools to streamline administration processes and reduce the burden on school principals.

In 2014 another 54 state schools have opened their doors as independent public schools. Why? Because we trust schools with increased autonomy and are encouraging principals and school communities to make more local decisions. These are real reforms that will deliver real results and the Newman government is matching it with real investment in our education sector. Last year the Newman government increased the education budget by 6.6 per cent or \$707 million. This year the government is supporting schools to achieve better results through the Great Results Guarantee initiative being rolled out as we speak. That means \$131 million in extra funding for all state schools just this year. There is also the \$300 million maintenance fund which is helping to clear the maintenance backlog left behind by Labor.

When it comes to education policy, those opposite are a policy black hole. They have no idea. They ran out of ideas when they were in government, they lost interest, and they are still waiting for someone to turn the light on. The families and school communities of Queensland can be reassured this government is hard at work, and they can trust this government to make sure Queensland can remain a great state with great opportunity for generations to come.

Department of Transport and Main Roads

 **Hon. SA EMERSON** (Indooroopilly—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.43 am): 2014 will be a great year for Transport and Main Roads. Let us look back briefly to see what we as a government inherited from the previous Labor government and the Leader of the Opposition when she was the transport minister. What we had was a three-year low in terms of rail reliability—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr EMERSON: Madam Speaker, they do not want to hear it. They do not like to be reminded of their record. We had a three-year low in terms of rail reliability, infrequent services and a 30 per cent increase in car rego over four years—an extraordinary increase. Let us see where we have gone. There are an extra 2,000 weekly bus services since we were elected to government. There are 1,000 additional weekly train services since we have come to office. There has been a freeze on family car registration for the term of government as opposed to a 30 per cent increase over just four years. In terms of affordability, we have halved Labor's planned fare increases. Let us not forget its only policy on public transport was to increase fares every year by 15 per cent—year after year after year.

But that is looking back. Let us look forward. This year we continue our work on the Underground Bus and Train Project. Already geotech works have begun in the river and on land. This is a \$5 billion project that will deliver benefits to both bus and train passengers. It is a once-in-a-generation, city-defining project. We are continuing our great work on the Bruce Highway—a record \$10 billion federal-state initiative. We did that deal. Let us not forget that Labor wanted to strip money from Queensland for its roads. Of course there is the Gateway Motorway upgrade. The residents of Redcliffe know very well that their ALP candidate for the by-election wanted to take money away from that project. That project would not be occurring if Labor were still in power.

It was great to join many of my colleagues in Toowoomba for the announcement of the Toowoomba second range crossing. What a great result. I hear my good friend the Minister for Agriculture talking about it. I see in the chamber Trevor Watts, the member for Toowoomba North, and Ian Rickuss, who joined me there for that project. What a great announcement! This is something we are delivering. It is something that has been talked about for many years. The Treasurer and the Deputy Premier were enthusiastic about the project and joined me there. Everyone wanted to be there because this is such a wonderful announcement for that area, and not just for Toowoomba but for the whole region because it creates economic benefits for that whole region. It takes an LNP government in Canberra and an LNP government in Queensland to deliver this project. 2014 will be a great year for Transport and Main Roads.

Health System

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (9.46 am): Two years ago Queensland Health and the delivery of taxpayer funded health care in this state was defined by words and phrases such as 'fake Tahitian prince', 'payroll debacle', 'underpaid, overpaid and not paid nurses and doctors', 'waiting list blow-outs', 'hidden waiting lists' 'waiting list for the waiting list', 'budget blow-outs', 'ambulance ramping' and 'ambulance bypass'. Of course there will all be glitches and exceptions, but in the main those words and phrases are no longer used to define Queensland Health since the election of the can-do LNP government almost two years ago. Step by step we have navigated, and will navigate for some time yet, through the myriad of administrative and service disasters that defined Labor's almost 20 years of mismanagement of Queensland Health. Who can ever forget Anna Bligh's amazing assessment of Queensland Health when she said it was dysfunctional and should be torn in two? We would then have had two dysfunctional health departments under Labor.

Queenslanders agreed that it was time to start again. When union bosses went missing in action as nurses and doctors went without their basic right to a pay packet, it was left to the LNP to fight for the rights of health workers and fight to protect taxpayer health care in Queensland. Upon the election of the LNP government and within one month of my appointment as minister, the can-do government secured pay rises for our nurses and midwives of 3.16 per annum, which was 0.6 per cent more than Labor planned to pay them. In April this year when the third LNP pay rise comes through, our nurses will be almost 10 per cent better off in their pay packets than at the change of government just two years ago. And they are actually getting it in their pay packets.

The Nurses Union's annual report describes the LNP pay rises as keeping 'Queensland Health nurses and midwives amongst the highest paid in the country'. We established locally focused and run hospital and health boards, and we went on to launch our Blueprint for Better Health Care in Queensland, which cements a philosophy to deliver on the basic needs of patients, not the needs of union bosses. By putting patient care and patient rights at the centre of all decisions, the blueprint also cements our commitment to build partnerships with non-government and private sectors so we can help grow organisations such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Red Cross, Blue Care and Drug-Arm, and expand models for public sector health care like we have done with the Mater for over 100 years. The blueprint also injected transparency into our emergency department and surgery waiting lists.

The policies of the can-do government have valued and empowered our public sector health workers across the state whose commitment and energy are delivering for patients. In our emergency departments, patients should be seen within four hours, and they are being seen within four hours. In Labor's last quarter, which was March 2012, just 63.1 per cent of emergency department patients were seen on time. Today, under the can-do government, 77.2 per cent are seen on time. It is the same story for elective surgery. In Labor's last quarter, March 2012, just 86 per cent of patients needing urgent surgery were treated on time. Today, under the can-do government, 95 per cent are treated on time. Step by step, thanks to the work of our staff who now feel valued and empowered, and thanks to partnerships with non-government providers, we are addressing the number of long waits both for surgery and dental care.

At the change of government, in Labor's last quarter, 185 patients needing urgent surgery were left waiting for more than the recommended 30 days. Today that figure has more than halved. The number of long waits for urgent surgery has been cut from 185 patients each quarter to just 84. For semi-urgent category 2 surgery, the number of long waits has fallen from 4,965 in Labor's last quarter to 2,774 in the LNP's latest quarter. While these figures confirm the monumental turnaround of Queensland Health as we deliver the right care at the right place at the right time, I know they are of little comfort for those individuals who still fall through the cracks, so to speak. In the months ahead the can-do government will work with Queenslanders to develop Australia's first surgery guarantee, modelled on the world-class, world-renowned Scandinavian health system that entrenches patients' rights and patients' choice as an integral part of taxpayer funded health care.

Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

 **Hon. SL DICKSON** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing) (9.51 am): I would like to set the scene for 2014 for the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing. Queensland is home to over 1,300 national parks, marine parks and other reserves, including five World Heritage areas. Over 12½ million hectares of land are managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service—this is an area larger than 60 per cent of the world's countries. The Queensland government is committed to delivering genuine environmental conservation outcomes to ensure Queensland's protected areas are well managed and available to be enjoyed by all Queenslanders and domestic and international visitors.

Following the changes to the Nature Conservation Act last year, the Newman government has called for innovative ecotourism investment concepts to showcase our natural assets. We have some fantastic facilities right throughout Queensland, and I would like to touch on a couple. We are going to do up Walkabout Creek at The Gap and it is going to be the best that you can visit. Visitors can also go to Mon Repos and see turtles come out of the sand. People from throughout the world want to go there and have a look at that because it is spectacular. That is just outside of Bundaberg. Then there is the David Fleay Wildlife Park. I do not know if people know of David Fleay. He was a fantastic human being who taught us about animal welfare in this world. As a little bit of trivia, I can tell the House that he was the last man in history to get bitten on the posterior by a Tasmanian tiger. Members can take that one away today.

I would also like to talk about our fantastic initiative called Get in the Game. This is about easing the cost of living, and we are doing that ever so well. Yesterday I went out to Nundah to open a facility there. Every week a member of parliament is opening a new facility in Queensland. With \$47.8 million, we are delivering great outcomes to so many young Queenslanders. Just yesterday we announced that there have been 15,000 take-ups of our \$150 vouchers so that young people can get more involved in sports. The majority of those young people have never, ever played a team sport, so this is bringing a new crop of individuals into our communities who will compete in the Commonwealth

Games in 2018. The passion is there within our sporting community, and the Newman government is giving these young people the opportunities they never had before. Life is tough, but the Newman government is there to help, and we are going to continue to do that in sport.

The last component I would like to touch on is the racing industry. We have just had an inquiry into racing. We have moved out of the dark days of racing and we know where we have to go. The Newman government was proactive when we first came to government and we put a new structure in place. We got rid of the old boards, the old Labor junkets, the old union heavyweights and the misguided industry that had not been looked after by the previous Labor government. This is a new era. We have put in place these three new boards with an overarching body. I have to commend the chairman of the board. Kevin Dixon is doing an outstanding job looking after 30,000 people. This is a bigger industry than Clubs Queensland and these people rely on this industry for their bread and butter. I can guarantee that, with the new product fee that will be negotiated not too long from now, Kevin Dixon and I and the Newman government will deliver a great outcome. We were 20 furlongs behind New South Wales and Victoria when we came to government, and last year we were five behind. This year we are looking to catch up and get our nose ahead. Queensland will always win by a nose under the Newman government's leadership.

Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

 **Hon. IB WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) (9.54 am): I am pleased to announce that 2014 will be a year of action and delivery for my portfolio of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Firstly, the Newman government is committed to science and innovation for economic success. That is why we will shortly be opening the Accelerate Queensland Science and Innovation Program, totalling \$8.75 million. This is three streams of grants for three different levels of science and innovation. It is a program that will fund people and projects—turning great ideas into great opportunities, making the best use of taxpayers' money and delivering a return on investment for Queenslanders.

We will also be proudly turning the sod on the Townsville site of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine—a \$42 million Newman government commitment. We want to ensure that we maximise the opportunities for Queenslanders all over our state and give them access to great facilities. We want to support the talent we have right across the state in a wide range of creative hubs in the science, innovation and arts sectors.

Another area of my portfolio which we will focus on is our ongoing commitment to deliver our Arts for all Queenslanders strategy—and we do mean for all Queenslanders. Through our \$3 million Playing Queensland Boost to Touring Fund, we have seen a significant growth in the number of regional touring activities—from 180 in the last year of Labor's term to more than 600 in 2013 and we expect this to continue to grow. Last year we announced over \$23.5 million in arts funding. In 2014, artists and organisations will be able to apply for further funding through two rounds of the Projects and Programs Fund and two rounds of the Individuals Fund.

With regard to South Bank, I was pleased to hear from a number of members of the Education and Innovation Committee yesterday after they heard from the CEOs of the various institutions which operate on that fantastic site at South Bank. Those institutions are performing well and the committee members were impressed—and that message came from individual members of that committee from all sides of politics. We will continue to promote the cultural precinct strategy plan to get that site operating even better and in a more cooperative way with all who operate on it.

The people of Queensland will also benefit from the Newman government's commitments to the arts sector and also from our commitment to deliver a simpler way for Queenslanders to access government information and services. Many Queenslanders are already moving to online transactions for day-to-day activities. Through our one-stop shop initiative, we have already increased the availability of online transaction services by 38 via www.qld.gov.au, and that will increase to 100 new simple online transactions by the end of 2014 with another 100 by the end of 2015. By the end of 2014, customers will be able to access information about all government services online. That is critical work because it delivers better customer service for busy, hardworking Queenslanders in ways that work for them.

Dissatisfaction with the way the government was working under the previous Labor government was very high, and the people of this state were not getting what they needed. When the Newman government came into office, we began to redress that. One way we are doing that is in the area of investment and management in ICT. The Newman government has already delivered millions of

dollars in savings to Queensland taxpayers as part of our major ICT reform. This is a can-do government in action. We have already saved more than \$17.6 million in ICT expenditure during 2012-13 because of a stringent review which ended the flagrant waste that was allowed to flourish under the Labor government. Those savings in ICT are set to continue because we are seeking the best value for money, comparing vendor pricing and reducing underlying ICT waste. The ICT Renewal Program will continue the delivery of the ICT action plan and support agencies' transition to ICT as a service.

Madam SPEAKER: I ask the minister to wrap up.

Mr WALKER: So 2014 will see my portfolio building a creative, clever and connected Queensland—investing strategically, delivering on promises and reducing waste.

MOTION

Office of the Opposition Spokesperson

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.59 am): By leave, without notice: I move that this House resolves—

That:

- (1) in accordance with section 42 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013, the Office of Opposition Spokesperson be approved as an office entitled under a determination to be paid salary in addition to the salary a member is entitled to under Section 41 of the Queensland Independent Remuneration Tribunal Act 2013;
- (2) that the maximum number of persons able to be appointed to the Office of Opposition Spokesperson at any point in time be equal to the maximum number of Minister's to be appointed as specified in the Constitution of Queensland 2001; and
- (3) that appointment to that Office becomes effective when the Leader of the Opposition formally notifies the Speaker, Clerk or the Legislative Assembly.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.01 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 29 of the Education and Innovation Committee titled *Report No. 29: subordinate legislation tabled between 20 September and 19 November 2013*.

Tabled paper: Education and Innovation Committee: Report No. 29—Subordinate legislation tabled between 20 September and 19 November 2013 [\[4502\]](#).

The committee has considered the Education and Training Legislation (Fees) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 2013 and found no issues in respect of fundamental legislative principle or lawfulness.

The subordinate legislation does two things: firstly, it increases the fees prescribed in six pieces of education legislation. The fee increases are broadly in line with the government's annual indexation policy and indexation rate of 3.5 per cent; secondly, it introduces new fees for a replacement teacher registration card and for eligibility declaration applications.

The committee considers that the new fees are reasonable and reflect the administrative cost of replacing registration cards and of processing eligibility declaration applications. I commend the report to the House.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee titled *Report No. 50: subordinate legislation tabled between 11 September 2013 and 18 November 2013*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 50—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 September 2013 and 18 November 2013 [\[4503\]](#).

STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND INDUSTRY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr GIBSON** (Gympie—LNP) (10.02 am): I lay upon the table of the House report No. 33 of the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee.

Tabled paper: State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee: Report No. 33—Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 September 2013 and 15 October 2013 [4504].

This report examines subordinate legislation tabled between 11 September 2013 and 15 October 2013 and considered by the committee. The subordinate legislation has a disallowance date of 6 March 2014. The committee did not identify any significant policy issues or concerns regarding consistency with fundamental legislative principles. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Regional Community Association Moreton Bay

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (10.03 am): My question is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Will the minister inform the people of Redcliffe why she has not released details of the government's report into the Regional Community Association of Moreton Bay, which is at the centre of the Scott Driscoll scandal, and why the workers who lost their jobs with this group have not been paid?

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members! I will call the minister, but the minister can advise the House as to whether this is in her portfolio and relevant to her portfolio.

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I advise the Leader of the Opposition that the lead agency for the report sits with the Minister for Health, so she may wish to direct that part of the question to him.

Those opposite will know that the unfortunate events surrounding the Redcliffe Community Association last year saw a phone call to our department to say that they were unable to continue to deliver services, so we acted responsibly and promptly to ensure that the services that were funded by the Department of Communities continued to be delivered to the Redcliffe peninsula. I commend all of those hardworking departmental staff who worked over the Easter long weekend last year to negotiate with the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre to continue delivering services into the local community.

Can I also say that I was really pleased that the Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre was able to engage those workers who were delivering services on behalf of the Department of Communities into Redcliffe and, as I understand it, are continuing to do so. But those opposite are doing nothing but trying to score political points over something that was really quite a tragic situation for the workers of the Redcliffe Community Association and, indeed, a very difficult time for the people of Redcliffe. The sad reality is that those opposite do not care about the people of Redcliffe.

What we were attempting to do was to ensure that services continued to be delivered, in stark contrast to what the state candidate for the ALP did when this became an issue last year. While my department was about ensuring that services were delivered into the Redcliffe community, and while the Minister for Health's department was making sure that mental health services provided by his department were delivered into the local community, what was the then federal member doing? Let me tell you: she was standing with placards out the front of Scott Driscoll's house. Yvette D'Ath would have been better serving the people of Redcliffe had she been making telephone calls to FaHCSIA, who were funding the Redcliffe Community Association. Yvette D'Ath should have been making phone calls and arranging for services to continue to be delivered to the people in Redcliffe, but she did not do that.

Let me inform the House that since coming into government, those services that were provided by FaHCSIA now are delivered back into the Redcliffe community. The contrast between this government and those opposite is that we continue to deliver services through the Department of Communities; Health continues to deliver services; and now FaHCSIA continues to deliver services—

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Redcliffe By-Election

Ms PALASZCZUK: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the issuing of the writs for the Redcliffe by-election and ask: why did the Premier and his government recommend to the Speaker a time frame that Antony Green has described as 'the shortest period for postal and pre-poll voting that I have ever seen'?

Mr NEWMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. As I did yesterday, I have to remark upfront that there are many important issues facing this state, but the opposition are focused on probably the smallest issue that they can get their hands on. There is a huge inconsistency here, and I would just remind honourable members—and perhaps the media covering parliament today—what the Labor opposition said. Indeed the Labor opposition have no position, because their position in January was, 'We have got to have an election right now.' That is what they said. They said, 'There has got to be an election straightaway.' They criticised the setting of the date of 22 February because they said, 'The people need an election right now.' That is what they said. So here we are today, and we hear this sort of confected outrage. Now they are saying that things are happening too quickly. They stand for nothing.

So while I am on that theme of policies, there are big picture issues that the Labor Party should be dealing with. I thought I would have a closer look at their so-called alcohol policy. If you recall, this is the only policy that they have to date. I thought I would go and have a look at what they said, because this is an issue that confronts millions of people across this state. This supposed 'policy' cost a lot of money to develop; it took two years and 22 staff. Look at the weight of this policy—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn members on my left.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: I warn members on my left. I was speaking and you continued to interject. I will start naming people under the standing orders. I call the Premier.

Mr NEWMAN: By my figuring, with an earlier interjection from the Treasurer, there was about \$6 million worth of work. Look at the weight of that document. Is that not great? That is value for money for what is probably the best resourced opposition in the state's history! What do they say? In this document they say that they are going to restrict trading hours. They talk about a parliamentary committee back in 2009, the recommendations of which they essentially fully adopted. So I thought I would have a look at the parliamentary committee's report and the then government's response, and this is what they said. They said—

Research indicates that assaults can occur on any day at any time and are most likely to occur whenever the venue is busiest and not just in very late trading hours. Accordingly, to address alcohol-related violence, it is appropriate to implement more direct harm minimisation initiatives rather than simply relying on reductions to trading hours.

That is what they said in 2010. Then, after \$6 million has been spent, they say the opposite.

Education

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question without notice is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on Queensland's bold new plan to lift student outcomes and ensure that Queensland is among the top performing states in literacy and numeracy in Australia by 2020?

Mr NEWMAN: Thanks to federal funds from the Abbott government—funds that have been delivered without strings attached so that we can pass them directly to schools—we will see \$131 million under our program Great Results Guarantee towards targeted evidence based programs with a particular focus on the early years in the primary part of the education system to strengthen outcomes for all of Queensland's kids in the state school system. What does it mean for individual schools? I heard members opposite hooting and tooting before about Redcliffe. It means about a million dollars extra for the Redcliffe electorate's schools. Let us have a look at some figures for Redcliffe and other places. There is \$227,494 for the Scarborough State School, \$255,213 for the Greenbank State School, \$195,400 for Pimlico state school in the electorate of Townsville, \$223,975 for Wynnum State School in the electorate of Lytton and \$157,834 for Oakleigh State School in my

own electorate of Ashgrove. These schools, along with every other state school right across Queensland—1,233 in total—are getting more money. They will all enter into an agreement either between the principal and the head of the school council in the case of independent public schools or between the principal and the director-general of the department in the case of schools that have not become an IPS.

What they are saying in that agreement is that they will achieve the national minimum standard for literacy and numeracy for their year level or have an evidence based plan in place developed by the school to address the specific learning needs of all of the kids. It is about empowering the schools—empowering the principals and the leadership teams and the teachers with the support of the school community—to do what is right for our kids. They have the influence; they make the call. That is what teachers have been crying out for. The focus on primary schools is something that I think is incredibly important because all the advice has been that we need to put more resources into the early years. It is a sad anomaly in the funding of our education system that the high schools have traditionally received a lot more—in fact, \$3,000 more per head a year—than primary schools. This starts to address that imbalance and takes on the advice of the educational experts, the professionals.

I have received great feedback since we announced this. One principal said ‘that the Great Results Guarantee is the most important and significant program introduced over my 28 years with EQ, a program that will have significant and ongoing positive results for the children of Queensland’. I could not have put it better myself.

Redcliffe, Electricity Prices

Mr PITT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the Queensland Competition Authority’s figures which show that, under the LNP, the average electricity bill for a pensioner couple has risen 24.9 per cent this year alone, and I ask: when did the LNP abandon its commitment to lower electricity prices, particularly for the people of Redcliffe?

Mr NEWMAN: The biggest thing that could be done right now for the people of Redcliffe regarding electricity prices is for Yvette D’Ath to not be elected because Yvette D’Ath was part of the carbon tax implementation and continues to be an unreconstructed supporter of the carbon tax—something that not only raises electricity prices but also puts hundreds and hundreds of dollars onto the bills of families in Redcliffe every year. That is what happens.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: I hear the interjections. We know that the member for Mulgrave is always short on content and facts and so he resorts to coming in here and just shouting out. The facts are these: the QCA has said—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: He does not like this. The QCA has said that if the carbon tax went, power prices would come down in Queensland in the 2014-15 financial year.

Mr Pitt: They didn’t actually say that.

Mr NEWMAN: That is what they said. Power bills will come down in Redcliffe if the carbon tax goes. Power bills will come down in Redcliffe if people like the members of the Australian Labor Party opposite and those in the federal house in Canberra support the removal of the carbon tax. It is clear, simple and straightforward.

What have we done in terms of the cost of living since we came to office? We abolished Labor’s \$7,000 tax hike on the family home. We have frozen family car rego for the last few years and it continues to be frozen. We have also frozen the traffic improvement levy that is on that bill. We have actually provided a water rebate to people on the Redcliffe peninsula of \$80 per household. We have halved Labor’s—the Leader of the Opposition’s—public transport fare increases. We have introduced a great deal whereby after commuters have completed nine journeys on their go card in a week all remaining travel will be free. We heard from the Minister for Transport, a far better Minister for Transport than the one we had previously, the one opposite, talking about commuters in Redcliffe who would be saving over \$800 a year. A commuter in Redcliffe coming into the Brisbane CBD will be \$800 a year better off under this government. Those are real savings.

In terms of electricity tariffs, we are providing huge subsidies and support to people across Queensland so that everyone gets a fair deal on electricity prices. As we heard from Minister McArdle yesterday and very eloquently on radio station 4BC this morning, we are doing everything we can to take the pressure off power bills and to support people in the community who are disadvantaged or doing it tough. Is there more to be done? Yes, there is. What should happen? The carbon tax should go, the RETs should go and then power prices will come down. If Yvette D'Ath actually gets into this place she will always hang her head in shame because she has been the biggest driver of costs for her local community.

Integrated Resort Development Licences

Miss BARTON: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Could the Deputy Premier please update the House about the strong interest and high standards that are being set in the process to allocate up to three integrated resort development licences across Queensland?

Mr SEENEY: I begin by thanking the member for Broadwater for the question. I can indicate to the House that there has been strong interest in the integrated resort development gaming licences that the government has made available. As members would recollect, one of those gaming licences has been made available to a developer of the precinct here in the CBD. It is good to see the building at 1 William Street that the Treasurer spoke about yesterday coming up out of the ground because that building will be the catalyst for a major development that will be bordered by George, Alice and William streets and will extend down to the river. We are envisaging a world-class resort development there that will operate one of the integrated resort development licences. Two other licences are available for proponents of internationally competitive projects in other parts of the state. I can indicate to the House that there has been extensive interest in those gaming licences. To date, the registration of interest process has produced 16 registrations of interest. Yesterday my department held an information session at which there were 56 attendees.

It is important for me to reinforce and to restate the government's expectations with regard to these licences, because we have made it clear from the start that these integrated resort gaming licences will only be available for proponents who can build and operate a world-class resort that will be internationally competitive and provide a destination attraction for Queensland tourism. Every one of those proponents needs to be very aware of the high standards that we will set. We have set a \$100,000 non-refundable application fee as an indication of our seriousness about the high standards that we will expect from applicants for those integrated resort development gaming licences. I look forward to seeing some of these proponents develop their proposals through the expressions of interest process and the request for the detailed development proposals. I am sure that this initiative can lead to the establishment of some world-class resorts in Queensland that will contribute to the revitalisation of the Queensland tourism industry, but those resorts will have to be world class and internationally competitive if they are to qualify for these gaming licences.

(Time expired)

Acland Coal Project

Mr HOPPER: My question is to the Deputy Premier. On 14 November 2012 in a press release the minister stated—

We made clear during the election that an LNP Government would not support the expansion plans for New Acland as then proposed because it would impact good agricultural land and be too close to local communities.

I ask the Deputy Premier: why has his government broken this election promise?

Mr SEENEY: Not surprisingly the member for Condamine's question is based on a false premise. We certainly have not broken our election promise with regard to the development of the Acland coalmine. Following our success at the state election we entered into a negotiation process with the proponents of that project and have negotiated a scaled-back option, if you like, that addresses many of the concerns that were raised with us by people in that area and people who had an interest in the original proposal. What is being developed now and what is being investigated now is vastly different to what was being proposed before the election and what we made very clear we would not support—made it very clear to the proponents, made it very clear to the local communities—and we have maintained the position that we had before the election. What is being proposed now is a development that hopefully will retain the jobs, retain the economic benefits to that part of the state, retain the jobs that are important to the Toowoomba community and certainly

important to the people who work there. I would say to the member for Condamine that he needs to consider that side of the question as well. Many of these decisions require consideration of a number of different interests, and one of the primary interests in this instance is not just the impact of the proposal on the particular environment in which it is located but also the impact on the 300-odd families who depend on that project for the jobs that sustain those families and the economic benefits for the people of Toowoomba.

Those are the sorts of decisions that we in government have to make. Those are the sorts of decisions that people in government, whether it is the Labor Party government or the LNP government, have to make across a range of issues. But those are the sorts of decisions that the member for Condamine never had the backbone or the character or the wit to make, because he cut and ran. He cut and ran. He could not sit in government and be part of that decision-making process because he does not have the intestinal fortitude to consider an issue in a holistic way and consider the competing interests that always exist in any decision making. Making decisions in government is never easy. It is never black and white; it is never as simplistic as the world in which the member for Condamine lives. We will continue to make those decisions. We will weigh up the costs and the benefits of those proposals, not just at Acland but right across the state, to ensure that we do have a resources industry that can continue to provide the jobs for Queenslanders and continue to provide the economic benefits to the state so that we can deliver for the people of Queensland, including the people of Condamine, who will be represented by somebody else after the next election.

(Time expired)

Newman Government, Accountability and Efficiency

Ms BATES: My question without notice is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade. Noting the LNP's election commitment to restore accountability and end government waste, can the Treasurer outline any examples of waste that he has identified recently?

Mr NICHOLLS: I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for her question about accountability and transparency and also efficiency and waste. As members in this House know and as Queensland knows, the Newman government was elected on a platform of increasing transparency, restoring accountability and ending the waste that was the hallmark of the previous Labor government that led to an \$80 billion debt. We made that pledge because Queenslanders were sick and tired of programs that ended up with things like the Traveston Dam, the Tugun desalination plant, the Health payroll system and of course the Tahitian prince. Waste and inefficiency are things that this government relentlessly hunts down so that we can deliver better front-line services for Queensland.

As the Premier mentioned yesterday—he has mentioned it again today—this is the best resourced opposition in Queensland's history because we have not cut its allocation. We have maintained its allocation. In fact, over the last 12 months we increased it from \$3.1 million to \$3.4 million, so I thought I would see if there was any other waste and inefficiency around from those opposite. I think it is a two-way street: not only does the government have to tighten its belt, but the opposition needs to tighten its belt. I thought I would work out all of the money that the opposition has received courtesy of the Queensland taxpayer. It got \$3.1 million two years ago. It got \$3.4 million in the current year, so that is your \$6 million, Premier.

Mr Newman interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I am sorry, but it is a little more. It also got \$3.3 million from the Electoral Commission and, when you add up all of their wages, it got another \$2.45 million to do the work of an opposition over the last two years—\$12.25 million. \$12.25 million, and what have the people of Queensland got other than a vacuum waiting for an idea to pop into it? What have they got for that? I went further and I looked on the website and I found one policy—one policy! Let us have a look at this policy and just see how detailed it is. Well, it has a front page. That is page 1. It has a back page, so there are two pages of it. Let us take them out because they are just ads. Then I thought I would have a look at page 2 of the document, and half of it has words on it and half of it has graphics. Here is a repeat of what it failed to do last time. Oh, hang on! At page 4 I finally reach a policy document—1,800 words, \$12.25 million, \$2 million a page, one page of documents, \$6,805 a word. I felt a pang of regret that 'mythbusters' was not on the sheet and I was disappointed in that outcome—too much money, too much time—

(Time expired)

Redcliffe Hospital, Services

Mrs SCOTT: My question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the comments at a public forum on Monday of this week by the LNP candidate for Redcliffe who admitted to the audience that the LNP has in fact closed ward 4E at the Redcliffe Hospital and eight nurses' jobs were cut, and I ask: how can the LNP claim to revitalise health services at Redcliffe when wards are being closed and nurses sacked?

Honourable members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Before I call the Premier, I remind members that I started to hear interjections. I did not see where they came from, but I would ask members to please not interject or talk loudly during the questions.

Mr NEWMAN: We on this side of the House believe that you measure the outputs—what is actually happening—not the inputs. Labor people, I am afraid, who do not have experience of the workplace other than in union jobs in the workplace or political jobs or political staffer jobs have difficulty with this. The only way that they understand how to measure the world is through the inputs—through the dollars expended. The outputs are what actually matter. What matters is care for the patient, care for the community, and—

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The interjection from the member for Mulgrave is irrelevant in this case. I was asked about Redcliffe. I was asked about the hospital. The hospital is performing better. It is performing far better today than it did two years ago—and the member should not shake his head, because there are the statistics. They are the facts. They are not our facts; they are independently audited. What is wrong with those opposite?

For category 1, as at March 2012, there was a 90 per cent achievement. There was a 100 per cent achievement in December 2013. For category 2, in the dying days of the discredited Bligh government, it was 56 per cent. Today, it is 86 per cent. For category 3, in March 2012 it was 89 per cent. Today, it is 93 per cent. The emergency access target—that is people seen within four hours—in March 2012 was 52 per cent. In December 2013 it was 73 per cent. On all of those important benchmarks the hospital is doing a better job. And what about those dental health waiting lists? I do not have the specific figures in front of me—

Mr Springborg: Down from 15,000 to 9,000.

Mr NEWMAN: Fantastic. But they just do not get it, because for them it is about union membership, it is about supporting the QNU, which will say and do anything when the nurses are almost the best paid healthcare professionals in that area across Australia. It is about delivering for the community. It is about delivering for patients. The hospital is better today.

You would think that that mob would have learned over the last few days that we are happy to talk about health care on the Redcliffe peninsula until the cows come home, because we have delivered. But Yvette D'Ath and the former Labor government did not. We are the ones who got the super clinic going and the pharmacy going. We are the ones who are delivering a \$12 million upgrade to the hospital. We are the ones who are making sure that nurses and doctors on the peninsula have the support—and indeed the opportunity, the ability—to try innovation, new practices to deliver for the community. That is what matters, not waste and inefficiency. What matters is performing for patients and outcomes for the community. That is what we are delivering. I am happy to take questions. I am happy to talk about health. I am happy to talk about Redcliffe, because Kerri-Anne Dooley, who is a nurse, would know how to make them better as well.

(Time expired)

Community Safety

Dr ROBINSON: My question without notice is to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services. Can the minister please inform the House how the can-do Newman government is making our communities and our streets safer now and for the coming year?

Mr DEMPSEY: I thank the member for the question and for his commitment to the safety of his constituents in the Cleveland area. He certainly has my ear in relation to his commitment to their safety.

This government is committed to making Queensland the safest place for people to live and raise their families. In 2014, we will work hard to support the men and women who serve in our police, fire and emergency services. That is why this government is dedicated to providing an additional 1,100 police officers over four years. We already have more than 600 of them working on the beat. Unlike those opposite, this government is about action. We introduced the nation's toughest anti-hooning laws. We have cracked down on criminal motorcycle gangs. Our out-of-control party laws are just part of our commitment to stop alcohol fuelled violence on our streets. This government has been working to ensure that our police officers have the resources that they need to do their vital jobs. At the 2012 state election, the LNP promised to deliver two police helicopters for South-East Queensland. Last year, we delivered a permanent, fully badged police helicopter for the Gold Coast. Our second chopper, in partnership with Surf Life Saving Queensland, will take to the skies by the middle of this year. Those things just did not happen; they happened because we have an LNP can-do government. In November, our great state will host the G20 leaders summit. The QPS has a dedicated G20 team working hard to ensure that this world-stage event runs smoothly and showcases the very best that our state has to offer.

Our fire and emergency services are there when Queenslanders are most in need. The year 2014 will be an exciting year as this government works to implement the recommendations of the police and community safety review. Also, the Public Safety Business Agency will take on the administrative side of police and emergency services, allowing our front-line emergency crews to do what they do best: protect the lives of Queenslanders. Following the Malone review, we reaffirmed our 100 per cent support to fully fund the equipment and training needs of Queensland's Rural Fire Service. We have also seen an extra 600 volunteers join the ranks of our State Emergency Service since we came to government.

The year 2014 is about action. With stronger laws, more police on the beat and better resourced fire and emergency services, Queensland will be the safest place to raise a family. This is on top of our commitment to over half a billion dollars so that police and emergency services for the first time can talk to each other. Over the past 20 years, the Labor government allowed that to just fade away. Imagine that! Emergency services and police actually being able to talk together for the first time!

(Time expired)

Cloncurry, Water Storage

Mr KATTER: My question without notice is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. The current drought has illustrated the need for the expansion of water storage in the north-west minerals province. With the opportunity to contribute to the federal coalition commitment to the development of northern Australia, will the minister investigate the provision of a large mixed-use dam in the Cloncurry area able to support agricultural and mining activities?

Mr SEENEY: I thank the member for Mount Isa for the question. The government is acutely aware of the drought situation that is ravaging Western Queensland. We are very much aware of the pain that the drought is causing to communities and to individual landholders. Members who represent that area have been very forthright in representing the interests of those areas to cabinet ministers and to the Premier, but more particularly to the Minister for Agriculture. It is of huge concern that those drought conditions are slowly spreading to the east and that more and more of Queensland is being affected by quite horrendous seasonal conditions as the time for the traditional wet season becomes alarmingly short.

The issue of water infrastructure is one that always becomes a hot topic of conversation when such drought conditions occur. But in reality, the issue of water infrastructure has to be dealt with a long time before a drought happens. Infrastructure planning is necessary, because the lead times for these types of infrastructure projects are so long. It is one of the great failings of the previous government that it did not undertake that infrastructure planning. It did not undertake any major infrastructure building program that would ensure that things such as water infrastructure were built in a timely way.

After 14 years in government, I think the previous Labor government could point only to the Paradise Dam on the Burnett River as its greatest achievement in water infrastructure—a project that we trapped the former Premier into promising at an election campaign in an effort to get the former mayor of Bundaberg elected. Then they built it at something like less than half the size—

Mr Hobbs: A third.

Mr SEENEY: Almost a third. The member for Warrego has acute knowledge of that issue as well. They ended up building a tiny little dam where they could have built a larger one. Then they did not build it properly, because it almost got washed away in the last flood. That is the sort of record that the former Labor government has in terms of building infrastructure, particularly water infrastructure.

The member for Mount Isa should reflect upon that before he supports the Labor Party, as he does on all too many occasions, both in this House and in the public domain. It is the Labor Party that has led to the infrastructure crisis in Queensland. Equally, he should reflect upon the performance of the federal Labor government—a federal government that his father supported in power for so long, a federal Labor government that equally did not make any commitments to the task of ensuring that infrastructure was made available in a timely way, planned and built when it needed to be. They are the things that the member for Mount Isa should reflect upon.

(Time expired)

Child Safety

Mr DOWLING: My question without notice is to the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. Can the minister please update the House on how the Newman government is helping to protect vulnerable children in Queensland?

Ms DAVIS: I thank the honourable member for the question. In December last year I released the Newman government's response to the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry report. There were 121 recommendations made by Commissioner Carmody and after careful consideration all were accepted. Unlike previous inquiries, this inquiry was not borne of a particular crisis. This was by far the most comprehensive and detailed examination of the child protection system here in Queensland and we are very proud to be a government that was prepared to find a better way to protect vulnerable Queensland children and families. In fact, Commissioner Carmody told us that had the intent of the past Forde and CMC recommendations been heeded by the previous government around supporting families earlier we would have a much stronger and effective system than what we found when we came into government. Commissioner Carmody also told us that if we sit on our hands and do nothing, as the previous Labor government seemed to be prepared to do, we would see more children in out-of-home care and be spending around \$1.47 billion on child safety by 2023.

The final report confirmed what we had suspected, and that was that the child protection system here in Queensland is under immense stress and is not working as it should or it could. It is overburdened and unsustainable and without change the cost of administering the system would continue to escalate at rates that put enormous financial pressure on the state's budget. Those opposite would well know that the drivers of these pressures relate to the system that they created over the past decade and became overly risk averse and tertiary focused. Commissioner Carmody told us that if nothing changed the number of children in out-of-home care would increase to around 12,000 young people in the next 10 years. The report also tells us that in order to arrest this demand the system needs to be revitalised and refocused so that we can reduce the number of children and young people in out-of-home care.

The department is working very hard with other government agencies in the crucial planning phase of these reforms. We are currently undertaking a stocktake of all family support services across the state so we will know where services need to be boosted. Work is also underway for legislative reforms. We are getting on with the job and working on a road map that will restore public confidence in the child protection system here in Queensland but, most importantly, it will strengthen families and improve the safety and wellbeing of our children here in Queensland.

Broadwater Marine Project

Dr DOUGLAS: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. Regarding the decision by the government to give the green light to a massive foreign owned sea terminal and casino in the Broadwater on the Gold Coast, can the minister please table in parliament the economic impact assessment and any other assessments that supported the decision of his department?

Mr SEENEY: I do genuinely thank the member for Gaven for the question but unfortunately his question too is based on a false premise which, like that of the member for Condamine, is not surprising at all. But I do appreciate the question. Let me reiterate in as simple terms as I can the details of the decision that the government has made in relation to the cruise ship terminal proposal in the Broadwater. The assessment panel that was made up of officers of the state government, my department and officers of the Gold Coast City Council, has decided not to select a preferred proponent. Can I say that slowly for the member for Gaven: not to select a preferred proponent. That is hardly giving the green light to anything—not to select a preferred proponent. What the assessment process did was to identify the issues that needed to be addressed to advance a proposal that has been kicking around as a political football for more than a decade. The member for Gaven has given that political football more than his fair share of kicks.

It is time to deal with the facts. The facts have been clearly established by the assessment process that has been undertaken quite comprehensively. The facts are that it is technically possible to build a cruise ship terminal in the Broadwater but it would require extensive development to offset the costs of establishment and operation. Whether or not the Gold Coast community is prepared to support and accept that extensive development is an issue for the Gold Coast City Council. This was a Gold Coast City Council proposal that was put forward. We have worked with them to identify the issues. It is now a decision for the Gold Coast community and the Gold Coast City Council whether to proceed.

Equally, in relation to the environmental issues, it is an issue for the Gold Coast City Council and the possible proponent, the only one possible proponent that was left in the process, as to whether they are prepared to commit the resources to do the environmental work that is necessary. The discussion is very clearly back with the Gold Coast community and the Gold Coast City Council. As a member who purports to, or is at least paid to, represent a significant part of that community, the member for Gaven is very welcome to participate in that discussion and I would recommend that he does. In participating in that discussion he should at least get the facts right to start with. They are pretty simple. It is not that hard. Get the facts right and participate in the discussion.

Environmental Protection

Mr GRANT: My question is to the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. Can the minister update the House on how the Newman government is working to protect Queensland's environment?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Springwood, and I certainly can. I stand in the House today energised and ready to continue delivering for the people of Queensland and for the environment in Queensland. The stark reality is that for decades Labor did little to ensure the future of our environment is protected. Its two approaches to protect the environment were to lock it up and close it down or to continue to do significant developments irresponsibly up and down the coast, the perfect example being its previous ludicrous plans for Abbot Point. Let it be known that had those opposite been in government today they would have created a new island in the Great Barrier Reef through their crazy dredging plan for Abbot Point. It is a matter of public record that Labor's incompetence and inability to get the basic state reporting right has caused much grief for the reef.

The people of Queensland are sick of the smear; they are sick of the negativity. The only trashing of the reef is by the extreme greens and their Labor mates. I call on those opposite to pick up the phone, call their mates in the greens and tell them to start telling the truth about the reef and to stop trashing the reef's reputation.

These are the facts; this is the science when it comes to the reef: the major causes of coral loss on the reef are storms and cyclones, crown-of-thorns starfish and bleaching. What is the Newman government doing when it comes to the reef? We are continuing to inject \$35 million a year into the reef. We have put out a Queensland Ports Strategy which restricts port development to those major long established ports. We are seeing a reduction in dissolved inorganic nitrogen and a reduction in sediment. We have pumped \$4 million into the Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership. We have 350 graziers working with us to improve the quality of the reef—working with us, not against us. These are the facts and I table them for the benefit of all Queenslanders but in particular for those opposite and for those who do not let the facts get in the way of a good story. Queenslanders can rest assured that under the Newman government the reef is in good hands because we put science before politics.

Tabled paper. Department of Environment and Heritage Protection poster titled Queensland Government—working to protect the Great Barrier Reef [[4505](#)].

As the environment minister my focus is on finding the balance between protecting the environment and contributing to the economic growth that this state needs. In 2014 we will continue with round 3 of the grassroots Everyone's Environment grants program as well as our money for koala rescue and rehabilitation and our heritage grants. We are committed to ensuring that the people of Queensland have a prosperous future, that we create jobs and that we build a sustainable and thriving economy based on our four pillars, all underpinned by a healthy environment.

Nellie Simpson Road Bypass

Mrs CUNNINGHAM: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport. While acknowledging Gladstone Regional Council's position on the Nellie Simpson Road bypass, can the minister assure Boyne Valley residents that the allocated funding will remain available for the project, to allow other options to be considered?

Mr EMERSON: I thank the member for Gladstone for the question. I do appreciate her question, because I know this is an issue of concern for residents of Boyne Valley. Nellie Simpson Road is the main access from Boyne Valley to Gladstone and it has been subject to flooding. When we had the community cabinet meeting in Gladstone in about August last year, announcements were made under the Royalties for the Regions program, particularly for works on that bypass. The Minister for Local Government and the Deputy Premier were talking about \$1.3 million at that time. I do not think that the council has written to me specifically, although they may have written to one of my colleagues; maybe the Minister for Local Government. The council now has a different view in terms of that project. It may no longer be interested in that project.

As the member for Gladstone knows from our actions over the past years of being in government, we talk to local members and local councils to find out what their priorities are. That is what we do with the Royalties for the Regions program. We will continue to have those discussions with the council and I can give a guarantee to the member for Gladstone that we will continue to talk to her as well. She has seen our good faith and goodwill on these projects, particularly, for example, with the Kin Kora roundabout. We worked with the member for Gladstone, the council and, particularly, Ken O'Dowd, the then and now federal member for that area, and the Abbott government to deliver on that roundabout project. We worked together to deliver a project that would never have happened under federal Labor. We will continue to show good faith and do good work. We will talk to Gail Sellers, the mayor of Gladstone, about where she wants to go. We will continue to look at the project.

The Royalties for the Regions program has been one of the runaway successes of the government. It has been great to deliver for so many communities. The Deputy Premier, the Minister for Local Government and my department are working together to deliver important infrastructure projects for communities. It is hotly contested. Many communities are very keen to get projects developed. We will continue to talk to the council in Gladstone, Mayor Sellers and the member for Gladstone about this project and other projects. As I said in August at the community forum when I met with the mayor in Gladstone, we will talk to the council to find out what its priorities are and what it wants. At that stage, the council talked specifically to me about the Kin Kora roundabout. We listened to council, we acted on what it said and we will continue to do that.

North Queensland, Economy

Mr KEMPTON: My question without notice is to my northern colleague, the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. Can the minister please outline any new plans to help super charge the North Queensland economy?

Mr CRIPPS: I thank the member for Cook for his question and I am delighted to say that I am. The Newman government is committed to encouraging the development of an expanded irrigated agriculture industry in North and North-West Queensland and supporting agriculture as a pillar of the Queensland economy. This was demonstrated last year when the Newman government delivered the release of 95,000 megalitres of unallocated water in the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments, following a successful competitive tender process.

Last week, the CSIRO released its report into the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments, which indicated that more water could be released responsibly for irrigated agriculture to help support the development and diversification of the economy in that region. Last year, I gave a commitment that if the research by the CSIRO showed more water could be allocated responsibly from the Flinders and

Gilbert river catchments, I would bring forward a review of the gulf water resource plan from 2018 to support the development of irrigated agriculture in the region. The CSIRO report indicates that there is an opportunity for additional water resources to be sustainably allocated for irrigated agriculture. Therefore, today I am delivering on my commitment.

It is my pleasure to announce that following the release of the CSIRO report I will bring forward the review of the gulf water resources plan from 2018 to encourage and support agricultural development opportunities for North and North-West Queensland. The Department of Natural Resources and Mines will commence this review immediately and it will be completed by the end of this year. The earlier review of the gulf water resource plan will determine how much more water can be released, while protecting existing entitlement holders, local communities, the environment and commercial fisheries.

I am aware that there is a strong appetite from local landowners to have the opportunity to source additional water for irrigated agriculture and that the release of water entitlements in both catchments has the potential to create jobs in local communities and grow the economy in North and North-West Queensland. In contrast to this proactive action taken by the Newman government, the previous Labor government never acted this decisively to support opportunities for economic development in North and North-West Queensland.

However, we will not rush this process. The review will be robust and it will be supported by sound science, including this new information from the CSIRO to protect the security and reliability of existing entitlements, community and environmental needs. We will ensure that we can meet emerging water needs and continue to manage our water resources responsibly to deliver positive outcomes for North and North-West Queensland and diversify the region's economy.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, there is too much noise in the chamber. I would ask you to please give your attention to those who are answering or asking questions.

Redcliffe Electorate, Healthcare

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the eight nursing positions cut from the Redcliffe Hospital and I ask: will the Premier confirm that the LNP candidate for Redcliffe was putting forward the official government position when she told a public meeting this week that these nurses were 'glad' that their jobs were cut?

Mr NEWMAN: I was not there. However, I do need to correct a statement I made earlier on as I may have inadvertently misled the House. The correct figures for the metro north long-wait dental waiting lists are as follows: in February 2013 there were 14,595 on that list; in December 2013 there were six. Metro north covers Redcliffe. My point is this: the health service for those on the peninsula is performing better—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr NEWMAN: I hear their excitement. I know they are upset.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr NEWMAN: I know they are upset about the power of those figures and the ones I talked about earlier on relating to the emergency performance at Redcliffe Hospital. I know they are upset that the elective surgery figures are great, as well. I know they are upset that we have Kerri-Anne Dooley, who is such a great caring qualified health professional, and they have a failed politician.

Interestingly, the theme of today's questions must come from the pay-per-view lunch yesterday. They must have got together at that pay-per-view lunch and—oh! They do not have pay-per-view lunches anymore. Is that another Labor policy that has changed or back flipped? There they were, with their candidate, Yvette D'Ath. The leader with absolutely no position or policies had to leave. She left Cameron Dick there with the candidate. They must have got in there and said, 'How can we come up with some questions for today?' The questions are lousy questions. The emperor has no clothes, because health services on the peninsula are performing better—

Mr PITT: I rise to a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

Mr PITT: Speaking of questions, when will the Premier actually answer this question?

Madam SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I am listening to the Premier's answer.

Mr NEWMAN: The nurses on the peninsula have been the recipients of a very generous pay rise over the past two years and there is another year or so coming through. The Queensland Nurses Union has acknowledged how good the pay rise is. Patients are being treated. The GP super clinic is now up and running. If we talk about other areas, there are more police on the Redcliffe peninsula, there are better ambulance and fire services across the whole of the metro Brisbane region, the schools have an extra \$1 million from the federal government going through our program and the schools have seen a huge amount of money spent on fixing up the maintenance issues left by the Labor Party.

These people have no policies. They have had two years and they have spent, according to the Treasurer, \$12 million to deliver a four-page policy. That is a pretty pathetic use of taxpayer funds.

Social Housing

Mrs SMITH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Can the minister please inform the House how the Newman government's reform of social housing and red-tape reduction in the building and construction industry is delivering better services for Queenslanders?

Madam SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Housing and Public Works. You have two minutes.

Mr MANDER: I thank the member for Mount Ommaney for her question. In my portfolio there has been plenty of room to improve. Let us not forget that we inherited a housing system that had basically not changed since the 1950s.

Let us compare and contrast for a moment. Under the last three years of the former government the waiting list blew out by a whopping 50 per cent to 30,000 households. Today that waiting list is down to under 20,000. That is a 33 per cent increase in performance. Under the previous Labor government there was a complete lack of accountability and outrageous antisocial behaviour often went unchecked. Now antisocial behaviour is totally unacceptable. We have a three strikes and you are out policy.

Under the previous Labor government there was a series of ridiculous incentives built into the system which actually rewarded bad behaviour—lurks and perks for criminals. A person could be in prison for a year and their house would be kept for them and the rent would be \$10.95 a week. Now that is gone.

Over the next seven years we will deliver 12,000 new social, affordable housing dwellings. We will transfer 90 per cent of tenancy management to NGOs—those that are purpose fit to provide holistic care. We will halve the rate of homelessness by 2020.

In the public works side of my portfolio we have got rid of the old building industry watchdog and replaced it with the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. We have cut red tape around plumbing, rainwater tanks, hot-water systems and solar panels. We have merged QBuild and Project Services and stimulated local economies by increasing the amount of work that is offered to private sector tradies. We have also overhauled the procurement system where we aim to save \$1.3 billion over the next five years.

Madam SPEAKER: Time for questions has expired.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

Madam SPEAKER: Before moving to the next order of business, I wish to acknowledge the schools visiting today: John Paul College, Daisy Hill in the electorate of Springwood and Hillcrest Christian College in the electorate of Mudgeeraba.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tasmanian Election, Advertising

 **Hon. LJ SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—LNP) (Minister for Health) (11.02 am), by leave: My attention has been drawn to some misleading ads which are being run during the Tasmanian election campaign. They purportedly outline the circumstances of Queensland Health workers. I wish to provide the House with the true facts of the matter here today.

One of those ads relates to a person by the name of Martha Druery and is titled 'Martha's story'. This person is captioned as a 'Sacked Queensland Health specialist'. This person was a social worker with Queensland Health and ceased employment with Queensland Health on 23 September 2013. In 2012 she was designated as an employee requiring placement following restructuring of her position due to the cost of Labor's Health payroll debacle. She was presented with two options: await assignment to another position within Queensland Health or take a voluntary redundancy. Ms Druery advised Queensland Health that she wished to proactively take a voluntary redundancy and accordingly was granted her request to leave the employ of Queensland Health. She received a payout of \$100,700. That certainly was not in the ad in Tasmania. What an extraordinary amount of money. Indeed, I am sure it is in contrast to that received by a lot of employees in Tasmania who have chosen to take voluntary redundancies.

In the other ad we have Karen's story. It is captioned 'Queensland nurse' and is filmed in front of Princess Alexandra Hospital. It should have perhaps been captioned 'People and culture officer for the QNU and branch secretary'. Or it could have been captioned as the '2012 recipient of the Emma Miller award for services to unionism'. However, she is actually the QNU councillor for the Logan Hospital and a continuous shiftworker. She is a registered nurse and midwife at the Logan Hospital. Her role is at the Logan and Beaudesert hospitals. That is very interesting. She does not work at the PA Hospital. She is attached to the Logan Hospital and provides midwifery services to the Logan and Beaudesert hospitals.

Karen is making claims that the situation in Queensland has worsened since the election of the Newman government. Try telling that to the mums of Beaudesert. We are returning birthing services to Beaudesert which were closed by the Labor Party 10 years ago. Karen Shephard believes that things have become worse for the mothers of Beaudesert even though we are reopening birthing services in March of this year which were closed by the Labor Party. Mums will be able to have their babies in their communities. Go down to Beaudesert, Ms Shepherd, and tell the mums of Beaudesert that the situation has become worse. This is the first birthing service to be reopened in Queensland. It has reversed the trend of what the Labor Party did in Queensland over years and years and years.

In 2010 Karen received three overpayments. Two of these were waived. However, she was advised in June 2011 and June 2012 that she owed Queensland Health the sum of \$499.12. Is it any wonder that from her perspective she says the situation has become worse because Anna Bligh said, 'Don't pay it back.' Our government says, 'We know it was not your fault, but there is an expectation that you should repay overpayments just the same as if you were underpaid you should be paid.'

It would have been expected that as the person in charge of people and culture that she would be leading by example, but she is not. Thousands of Queensland Health workers have signed up in recent times to repay millions of dollars voluntarily. They are now coming forward. To the best of my knowledge the health worker in Karen's story is not one of them.

In Karen's case is it any wonder she says she is worse off because we are expecting her to pay back her overpayment? She has not told the true story. How does this contrast with the situation that faced health workers in Redcliffe who were a lot worse off under the former Labor government and in the lead-up to the change of government in March 2012? Some 438 staff were the recipients of emergency cash payments. Since the election of the Newman government there has been no need for emergency cash payments to health workers on the Redcliffe peninsula and therefore no-one has been in receipt of any. Prior to March 2012, prior to the change in government, there were 438 emergency payments. In Karen's case, try to tell those health workers on the Redcliffe peninsula, the 438 of them, that they are worse off.

That is the true story. That is the story that actually deserves to be told. We certainly have not heard about the 4,400 Queensland Health workers who left the system—many of them did not have their contracts renewed in the last nine months of the previous Labor government in Queensland—or the 3,900 workers the Labor government listed for retrenchment in that much vaunted and much publicised list which we were able to table in this place. They are the facts. That is what deserves to be told in Tasmania; a little bit more fact and a little bit less fiction.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report No. 35, Motion to Take Note

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The report before the House is report No. 35 of the Health and Community Services Committee. There being no mover, the notice of motion has lapsed in accordance with standing order 71.

TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Report No. 38, Motion to Take Note

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (11.10 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 38 of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee tabled on 14 November 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Report No. 39, Motion to Take Note

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—LNP) (11.10 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 39, *A new direction for cycling in Queensland*, of the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee tabled 29 November 2013.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report No. 36, Motion to Take Note



Mr RUTHENBERG (Kallangur—LNP) (11.11 am): I move—

That the House take note of report No. 36, *Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising*, of the Health and Community Services Committee tabled on 31 January 2014.

I am pleased to speak to this report. I thank committee members for their careful consideration of the issue, which proved to be a very complex and perplexing issue and required much consideration. I thank the secretariat for their excellent work during this inquiry. I encourage members and the broader Queensland community to read the report and recommendations.

This was a very difficult and complex inquiry, as I said. For example, how do you determine what community standards are right across Australia? Different communities across Australia espouse different values, yet we are required to determine a common set of values for the Australian community. Also, there is a very complex legal landscape with a lot of overlapping jurisdictions. Again, trying to determine what those jurisdictions were was difficult.

We have in good faith presented recommendations that respect industry efforts and community expectations as best we can. As we only have a short time, I want to respond to industry comments since the release of the report. Firstly, as stated in the report, the outdoor advertising industry have worked very hard to determine and comply with community expectations. Industry structures rely on companies voluntarily complying with the determination of the Advertising Standards Bureau. Those companies that are part of peak bodies do; others, and some very high-profile ones, do not—for example, Wicked Campers. The ASB have no enforcement capacity and Wicked have shown that they will ignore the ASB and there is nothing the industry or government can do about that. Our recommendations simply give teeth to the ASB if they wish to use enforcement options.

Private organisations cannot levy fines to non-willing organisations; to do that requires government. Our recommendations simply provide a structure to enable industry to enforce decisions they have made where a company like Wicked thumb their nose at the community. For all intents and purposes, there should be negligible impact on the operation of the ASB or the AANA. We have recommended existing industry structures are maintained. We have recommended ways for the Queensland government to stand behind industry as a means of enforcing the industry's structures and the ASB's decisions. Indeed, under our recommendations the government would only get

involved in enforcing a decision if asked to do so by the ASB. Any company that currently complies with industry and community expectation will see absolutely no impact on their day-to-day business operations.

I am not sure how industry determines that the advertising companies in Queensland would be severely impacted. Industry bodies have slammed me and my committee and accused us of overreaching or even being disingenuous. I am very disappointed with this reaction. Industry leaders were very active in trying to meet with me during the inquiry process. I have not heard from one of them since the report was released. I think they should take a Panadol and drink some cold water before they themselves might be seen as overreaching or being disingenuous.

Our recommendations are not overreaching. They are not dismantling existing industry structures. They would not create big bureaucracies or impose expensive red tape on companies. In fact, while advice would be needed, I am confident that our recommendations would operate within existing COAG arrangements. In fact, our recommendations would strengthen industry structures and decisions and provide a backstop for them where a recalcitrant company, like Wicked, thumbs its nose at the community and those corporate citizens. I would welcome an opportunity to work with industry if they felt that would help. Other committee members will now offer their opinion and help to provide some understanding of this report.

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (11.15 am): I rise in the House this morning to speak to the Health and Community Services Committee report No. 36, *Inquiry into sexually explicit outdoor advertising*. The committee identified industry bodies as one of the key stakeholder groups in our deliberations and, as such, invited submissions from a number of key bodies. The Australian Association of National Advertisers and the Outdoor Media Association both made submissions to our inquiry.

The scope of the advertisements that were to be considered within the inquiry were all outdoor advertising including billboards, shopfront windows, public shelters and public transport. It is worth summarising that the submissions to the committee also included indoor public spaces, which, while physically indoors, share the characteristics of outdoor advertising in as much as the ads are accessible freely and without choice as to whether exposure would or would not occur.

It was decided by the Commonwealth House of Representatives during a similar review in 2011 to review all forms of advertising outside of the home on the basis that their access is generally unrestricted to the public. It was a position of our committee to adopt these same measures. The size and reach of outdoor advertising is enormous and the CEO of Outdoor Media Association recently stated—

We are pleased that advertisers are recognising that Out-of-Home is the number one broadcaster in today's fragmented media market. We are the one traditional media channel still able to reach mass audiences and we do that very cost efficiently.

The committee deduced also that the unique features of outdoor advertising that distinguished it from most other media sources are that it has an extremely wide audience that become engaged through a simple momentary glance, the media cannot be switched off and, perhaps most importantly given our terms of reference, it cannot be avoided by children. Responsible parenting can monitor and manage interfacing with all other forms of media. However, a parent cannot control the interaction between their child and any outdoor advertisement.

We were further challenged by the task of defining what indeed 'sexually explicit' means. The Macquarie Dictionary defines 'explicit' as leaving nothing implied. This becomes problematic for advertisers, particularly as the Australian Association of National Advertisers' own code of ethics does not define 'sexually explicit' but instead provides that sexual appeal should not be employed in an exploitative or degrading manner and that sex, sexuality and nudity should be treated with sensitivity to the relevant audience.

The issue with that stance is simply that the unique features of outdoor advertising means that the relevant audience is in fact the entire population passing by that place, as the medium cannot be turned off or controlled. The Advertising Standards Bureau noted in their submission to the committee that research in 2007, 2009 and 2010 indicated that their decisions did indeed generally reflect community standards at the time.

The committee also reviewed the findings of a number of other inquiries by other jurisdictions—namely, *Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media* undertaken by a Senate standing committee in 2008; *Reclaiming public space*, an inquiry into the regulation of billboard and outdoor

advertising by a House of Representatives committee in 2011; *Review of the National Classification Scheme: achieving the right balance* by a Senate committee in 2011; and an Australian Law Reform Commission report in 2012.

It should be noted that the vast majority of the outdoor advertising industry is currently compliant with the self-regulation. However, as was outlined specifically within the second case study of chapter 3 in the report, there are difficulties enforcing compliance. To assist in this regard, the committee's recommendation at 1f enables the adjudication board to refer incidents of noncompliance to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to consider enforcement penalties which may escalate on further instances of non-compliant advertisements by the same advertiser. In closing, I would like to thank the secretariat for their assistance, and I wholeheartedly endorse the committee's recommendations contained within the report.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (11.20 am): I rise today as a member of the Health and Community Services Committee to speak to our report No. 36. I wish to cover only a couple of areas in the report: the impacts on children and the current regulatory environment for outdoor advertising. In submissions to the committee and in evidence at hearings, the committee heard of community concerns about the possible impacts of sexually explicit outdoor advertising on children. The committee considered the impact of sexually explicit and inappropriate images. Indeed, the committee looked at many images from outdoor advertising in Queensland that were used in 2013. Some of the images that were highlighted due to concerns about their appropriateness were not sexually explicit but instead implied a sexual message or were advertising adult products and services.

The committee received submissions and evidence regarding people's concerns about the appropriateness of some outdoor advertising in light of its placement—for example, near schools, churches and places frequented by families. I will give the House an example from my electorate. There was an advertisement for a Townsville sex shop which had 'hot stuff' branded across a woman's buttock. The advertisement was opposite a church and not far from schools. In November 2012 the Advertising Standards Bureau found that the banner advertisement breached the code of ethics as it used sexual appeal in a manner which was exploitative and degrading. Townsville resident Jane Chester, in her submission to the committee, stated that she again contacted the ASB when the advertisement remained in place about six months after the ASB's initial decision. She stated that she was then informed by the ASB that the owner of the banner was not responding to the ASB. We found there were some significant issues in that regard. An area where we have problems is where a small operator who generally owns the premises has an ad on their premises. Accordingly, we noted that the code of ethics does not include a specific placement policy to guide outdoor advertisers. The committee believes that regulation of outdoor advertising could more adequately meet community concerns if it included a specific placement policy for outdoor advertising employing any form of sexual imagery.

With regard to the impacts of sexually explicit advertising on children, the committee noted that whilst anecdotally many submissions said that there were impacts there was little evidence or examples of the link between sexually explicit outdoor advertising and adverse impacts on children. The committee found there is very little research that has tried to measure or identify this. Therefore, the committee was unable to identify any research or expert evidence about any adverse impacts there may be on children to inform its consideration of appropriate regulation. Despite this lack of research on the impact on children, the committee was concerned about the possibility of the indirect sexualisation of children over time.

I now quickly turn to the regulatory environment that currently exists. The committee looked at the current legal framework for the regulation of outdoor advertising and the extent and limitations of the different jurisdictional responsibilities in this area. There is no Commonwealth or state legislation which specifically regulates sexually explicit outdoor advertising or outdoor advertising generally. Members of the House will know that there are four types of regulation. There is government regulation, co-regulation, quasi-regulation and self-regulation. We also know that advertising content must comply with Australian Consumer Law as provided for in the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, which is a Commonwealth act. However, this really only provides for consumer protection from false and misleading claims et cetera, not style and standards of advertising.

Queensland licensing laws impact on advertising only where an adult entertainment venue also has a liquor licence and it specifically precludes detailing the services or entertainment within the venue and/or from offering free or discounted drinks. The Queensland Transport Infrastructure Act

only has effect over advertising within or on the boundary of state controlled roads. We also have the Local Government Act, which impacts advertising with regard to size placement and lighting only, not content.

We had a look at the member for Dalrymple's private member's bill, the Classification of Publications (Billboard Advertising) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which was introduced in this House and referred to the legal affairs committee. We noted that the report of the legal affairs committee did not support the bill, essentially because a classification system based on the classification of films and computer games was not an appropriate system for regulating billboards. It would be inappropriate to attempt to apply the scheme for a purpose beyond the scope it was designed for. I note that both reports of both committees were supported without any statements of dissent or reservation. Accordingly, I recommend the report to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.25 am): I rise to make a short contribution concerning this report of the Health and Community Services Committee. Firstly, I endorse the chair's comments in relation to the contents of the report and the commentary about the report from certain sectors of the industry in subsequent weeks. The report has recommended changes to the regulation of outdoor advertising to effectively provide a deterrent to the one per cent of industry participants who are not doing the right thing. A key finding of submissions to this inquiry is that, by and large, outdoor advertisers are doing the right thing. The system of self-regulation of the industry is encouraging them to do the right thing. However, there is a minority of advertisers who will not do the right thing and refuse to adhere to the system of self-regulation and to the directions or recommendations of the ASB. There needs to be a method of reaching that one per cent who defies self-regulation. In that respect, the report is very significant and will go a way to dealing with the concerns in the community, including my own community in the Beaudesert electorate, of outdoor advertising regulation.

Queensland is leading the way in giving the ASB a means of enforcement and deterrence through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. One of the aspects the committee looked at was similar international systems of regulation for outdoor advertising. At the outset it should be noted that the codes of most countries that have codes or regulation are based on the International Code of Advertising Practice, which is published by the International Chamber of Commerce. It has been around for quite a while. It was first published in 1937, but it has been updated on a regular basis since that time. The basic premise of the regulation in all systems is that—this is based on the ICC—advertising must be legal, honest, truthful, and prepared with a sense of social responsibility and respect for the principles of fair competition.

To look at a couple of other jurisdictions, the United Kingdom has in place a system of self-regulation. In fact, its parliament looked at the issue of outdoor advertising in recent times. The Bailey report entitled *Letting children be children*, which looked at the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood in the UK, noted the need to reduce the amount of on-street advertising containing sexualised imagery in locations where children are likely to meet. The UK system of self-regulation also has in place a sanction system where the UK Advertising Standards Association, the UKASA, can enforce the code that it has in place to deal with outdoor advertising. It can direct that the advertisement be withdrawn or amended.

There are also other deterrents in place in the UK system. For example, the UKASA can issue alerts to its members including the media advising them to withhold certain services—for example, access to advertising space—and can put in place a system of prevetting for frequent offenders against the UK code of outdoor advertising. This is a deterrent for advertisers who are doing the wrong thing—the one per cent I referred to before.

Similarly, Canada has a system of self-regulation based on a code which is enforceable by an office set up under legislation, but the sanctions that can be imposed by that governing council are merely requests to amend or withdraw the advertisement. In the situation where an advertisement has gone up on a billboard and the hit for the advertisers has already been obtained, a request to withdraw does not really provide any deterrent whatsoever.

This report recommends that the ASB have some teeth and through the Department of Justice and Attorney-General have the ability to actually impose sanctions by way of fines for advertisers that breach the code. This will provide a deterrent for people who do the wrong thing. We need to recognise that most industry participants have been doing the right thing, but we need to have some sort of mechanism to deal with those who continue to do the wrong thing.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.31 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Electrical Safety Act 2002 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 for particular purposes. I table the bill and explanatory notes. I nominate the Finance and Administration Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4506\]](#).

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4507\]](#).

This bill implements the first tranche of findings from the Queensland government's review of the national model work health and safety laws which commenced in Queensland on 1 January 2012. The review considered the impact of the new work health and safety laws, including unanticipated or inequitable compliance costs associated with doing business. This bill is the result of an extensive consultation process in which I hosted two ministerial roundtable discussions with employer associations, legal representatives and the unions. I want to thank all of the organisations that were involved in that process for their willingness to discuss and debate the issues that are important to the safety of Queensland workers.

As a government, we are committed to having the safest workplaces in Australia. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, which is within my department, has an extensive range of guidance materials and communication strategies to enable Queensland employers and workers to understand their roles and responsibilities in achieving this goal.

During the review, the construction industry raised serious ongoing concerns about the misuse of right of entry provisions by union officials and the impact this kind of disruption has on business. While this is mainly an issue for the construction industry, other industry sectors noted the complexity and confusion created by the inconsistency between right of entry provisions under the Work Health and Safety Act and the Fair Work Act.

The government has responded to concerns of industrial lawlessness on construction sites by introducing and implementing the Implementation Guidelines to the Queensland Code of Practice for the Building and Construction Industry, which were effective from 1 July 2013. The Building and Construction Compliance Branch, known as the BCCB, within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is responsible for monitoring, auditing and reporting on compliance with industrial relations laws—for example, right of entry and freedom of association—on state funded infrastructure projects. The BCCB targets behaviours and responds to notifications and complaints of interruptions to work site productivity—that is, unlawful industrial action. The BCCB supports contractors to ensure industrial relations laws are observed on the work sites. The BCCB provides the government with the means of directly confronting unlawful and unproductive industrial activity on state funded construction sites through its physical presence on site and at the tendering stage where it verifies the efficacy of the head contractor's Workplace Relations Management Plan.

The construction industry's concerns are confirmed by complaints the work health and safety regulator has received about union right of entry disputes. Most of these disputes related to entry without prior notice to inquire into a suspected contravention under the Work Health and Safety Act. Inspectors found that overall none of the issues identified were considered to be an immediate or imminent risk to workers or others at the workplace.

For too long, we have seen construction unions using safety as an industrial weapon in this state. I have personally heard of stories from hardworking Queenslanders who have been locked out of their workplace because of militant union activity. Last year, a major contractor lost 42 days of work due to illegal strike activity in the first year of their enterprise agreement. Sites are being hijacked and workers are being held to ransom by the unions. This practice has to end.

This bill will restore balance to the system. There will be legitimate avenues for safety issues to be raised and dealt with appropriately, but the practice of unions using safety to hijack sites and bully contractors on work sites will end. The bill supports the—

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I am not going to take any interjections from the Labor members over there who rely on their preselections from the unions we are talking about. The bill supports the Implementation Guidelines to the Queensland Code of Practice for the Building and Construction Industry and the important work of the BCCB. Every Queenslanders deserves to be able to go to work and do their job without interference, without fear, without intimidation and without the union bullying tactics, and they deserve to get paid and be treated fairly by all those on the work sites, including the unions.

Business representatives also raised concerns about the cumulative compliance costs associated with red tape. Not only does this government hear these concerns, we are determined to follow through and reduce the red-tape burden of excessive regulation in the building industry. This should not be seen as a lowering of safety standards. We believe Queensland workplaces should be safe, but this is not achieved by choking businesses with paperwork and unnecessary red tape.

The review also considered a range of national model codes of practice that could be adopted in Queensland. Harmonised model work health and safety laws and codes have advantages, but stakeholders considered there is a need for some scope to vary the model codes where they can be made more relevant for circumstances in Queensland. The act does not currently permit this flexibility and the bill will rectify this issue.

The bill also makes a technical amendment to the Electrical Safety Act to provide that the maximum penalty for offences in the Electrical Safety Regulation can be no more than 300 penalty units, replacing the current maximum of 40 penalty units. This will ensure the Electrical Safety Act is consistent with the maximum penalty for regulations made under the Work Health and Safety Act and that nationally consistent penalties can apply to electrical safety offences. The government is still finalising our formal response to the remainder of the issues that were considered by the roundtable review.

Construction is a key pillar of our plan to get the state's finances back on track and turbocharge the Queensland economy. The changes I have outlined in this bill will restore balance to the system and foster safety, fairness and productivity in Queensland's workplaces. How are we going to do that? The answer is simply this. Unions will no longer have the right to enter a workplace and use work health and safety as an industrial dispute weapon in this state. They will now have to give 24 hours notice to be able to enter work sites in Queensland. That is good for business and good for the workers in Queensland. Hopefully, we will rid this state of union militant bullying activities.

First Reading

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.37 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Finance and Administration Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Finance and Administration Committee.

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice), (11.37 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Finance and Administration Committee report to the House on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 25 March 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS BILL

Message from Governor

Hon. AC POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.38 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

The Deputy Speaker read the following message—

MESSAGE

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS BILL 2014

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act to provide for environmental offsets to counterbalance significant residual impacts of particular activities on particular matters of national, State or local environmental significance and to establish a framework in relation to environmental offsets, and to amend the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary Act 1976, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Marine Parks Act 2004, the National Trust of Queensland Act 1963, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes and to make minor and consequential amendments of the Act mentioned in schedule 1

(sgd)

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 FEB 2014

Tabled paper: Message, dated 13 February 2014, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Environmental Offsets Bill 2014 [\[4508\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.40 am): Mr Deputy Speaker, I present a bill for an act to provide for environmental offsets to counterbalance significant residual impacts of particular activities on particular matters of national, state or local environmental significance and establish a framework in relation to environmental offsets, and to amend the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, the Currumbin Bird Sanctuary Act 1976, the Duties Act 2001, the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Fisheries Act 1994, the Marine Parks Act 2004, the National Trust of Queensland Act 1963, the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the Queensland Heritage Act 1992, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the Vegetation Management Act 1999 for particular purposes and to make minor and consequential amendments of the act mentioned in schedule 1. I table the Bill and Explanatory Notes, and I nominate the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee to consider the Bill.

Tabled paper: Environmental Offsets Bill 2014 [\[4509\]](#).

Tabled paper: Environmental Offsets Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4510\]](#).

Offsets are a component of the state government's assessment process that allows development to proceed. They compensate for unavoidable impacts on significant environmental values by making sure that an equivalent environmental outcome occurs elsewhere. Since they were introduced in the early 1980s, a growing number of specific issue offset policies have been developed. Over time this has led to an inconsistent, complex and onerous regulatory framework with little coordination.

The Newman government is seeking to address this by introducing a new foundation for the state's environmental offsets framework. The Environmental Offsets Bill sets out what an offset is and how it is to be provided. It supports assessment provisions in existing legislation which govern if and when an offset is required as a condition of an approval. Under the former government there were five separate offset policies. This is typical of Labor: they are all about quantity but not about quality. By combining five separate policies into one piece of legislation not only is the Newman government cutting green tape, but we are removing complexity and inconsistency. However, this will not come at a cost to the environment; instead, the new framework will also achieve greater strategic environmental outcomes for Queensland.

Introducing primary legislation that provides a 'head of power' to impose environmental offset conditions demonstrates the Newman government's commitment to protect Queensland's environment while allowing balanced economic growth to support our state's future. The bill supports the government's commitment to growing a four-pillar economy because it provides a single point of truth for proponents. It will end uncertainty and deliver a simpler, more timely and affordable solution for offsets under an integrated regulatory framework.

The environmental impacts of a particular development can currently be assessed multiple times by separate levels of government, each imposing substantially different offset requirements. This inconsistency has led to significant delays and additional cost to industry and is a major roadblock to development. The bill removes the potential for 'double counting' offset requirements across the three levels of government; reduces the number of matters subject to offsets; aligns with the Commonwealth approach of requiring offsets only for significant and unavoidable impacts on a matter of environmental significance; and provides greater flexibility in offset delivery options than the current offset policies. In providing this simpler framework, the government aims to reinstate industry confidence and reduce the unnecessary delays associated with uncertainty.

The Newman government is committed to being Australia's best-practice environmental regulator, and this innovative approach to environmental offsets will demonstrate this. The legislation also gives proponents the option to stage offsets in accordance with on-the-ground impacts and allows a financial settlement determined in accordance with a scientifically based offset calculator or a proponent-driven offset that replaces the impacted environmental matter. This simplified and scientifically-based approach to determining an offset obligation and flexibility in offset delivery options will provide greater certainty. This is a clear improvement on current policy approaches, where offsets can take years to find.

For the first time ever the state government will be able to take a big picture approach to the future protection of Queensland's environment. Through strategic investment corridors and direct benefit management plans, Queensland will no longer have a patchwork quilt of areas set aside; instead, the government can direct offsets to locations that will deliver the greatest environmental outcome. By working with industry and not against them, we will achieve greater environmental benefits than the current ad hoc and piecemeal outcome. This will also provide opportunities for landholders to receive income in return for voluntarily agreeing to manage their land, or part of their land, as an offset under a legally binding agreement.

In addition, the bill amends legislation for other matters. The Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 and the Environmental Protection Act 1994 will be amended to address specific unintended operational problems with the application of these acts. Amendment to the Coastal Protection and Management Act is necessary following a recent court decision associated with the Gold Coast Light Rail project. This decision highlighted an error in legislation that brought into doubt the validity of previous tidal works approvals made under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the repealed Integrated Planning Act 1997. The proposed amendments will validate these decisions. These amendments will clarify when operational works within a coastal management district, including within a tidal watercourse, are tidal works under the Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995 and referred to by the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and repealed Integrated Planning Act 1997.

Amendments are also required to address a separate matter in relation to dredge management plans. The amendments provide clarification to transitional provisions for dredge management plans made in 2011 to ensure that royalties remain payable for the commercial removal of material under such plans.

The National Trust of Queensland Act 1963, Currumbin Bird Sanctuary Act 1963, Queensland Heritage Act 1992, and the Duties Act 2001 will be amended to allow Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary and the National Trust of Qld to relinquish their statutory status and transition to a single company, independent of government. This reflects the approach taken in other jurisdictions and is consistent with government's commitment to reducing red tape and regulation for business. The Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary—the largest and most visited property belonging to the National Trust—will continue as a not-for-profit organisation, reinvesting revenue back into conservation-based research, public education and caring for injured wildlife through the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital. The National Trust is keen to undertake these reforms which provide greater autonomy and improved opportunities to seek corporate sponsorship and support for its heritage and conservation activities.

The Environmental Offset Bill is the product of a whole-of-government review, and there has been significant and ongoing engagement with industry, government, natural resource management and conservation sectors in development of the offsets framework. This engagement occurred from July 2012 through to January 2014 and included robust testing of the framework and calculator on actual projects to ensure that the cost savings and simplification objectives of the review are real and tangible outcomes.

I thank those who have been involved in the development of this important environmental reform. Your involvement has ensured that we have developed a fair and simplified offset framework that helps build Queensland's four-pillar economy whilst retaining a focus on environmental protection.

First Reading

Hon. AC POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.48 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

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

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. AC POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (11.49 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That under the provisions of standing order 136 the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee report to the House on the Environmental Offsets Bill by 28 April 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 12 February (see p. 176), on motion of Mr Langbroek—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Mr PUCCI (Logan—LNP) (11.50 am): I rise today in support of the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013. As our state continues to grow, we will see Queensland, both domestically and internationally, situated at the forefront of an unprecedented and exciting period in our nation's history. In conjunction with our government's proactive initiative to engage our regional partners through trade and investment opportunities, the need for Queenslanders to remain intellectually competitive is important to our state's growth and to the opportunities that lie before us. To achieve our full potential it is imperative that each industry throughout Queensland develops a legislative framework that enables growth rather than stand as a bureaucratic blockade. This is why this can-do government is committed to engineering a culture of moving towards red-tape reduction and empowerment for Queensland organisations and businesses.

The need for red-tape reduction was identified as one of the key outcomes of the ongoing round table discussions with principals that were conducted throughout the state including in Logan. Principals from schools within my electorate of Logan echo the same sentiments of their colleagues across the state when they voice their frustration about being restricted to their offices under a mountain of bureaucracy. This bill will seek to continue the historical achievements accomplished by our government in making Queensland the premier state in the field of academic achievement. The

Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013 will make further inroads into clearing the stranglehold on red tape whilst improving the delivery of services and skills to the next generation of Queenslanders.

Logan is one of many communities across Queensland that has directly benefited from investment in services, infrastructure and support spurred on by the Newman government. Logan schools have shared \$2 million as part of our government's efforts to clear the backlog in maintenance that accumulated over 20 years of neglect by the former Labor government. Logan schools will also share in \$1.4 million that has been allocated to Logan as part of the government's exciting Great Results Guarantee, which will boost student outcomes in Queensland state schools by focusing on the early years. That is nearly \$3½ million that Logan schools shared. Our focus on the early years of children's education will also benefit from the addition of further prep teacher aide hours being allocated to Yugumbir State School and Park Ridge State School that rolled out with the commencement of the 2014 scholastic year.

School safety is also a prominent feature in our government's push for better local schools. Safety for our students will continue to improve for Logan schools with the recent addition of flashing lights at Logan Village State School and another installation scheduled for Yugumbir State School in the near future. These installations, combined with \$80,000 allocated towards Logan Reserve State School under the safe school travel program, will continue to create a safe environment for parents and students during peak travel times. I encourage all schools who have not already taken advantage of this great initiative to apply for funding. Our government is wholeheartedly committed to ensuring the safety of our students at all times. As our community continues to grow, so does the impact imposed on school infrastructure. Recognising this, I welcome the allocation of over \$400,000 in capital funding to two schools situated in the critical growth areas. This funding will see building upgrades, relieving the pressure felt by staff and students.

After having achieved so much in just two years under the LNP government, Logan schools are set to have a bright future as our government continues to listen to the needs of the community and put the future of our children first. The objective of this bill will establish the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority as the new statutory body responsible for syllabus development, supporting the implementation of new syllabuses and the Australian Curriculum, testing, moderation, certification, tertiary entrance rankings and administration of student accounts. Despite the establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and the progressive implementation of the Australian Curriculum, there remains a fundamental need for a single independent body to oversee school curriculum. The QCAA will effectively replace the Queensland Studies Authority, creating a robust statutory entity with strong corporate governance and clearly defined functions that are consistent and relevant to the current educational environment. Strong expert strategic governance will be critical in enabling the authority to lead the implementation of senior Australian Curriculum subjects in Queensland schools.

The QSA has led the introduction of many significant changes in our education system. However, now is the time to evolve and reflect on the new era of education that lies ahead. The work of the QSA so far has included the administration of the Australia-wide NAPLAN testing in years 3, 5, 7 and 9, the commencement of the Queensland Certificate of Education and the initial introduction of P-10 Australian Curriculum subjects which will include subjects in the areas of arts, health, physical education, civics and citizenship, technology, economics and business, and languages. However, the QSA operates under legislation that is over 10 years old and which predates the establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and the development of the Australian Curriculum. As the needs of students in the scholastic community change, adaptive legislation needs to develop to ensure the success and opportunities for our youth. This bill helps guarantee the success for the statutory body evolving with a dynamic educational landscape.

The structure and functions of the QSA have also been the subject of a review including a 2006 review of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 by Professor Philip Meade, which highlighted concerns with the structure and functions of the QSA. These concerns had not been addressed by the previous government. The inactivity of the former government will no longer serve as an obstacle for educational providers and students reaching their full potential. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority will operate through more contemporary governance arrangements including a seven-member governing body selected on the basis of relevant expertise. As outlined by the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, it is important to note that the QCAA will continue to work with key stakeholders, including teachers, principals and parents. This will occur through membership of committees established by the governing body rather than through a

place on the governing body itself. The syllabus functions of the QCAA will recognise the authority's role in that of the Australian Curriculum. For example, unlike the existing QSA act, the bill includes specific functions to support schools implementing the Australian Curriculum. The bill also streamlines and simplifies a number of the operational processes set out under the QSA act such as processes for the establishment and operation of student accounts.

The success for our state's future rests in our hands. It is our responsibility to provide an environment in which our students receive the best possible opportunities. I can speak for my electorate when I say that we are charging ahead. The improvements that the state government has made to deliver services and infrastructure are a piece of the bigger picture that will see our community shine as the true jewel of the south-east. I commend the efforts of the Education and Innovation Committee for they play a role in building a stronger Queensland. I also commend the efforts of the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and his ministerial and departmental staff for their continuous efforts towards developing a viable education system that will ensure Queensland remains a great state with great opportunities. I support the passage of the bill through the House.

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (11.57 am): I rise in support of the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013 and the replacement of the Queensland Studies Authority with a new curriculum authority. This QSA was established in January 2002, over 10 years ago. It is time to modernise our approach and support the establishment of a new curriculum authority, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, or QCAA. The QCAA will guide significant education reforms.

This government recognises the importance of a high-quality school education. It is not just an economic imperative; it is essential for allowing young Queenslanders to reach their potential in all aspects of their life. This bill delivers the QCAA and will support schools in implementing the Australian Curriculum. The QSA have effectively implemented many changes over the years to our education system including the management of the NAPLAN testing, and I commend them on their dedication and tireless efforts. Nonetheless, as I have already stated, the QSA operates under legislation that is over 10 years old and legislation that predates the establishment of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and the development of the Australian Curriculum. It is certainly time for a refresh.

The QCAA will operate through more modern-day governance arrangements which will include a seven-member governing body selected on the basis of relevant experience. The QCAA will support the role of Australian Curriculum subjects such as the arts; health and physical education; civics and citizenship; technology, economics and business; and languages. With its more contemporary governance arrangements and clearly focused statutory functions, the QCAA will be well placed to action any changes arising from the independent review report, which is due to be provided by the end of July this year. As a mother of three young boys, I am passionate about their education and what our education system will be able to offer them. I am pleased to see that this bill will provide contemporary education standards for not only my children but all Queensland children to give them the best foundation to compete in the global job market and to make the most of every opportunity that comes their way.

In my electorate of Pumicestone education has certainly been the big winner since the Newman government was elected and appointed John-Paul Langbroek to the position of minister 23 months ago. It started with the Premier and Minister Langbroek coming to Tullawong State School and announcing additional prep aide teachers for schools across Queensland and indeed Tullawong itself. The Great Teachers = Great Results action plan embraces what we all know is true—that is, great teachers do get great results. We have created IPS schools and that has certainly allowed Banksia Beach State School to flourish, with Mrs King and her brilliant group of teachers providing an exceptional learning environment for their students. We have provided schools with the capacity to discipline their own students. Education in Queensland has received a 6.6 per cent budget increase this year, allowing for these reforms to take place. Pumicestone has benefited through over \$14 million worth of injected funds for maintenance, flashing school lights, new classrooms and infrastructure and programs to support our teachers, principals and students.

The education reforms that the Newman government has undertaken give me great comfort that we are providing the best educational opportunities for our kids here in Queensland. This morning it was fantastic to hear that when talking to Brett from the Arthur Beetson Foundation it

requires its students who are going to participate in the rugby league competitions to have at least a 90 per cent attendance record. In Mount Isa in 2012 it only had two who qualified and last year 22 qualified. That is a significant increase in the number of students who are actually going to school. I congratulate the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, for proposing this bill and providing a robust new curriculum and assessment authority that will function under a modern legislative framework. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (12.02 pm): In rising today to speak to the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill, I acknowledge that the core of this bill is in the best interests of the Queensland education system, which will be gradually aligned with the education systems of other states and territories. The bill implements a new statutory body known as the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority which will work in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, therefore bringing the Queensland education system a step closer to the standardisation of the Australian Curriculum. I support the creation and implementation of the authority insofar as it operates to represent stakeholders and provide informed advice independent of political interference.

In reference to the former, I encourage members of this House to always contemplate and remember that education is a powerful tool whose effects depend on who holds it in their hands and at whom it is aimed. This contemplation resonates in the University of Queensland submission, expressing that care needs to be taken to balance the level of ministerial influence and the independence of the authority. I also have concerns that this bill diminishes the higher education sector's ability to contribute to policy and practice. My concerns were reinforced by the submission from the University of Queensland which stated that the proposed legislation removes the requirements for universities and QTAC to be consulted regarding tertiary entrance and, further, that the proposed new governing body—the authority—no longer has higher education representation mandated. I do not know about other members of the House, but I believe our universities are well placed to act as mandatory consultants with regard to the development and implementation of school syllabus. Therefore, I encourage the minister to rethink the removal of higher education representation in relation to this bill.

In relation to another aspect of the bill, the minister commented in his explanatory speech that ongoing support could be provided on a 'user-pays basis'. This statement has caused a bit of anxiety and has resonated with some of the submitters concerning the possibility of a privatisation agenda, and this does concern us. I commend the minister on his push to standardise the Queensland education system in line with the Australian Curriculum, but I hope that the minister's explanatory speech was misinterpreted concerning his comments about support being provided on a user-pays basis.

If there are parts of this bill which might have been designed to commercialise the Queensland state education system, the minister should take the front foot and inform the Queensland public what direction he is taking. It is important that the minister clarify his intent to the families who use the 1,235 state schools, with 40 per cent of those families being low-income earners. We have to look after these people. A user-pays system will place an increased financial strain on low-income families who have no option but to send their children to a state school because of their financial situation. I encourage the minister to listen to the Independent Education Union, which has called upon the Education and Innovation Committee to seek a guarantee from the minister that the authority will not charge schools and students for access to core syllabus and curriculum materials. If the minister can give this guarantee, it would certainly make me very happy.

 **Mr YOUNG** (Keppel—LNP) (12.05 pm): I rise to support the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013. The Newman government recognises the importance of a high-quality school education. It is not just an economic imperative; it is essential for allowing young Queenslanders to reach their potential in all aspects of life. Research around the world has shown that high-quality education depends above all else on high-quality teaching. To this end, this bill provides that the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the QCAA, will support schools in implementing Queensland's syllabuses and the Australian Curriculum. To perform this role, the QCAA is specifically empowered to provide curriculum resources and services for the professional development of teachers. In providing this support, the QCAA will build on the existing work of the Queensland Studies Authority, the QSA, which currently provides Queensland teachers with a range of online curriculum resources and professional development workshops to build teachers' knowledge of curriculum and assessment practices.

The bill also provides that the QCAA will assume responsibility for moderation processes that ensure comparability in senior assessment across Queensland schools. Queensland's current social moderation processes, in which teachers participate on moderation panels and receive feedback on their judgements of student achievement, are widely recognised for providing teachers with a thorough knowledge and understanding of assessment practice. I understand the QCAA will work closely with schools and school authorities to ensure the support and advice it provides is clear and effective. In this context, I acknowledge the parliamentary Education and Innovation Committee has recently identified a number of areas where teachers require clearer guidance and information. These areas include the ways in which numerical marks are used to record student achievement and the way assignment based assessment is used. The government has responded to these findings and I understand that the minister has requested the QSA to provide initial clarification on these issues. The QCAA will continue to ensure that these issues are addressed in accordance with the government's response.

Support provided by the QCAA will complement other major government initiatives that support quality teaching. The landmark Great Teachers = Great Results action plan will elevate teaching standards, reward high performance and position our highest performing teachers where they are needed most. Boosting school autonomy through the ongoing rollout of independent public schools will empower school leaders and teachers to ensure their educational practices meet the particular needs of their students and school communities. Strategies under *A fresh start: improving the preparation and quality of teachers for Queensland schools* will ensure graduate teachers are prepared to meet the challenges of a contemporary classroom.

I wish to acknowledge the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, for his excellent stewardship in this important portfolio.

 **Mr HATHAWAY** (Townsville—LNP) (12.09 pm): I rise today to make a short contribution to the debate on the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013. At the outset, I indicate my support for this bill and I note the support for this bill from across the chamber of this House. By way of background, this bill is necessary as a result of updating the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002. As we have heard from a number of contributors today, education is not static; otherwise the member for Warrego would be still comfortable with his inkwells and slate pencils. We found that, as technology develops and the Australian Curriculum is introduced, we needed to update the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002. Education is not static. It is modern, dynamic and it is an environment in which we must continue to work for the benefit of our Queensland students.

The QSA Act needed to change. This change, as introduced by Minister Langbroek, will bring about more effective governance arrangements. It will redefine the curriculum but, more importantly, redefine the responsibilities for the curriculum, particularly in light of the national curriculum initiative. This latter point is a key driver for me. As a member of the Defence Force for 30 years, I moved my children from pillar to post across this country—indeed, across three states of this country—and two other countries. So maintaining consistency in education and curriculum was very important to me.

This bill establishes the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, which will provide strong, expert and strategic governance to lead the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in Queensland. The QSA will be managed by a seven-member board, which will bring with it experience and expertise to inform where the Queensland curriculum needs to go. The board will have representatives from the Department of Education, Training and Employment. I note also that the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland will be represented on that board. The QCAA will be responsible for the administrative and strategic direction of curriculum, testing, certification and assessment and, as we have heard throughout this debate, later on tertiary education rankings.

At the beginning of my contribution I noted the strong support for this bill from across the chamber. So I would now like to move on to speak about education broadly in Queensland and in particular the achievements of Minister Langbroek. At the outset, can I say that the view that is continually peddled by political commentators outside of this House that the Liberal National Party has neither the expertise nor the willingness to support education is incorrect. Clearly, this government has demonstrated that that view is wrong. Indeed, I will provide the evidence. This year the Education budget was increased by over \$700 million. We have seen this government invest \$300 million in school maintenance and fixing our schools. That was to overcome the last two decades of poor investment and underinvestment by ALP administrations in our schools. We are

giving the children of Queensland the best facilities in which to gain an education. More recently, we have had the announcement of \$131 million for this calendar year for the Greater Results Guarantee. This is a fantastic initiative that I think over the forward estimates is worth in excess of \$500 million. What does that mean for Townsville? Across the 33 state schools in Townsville it means funding in excess of \$4.3 million. The 12 schools in my electorate, including Magnetic Island State School, Townsville Central State School, Belgian Gardens State School and Townsville South State School, will share in over \$1.1 million of funding.

In fact, the day before that funding announcement I was at Townsville South State School with the principal, Chris Riggs, and the school's parent and student body, and I know that they were looking forward to the announcement of that funding. So the next day it was great that I could call him and say, 'Here's this money.' Principal Chris Riggs has a very active P&C. At that stage Townsville South State School had increased its enrolment numbers from 79 last year to about 102. The school was ecstatic that it had finally received a fourth extra teacher. They were chasing another two students to enable the school to have a fifth teacher. I am happy to report that before census week, which was the following week, that school welcomed the opportune enrolment of another five students. So they are very happy that they now have a fifth teacher at their school. Other schools across my electorate that will benefit from this funding are Townsville West State School, Hermit Park State School, Garbutt State School, Townsville State High School, Currajong State School—and I note the comments made last night by the Minister for Local Government that Currajong State School is located in his electorate, but students from my electorate also attend that school—and Bwgcorman Community School on Palm Island.

This government has also introduced the Independent Public Schools initiative. I am glad to say that this year two schools in my electorate have managed to be elevated to being an independent public school. I know that the principal of Hermit Park State School, Clayton Carnes, is simply over the moon about that. He has a very active and energetic, focused and committed P&C, teachers and school community and they are excited to take greater control over the direction, planning, resource and delivery of education to the students of Hermit Park State School. Pimlico State High School is also transitioning to become an independent public school and it is looking forward to that. That school is the largest school in my electorate.

Whilst we have heard some unpalatable news in regard to discipline, as a government we are focused not only on education but also accountability and delivery of education at the lowest level, because it is our local principals, our local school communities and other local teachers who know exactly what is best for their schools. I know the principals of the schools in my electorate welcomed the changes that gave them a greater role and more accountability with regard to discipline in their schools.

I present that argument against that of the former government which, over the past 20 years, made an underinvestment in education. Our government, our Premier and Minister Langbroek are increasing education funding and promoting education at every point, because we are very interested in delivering effective outcomes to improve the future of our Queensland—and, indeed, North Queensland—students. We have long removed the shackles of central control, because we understand that local authority, local responsibility, local solutions and local ownership provide the best outcome for our students. I support the bill and recommend it to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Beaudesert—LNP) (12.17 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013. I note that the objective of the bill is to establish the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority as the new body to be responsible for syllabus development and to support the implementation of the syllabus and the Australian Curriculum. Incidentally, this bill was one of the topics of discussion at a roundtable forum that was held last week in the Beaudesert electorate where the minister visited Boonah State High School and met with 20-odd principals of the 30 schools within the Beaudesert electorate. I understand that it was one of the largest gatherings that the minister has conducted in terms of principal roundtables and it gave a great opportunity for the minister to obtain feedback about issues just like this one, including feedback from independent schools about the release of C2C to non-government schools and the great benefit that will give those schools into the future. There are five non-government schools in my electorate and I know that they are very grateful for that. On behalf of all the students of Boonah State High School, some of whom the minister met, the principals in attendance, the staff and the broader community, I thank the minister for making himself available for that roundtable forum.

Another issue that is touched on very tangentially in this bill is the issue of external testing and the external benchmarking of results in high school as opposed to the system we have here at present where there is moderation of results across schools within a region. There were some issues raised in relation to the prospect of external examinations being introduced again. I am heartened by the minister's comments that he will take on board the expert advice being provided to the government in relation to that, whether that be in whole or in part external examinations. These sorts of issues are not static. Things are always changing and from time to time we need to look at the system we have, our curriculum and our way of assessment, to see if the best system is in place to get the best educational outcomes for our children.

I note also that the bill refers to the QCAA having the task of developing kindergarten syllabuses. On that point it is necessary for me to raise the issue of kindergarten services in the Fassifern area of my electorate. There is only one kindergarten. The assistance provided to that kindy last year by way of a \$181,000 grant for upgrades is terrific, but we need to look at future demands for the area and whether it is possible to facilitate the establishment of new kindergarten facilities in the area. There is a very long waiting list for that one kindergarten. I know that the community would really welcome that contribution.

As other members have alluded to, the \$300 million maintenance funding and the untied funding provided to all state schools to increase literacy and numeracy results from prep to year 2 is most welcome. I thank the minister for that and for delivering the federal funding to our schools without the additional red tape. I endorse the comments of other members of the committee who have spoken and thank them for their analysis of the bill. I thank the minister again for his contribution to our community last weekend.

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.21 pm), in reply: At the outset I thank all members who have contributed to this debate in relation to the bill. I take on board many of the comments that members have made about education being a very important part of the future of the Queensland economy and our society but also that it is in a constant state of flux and development. This bill has been brought forward because of the necessity for changes that have been brought upon the system through the development of the Australian Curriculum but, as many have mentioned, also because the original Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 was outdated in terms of how it could deal with aspects of the Australian Curriculum.

The most important issue is improving students' results in Queensland. We have an unashamed focus on boosting results which will come through the quality of teachers and working with them to improve the product they are able to deliver, making sure our schools have autonomy—there are more local decisions—and also disciplinary measures. Those issues have had significant exposure in the last day or two. When we ask parents what they consider to be the most important issue they definitely say it is teacher quality. The second issue they consider to be important is behaviour and then curriculum. Parents do not necessarily have as great an understanding as the teachers who provide the education. There is no doubt that the content of the curriculum is an important part of the education system. That is why federally there was an agreement between all education ministers that there would be an Australian Curriculum that was determined by the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority but that assessment is to remain the property of the states. People have said that the Queensland Studies Authority no longer has relevance because of the presence of an Australian Curriculum. Many people do not understand that the Australian Curriculum is not in every subject in every school in every year level. I think members here, through their research on this bill, may well have been surprised to discover that at the moment in Queensland the Australian Curriculum has been introduced into prep to year 10 subjects in maths, English, science, history and geography. There is a need for the state to maintain an ability to do this assessment. That was the focus of this review.

I acknowledge the member for Woodridge, the opposition spokesperson for this bill, and I will deal with some of the issues that she raised. I want to put into the record of *Hansard* why there was a need for a statutory body. It is a major important step forward in our relentless quest to improve student results. We are modernising the statutory body that oversees the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. There had to be a body in Queensland. While ACARA, the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, was determining the content, there had to be a process for us to bring it into Queensland given the nature of our state, in terms of diversity of the students in many of the electorates and those issues that make education potentially more difficult to

deliver in some of the far-flung parts of our state. There was a need to modernise the body that would be preparing the additional syllabuses—or syllabi, in answer to the member for Burdekin who was not sure what the plural was. Either is acceptable. Then we had to coordinate and oversee the assessment of this content in order to facilitate student admission to tertiary and other learning institutions.

To give members a brief history, in April 2012 there was a review of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act because it was over 10 years old and it predated the establishment of ACARA and the rollout of the Australian Curriculum. There had been a number of reviews. In 2006 Emeritus Professor Philip Meade conducted a review of the QSA act. Subsequent to that, ACARA was set up by the federal government and the states agreed to work with the federal government to implement the Australian Curriculum. We also had the Webbe-Weller review of non-departmental government bodies and there was work undertaken as part of the proposal of the previous government to establish a new education standards authority. The review confirmed that there was a need to clarify the statutory functions of the QSA. In particular, the syllabus functions in the QSA act do not recognise the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. This legislation will make sure that QCAA formally recognises that. The review also highlighted the need to support effective corporate governance and clear strategic direction. Previous reviews have suggested that the large size and representative nature of the QSA may have limited its effectiveness as a governing body. I know the opposition expressed concerns about that, and there were concerns expressed by the member for Condamine about the representation, for example, from tertiary institutions, and I will come to that in a moment.

In a nutshell, these were fundamental issues which required transformative change. In this context the government has endorsed the creation of a new statutory entity and the development of a new and more contemporary legislative framework. It is impractical to suggest, as some people do, that due to personality differences or concerns that they have had about the QSA not being as communicative as they might have liked, or due to their history and association with the QSA, we should just get rid of the QSA. That is a simplistic notion when one looks at the roles and purposes of the QSA. We had to make sure, and have made sure through this bill, that curriculum and assessment was overseen. That is why it is necessary to retain a state body.

The introduction of the Australian Curriculum involves content and achievement but does not remove the need for curriculum certification and testing functions to be performed by an independent state authority. Queensland senior syllabus documents are required as a basis for year 12 certification and tertiary entrance. Queensland may need to develop subjects in areas not covered by the Australian Curriculum, such as accounting or languages. Queensland will still be responsible for assessment in all senior subjects whether they are based on the Australian or Queensland curriculum.

Ensuring consistent senior assessment standards, conducting state-wide testing—for example, NAPLAN and the Queensland Core Skills test—and ranking students for tertiary entrance—for example, issuing OPs—are high-stakes processes that affect tens of thousands of Queensland students and their families each year. These functions are best conducted by a body that is separate from the department and the state schooling sector. All other Australian states and territories maintain statutory curriculum authorities that are responsible for senior curriculum, senior certification and related processes to ensure the comparability of school based assessment in the senior years.

I want to deal with some of the specific concerns of the member for Woodridge. I acknowledge that, of course, on this side of the House we share her value of education. Coming as she does from Woodridge and being a longstanding member of the House, I know that she understands the importance of education as the basis for improving people's lives. I am pleased that she shares our wish to modernise the system whilst paying tribute to the work of the QSA, as I am happy to do here today. We pay tribute to both the staff and the governing body for the work they have done in the past number of years. I assure the House that the new governing body, the QCAA, will continue to represent all sectors of schooling in Queensland. It will include knowledgeable and suitable appointees to oversee its important function.

Clause 22 outlines the appointees to the authority. Of course, there will be a CEO. As has been mentioned by numerous members, there will be one representative each of Independent Schools Queensland and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. The board will include four nominees of the minister. The explanatory notes very pointedly state that one of those four positions should be someone with relevant corporate, governance or financial qualifications or experience. The board will be able to get advice from a subcommittee established to ensure that they are widely

consulting. By reducing the size of the board from 20 to seven, we are enabling the board to have the agility and skills to deal with complex and important matters in a timely fashion. Of course, we are yet to appoint those additional board members. There are many other avenues to consult and to include representative groups from the QCAA.

Some say that we should keep the status quo, that the board membership should stay at 20, as otherwise obviously some people will no longer be able to be on that board. Let us look at the governance as it has been. It is important to have effective governance. It is critical. It will manage significant public resources. It will need to lead the implementation of new senior Australian Curriculum subjects and any changes arising from the review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance. It has a relatively large governing body with 20 members nominated by a wide range of stakeholder organisations. In 2006, before the LNP came to government, Professor Emeritus Philip Meade conducted a review and raised concerns that the size and representative nature of QSA membership may limit its effectiveness as a governing body. This government has determined that, on balance, a more streamlined governing body would be more likely to support effective corporate governance and clear strategic direction.

QCAA will continue to be informed by the expertise and experience of key stakeholders. Rather than being provided through direct representation, this will be provided through participation on committees. Under clause 21 of the bill, the governing body has a broad power to delegate matters to committees. I expect syllabus development by QCAA will continue to be informed by both discipline experts and those with experience and first-hand knowledge of school operations. Similarly, tertiary entrance processes will continue to be informed by Queensland universities and tertiary institutions.

The member for Woodridge was also concerned about the clauses of the bill relating to the payment for material generated by the board. It is important for the member and others who expressed those concerns to look beyond the boundaries of this chamber. Queensland stands at the forefront of innovation in material to assist teachers in the classroom. It is a valuable resource that others beyond Queensland would like to share and in that sharing there is a place for cost recovery. For example, schools overseas that implement the Queensland curriculum currently pay for the licence. I will come to some details in a moment. This bill ensures that we continue that sort of activity in the future.

Let us look at the current level of funding that QSA receives. It is actually funded through grant funding from the Department of Education, Training and Employment. That is budgeted at \$36.4 million in 2013-14. It has some of its own source revenue, largely relating to the sale of QSA products and services. In other words, under licence with the Department of Education, Training and Employment, which is responsible for dealing with the formal parts of the revenue raising, it has been able to raise money and it has had its own source revenue of \$2.1 million in 2013. It has been raising revenue, but we are making sure that now the clear statutory functions and contemporary governance arrangements will support the effective allocation of its resources.

QCAA will have a specific function to commercially exploit intellectual property in the products and services it has developed. At the moment, there is existing uncertainty about the QSA's capacity to commercialise its products and services. It will support the government's ability to market and promote Queensland curriculum products and services to international students and schools. In a similar vein, the bill specifically enables the provision of testing and tertiary entrance services to international students attending recognised schools. The bill streamlines and updates a range of other operational provisions and processes. For example, complex provisions relating to the operation of student accounts have been simplified and detailed procedural provisions relating to governing body procedures have been removed, consistent with contemporary drafting practice.

Clause 18 of the bill clarifies the QCAA's capacity to commercially develop its own intellectual property by providing a specific commercialisation power. As I have already mentioned, currently it does not have an equivalent commercialisation function under its own legislation. Now, they will be able to licence the use of their material and, as I have already said, ensure that that aligns with government support for emerging opportunities to market and promote high-quality educational products and services to overseas markets and international schools.

I have had the pleasure of attending a couple of international schools overseas. Five overseas schools have entered into commercial arrangements to use QSA curriculum products and services: the Australian International School in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates; Nauru Secondary School; Hangzhou Dong Fang School in China, which I visited in June or July last year; the Suzhou International Foreign Language School in China; and the Ma'anshan Foreign Language School in

China. In those schools, students may elect to study a range of QSA authority subjects and authority registered subjects. They are taught and assessed in English over two years and work towards receiving a Queensland Certificate of Education. I spoke to parents of students at those schools. They said, 'We had the choice of sending our children to Queensland.' Of course, as a government we would encourage that. However, should parents want to take advantage of a system that has a robust curriculum, we are happy to provide the syllabus that can be delivered by teachers who may not necessarily be from Queensland or Australia. That is what I saw happening at Hangzhou and Suzhou when I was there. It means giving parents more choice as to where their children can be educated. Certainly, that is very worthy. That is what we are encouraging with this new legislation, which really deals with the issue of commercialisation because we want to ensure that there are more opportunities that QCAA can take advantage of.

However, that is a different matter to saying that schools are going to have to pay for syllabuses and resources, which was mentioned by a number of members opposite. Certainly the member for Woodridge asked about that. I make this very clear: the inclusion in the bill of a commercialisation function does not reflect an intention to charge Queensland schools for core syllabus and curriculum products. That is pretty clear. I have made it clear why a commercialisation process is mentioned in the bill. For those who want to misinterpret mischievously why that is in there, I cannot be more clear: there is a commercialisation function to enable us to work on the world stage and develop intellectual property from which QCAA and the government can benefit. That does not mean that we are going to be charging Queensland schools for core syllabus and curriculum products.

The new bill has been developed on the basis that there may be some circumstances in which it would be appropriate and administratively efficient for the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority to directly enter arrangements for the commercial use of intellectual property rather than, as I have already mentioned, requiring all such arrangements to be administered by the department on QCAA's behalf. This may include consideration of requests from publishers to include extracts from QCAA syllabus materials as part of their texts. It does not mean that QCAA will seek a commercial rate of return in relation to the provision of curriculum products and services to Queensland schools. The QSA does not charge Queensland schools for access to its syllabus documents or for core curriculum resources that are provided to support their implementation. It is expected that QCAA will follow a similar approach.

I note that the member for Woodridge was also concerned about whether there would be interference from the minister in terms of directing the authority. Can I reassure the honourable member and anyone else who may be concerned that there is an appropriate distance legislated for in this bill to make sure that this does not happen. But as a statutory body it is also appropriate that there be a written statement of expectations and a very clear list of priorities from the minister. That does not mean, as some in the wider media would suggest, that the minister will go in and say, 'I do not like what you are teaching. I think you should be taking that particular book out of the library and taking that element out of a particular subject in terms of curriculum development.'

It is important to acknowledge that it is appropriate that the federal government undertake a review of the Australian Curriculum. It is not necessarily about specific content. It is a wide-ranging review. As I have travelled the state and listened to teachers and principals they have given me the feedback that in terms of the Australian Curriculum, developed by ACARA and brought into our schools, it is difficult for teachers to get through every element of a particular subject. It is appropriate that that be reviewed. To that end, this government supports wholeheartedly the new federal education minister Christopher Pyne's review to look at how the curriculum is being derived and to make sure that the processes in place to support our teachers at the front line are as good as they can be.

In Queensland we have had to pass on to teachers the mantra of adopt and adapt. We are not expecting them to take on every element of the subjects that we are currently doing in the Australian Curriculum in our P to 10 years. They do not have to take everything on. They can adopt and adapt for their local needs in order to make sure that their students are able to attain the elements they need to. It is certainly appropriate that we have a review. We have been happy to support that review.

In my statement of expectations I have expressed my hopes for the new board. I have said that the member for Woodridge's fears that it will be a political body overseeing a politically charged curriculum are completely unfounded. Clause 72(4) states very clearly that the minister is unable to give a direction about the content of the curriculum.

I thank those members on this side of the House who made contributions. The member for Nanango made a lot of statements, as others members did, about the achievements of the Newman government in the education field. As she noted, QCAA will help us to achieve the improvements in student outcomes that we are seeking. It is about modernising the legislative framework for curriculum, syllabus and assessment in this state.

The member for Burnett was also right. This is a very exciting time for education in this state. He hit the nail on the head with his comment that with change one must be careful and considered. QCAA will be both careful and considered. The member correctly identified that through the formation of committees there will be ample opportunities for representatives' communities and their schools to be included and consulted on matters considered by QCAA.

The member for Gaven was again confused. This bill is not about the OP review, which is currently being undertaken by the Australian Council for Educational Research, but there are elements within this bill that will allow QCAA to consider the results of that review. No decisions have been made.

I put on the record very clearly—and the member for Beaudesert made this point following the principal forum that we had in his electorate last week—there has been no direction by this government to Professor Geoff Masters and Dr Gabrielle Matters, who are leading this review. They put out a discussion paper last week so interested parties can have some input into this review of assessment practices—the OP review as it has been called. There has been no direction from this government about what those outcomes should be.

We want best practice and we want to make sure we have the best system in the 21st century for our students—a system that can stand up to any scrutiny, any criticism by anyone in any system, both in Australia and around the world. We want to make sure that when we do this we get it right. There has been no direction by me as the minister, no direction by the Premier, Campbell Newman, no direction by anyone else in this government to those independent authorities that will come up with the recommendations. The government will consider those.

In terms of the time frame, we have reassured everyone that the changes will not affect students until 2016. Students who were in year 8 last year will be affected in the sense that they will start year 11 in 2016. They will be the students who will be affected. I cannot be any more clear for people reading *Hansard* in terms of clarifying any of those misapprehensions and any conclusions that some members of the public are jumping to. We do not have a predetermined conclusion for this review.

The member for Gaven can be reassured that I will bring the government's response to the ACER review to the House in good time. He had fears about the introduction of a user-pays system. They are unfounded and they are characteristic of his confusion.

In his contribution the member for Albert spoke about principals in his area. I appreciate his words about the reforms of the education system that we, as a can-do government, already introduced. I appreciate him going the extra mile as a local member, as I know many members did, speaking to his principals and supporting our Great Results Guarantee.

To my colleague the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience, thank you for your support of the bill. As a cabinet we have talked about streamlining and strengthening the processes so critical to our schools. We are about reducing red tape and this is another example of this.

Thank you too to the member for the Burdekin, one of the whips in this place. As a teacher she is well placed to understand the challenges and joys faced throughout thousands of classrooms every day. We are committed as a government to supporting those teachers, and this legislation is part of keeping Queensland at the forefront of the education agenda. I have already thanked her for her chairmanship of the Education and Innovation Committee, and I will continue to do so. I thank the other members of that committee.

I thank the member for Pumicestone for her contribution. As she points out, this bill is a timely update reflecting the current curriculum arrangements as the Australian Curriculum continues to be rolled out.

We also had contributions from the members for Logan, Keppel, Townsville and Beaudesert. They are all advocating strongly on behalf of their schools. It really does show the importance of education that our local members—those privileged to be in this place—are able to go to those schools and see the practical realities of what happens in our schools.

I have also mentioned that the member for Condamine was concerned about the tertiary sector being involved in QCAA. As I have said, the board appointments are yet to be made. There are many avenues for consultation with interested parties, including universities.

Clause 13 of the bill requires that the processes for ranking students for tertiary entrance are to be developed in consultation with the minister. It would be expected that I would require assurance that the development of these processes has involved appropriate stakeholder consultation with universities. I note for the member's benefit that there is no intention to charge Queensland schools for core syllabus and curriculum products.

In summary, I emphasise the Newman government's commitment to increasing productivity in our economy and enhancing the social improvement that education can bring. When the Premier talks about turbocharging the economy, there is no doubt that education is at the core of that. That is what honourable members here have acknowledged. The Great Results Guarantee is going to help students from prep to year 2 to reach the national minimum standard as a guarantee. This is a plan to help those students get there. If there is early intervention we will prevent a lot of problems later.

Importantly, we will increase productivity by making sure that our students are educated as best they can be and our teachers supported in the curriculum. People can be assured that QCAA will be up to date for the 21st century and in line with the arrangements that we have with our federal and interstate colleagues. This will make sure that we have a system that is at the forefront when compared to any other jurisdiction. This is an important plank, an important step on the road to making sure that education is always seen as a progressing field and one that is keeping up to date with the changes in the system. That is the commitment of the Newman government. That is the commitment of those on this side of the House. That is the commitment from me as minister. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 40, as read, agreed to.

Clause 41—

Mr LANGBROEK (12.50 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 41 (Employment of staff on casual basis)

Page 24, line 21—

omit, insert—

section to help the authority perform its functions under division 2.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments.

Tabled paper: Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013, explanatory notes to Hon. John-Paul Langbroek's amendments [4511].

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 41, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 42 to 114, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.51 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.51 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 19 November 2013 (see p. 3906).

Second Reading

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (12.51 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013 reflects the government's commitment to ensuring that Queensland's agricultural colleges have every opportunity to be highly regarded institutions that deliver quality agricultural training and vocational education. This bill provides for amendments to the Agricultural College Act 2005 to significantly restructure the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, making it a statutory body and renaming it as the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges. The new corporate structure is designed to deliver effective management and decision making to ensure greater alignment of college services with the needs of students and industries in rural and regional Queensland.

I would like to thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for its report on this bill, tabled on 3 February 2014. The committee recommended that the bill be passed, and the government of course is pleased to accept that recommendation. The committee also recommended that the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry or his delegate ensure that the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges continue to meet key performance indicators that will be relevant to the quarterly reviews required by the legislation. The government wholeheartedly accepts this recommendation as it goes to the very heart of the bill. This bill seeks to ensure that the new Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges are viable into the future. This can only be done if the corporation is accountable for its performance.

The bill makes a number of amendments to address the deficiencies in the corporation's structure and management systems. These weaknesses were very clearly identified and articulated by Ernst & Young in their independent 2012 review of the colleges. Collectively they were contributing to operational losses and a disconnect, most importantly, between service delivery and industry needs.

I have previously made it clear that the corporation has not operated profitably since its commencement in 2005. The current corporate structure and delivery model is simply not sustainable in the long term. The government is committed to reinstating corporate integrity and accountability into the new Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges. For this reason the bill introduces a statutory obligation for the corporation to act in accordance with its strategic and operational plans and otherwise perform in a way that is proper, effective and efficient.

As minister, I can also give the corporation a statement of expectations with which they must comply. Furthermore, the corporation's board will be accountable to me for the corporation's performance, and the chairperson is required to report to me on a quarterly basis. I have every intention of ensuring that these arrangements are implemented and that the corporation continues to demonstrate that it is not only meeting the expectations of industry and of students but also turning around financially—essential requirements, I suggest, that I have had the opportunity to discuss at length with industry and representative organisations such as AgForce and the Queensland Farmers Federation.

The committee also previously identified a minor cross-referencing error in the bill, and as such I can advise the House that I will be moving amendments during the consideration in detail stage to correct this particular oversight. I table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee: Report No. 34—Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013, government response [\[4512\]](#).

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.56 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. Let me start by saying that the Labor opposition will not be opposing this legislation. We recognise the continuing challenges within the existing Australian Agricultural College Corporation and see the merits in many of the provisions of the bill. I made a number of changes to the governance and structure of the AACC during my period as minister, with the aim of producing a more resilient and responsive organisation. But it is the nature of politics that people rarely get to choose the time of their departure and they always leave unfinished business. The AACC is part of my unfinished business.

There is no denying the fact that Queensland agricultural colleges were slow to respond to the changing needs of the agricultural sector. When I became minister the colleges were still operating on a one-size-fits-all model of training delivery which was not suited to the increasingly diverse agricultural industry. The colleges did not have a detailed plan or strategic direction for their future. There is no doubt the agricultural sector has undergone rapid changes in recent years and agricultural colleges have needed to respond to those changes.

The member for Lockyer and chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee pointed to one of the largest changes affecting agricultural colleges during the committee's process—the growing number of students who complete year 12. While in times gone by many teenagers left school at year 10 and then enrolled at the agricultural colleges, these days approximately 80 per cent of students complete year 12. Many of these students complete certificates I and II qualifications while still in high school, which requires a different delivery model than what was traditionally offered through the agricultural colleges.

When you combine the structural shift with advances in communication, particularly the advent of online education, agricultural colleges were left in a very difficult position. In order to address this disparity between community and industry demands and the products offered through the AACC, as minister, I convened an industry advisory committee to outline what the sector was looking for in agricultural training and what the AACC needed to deliver to remain relevant. We engaged with the broader agricultural sector in places like Dalby, Longreach, Mareeba, Burdekin, Emerald and elsewhere across the state to ensure that we listened to industry. This engagement showed that the industry wanted the AACC to deliver agricultural training through varied methods including online courses, residential college and on-farm training. I developed a detailed restructuring plan for the corporation, which I released in 2010. The Reconnecting Agricultural Education plan was designed to address the parlous state of the agricultural colleges and improve their service delivery.

As part of these measures, the residential college at Dalby was transferred to the department of education and refurbished to become a second campus for Dalby State High School. The AACC continued to provide training through the rebadged Dalby Training Centre. We also headquartered the Agricultural College Corporation at the Gatton University of Queensland campus. We expanded the footprint of the organisation to have a presence in Mackay, Ayr, Cunnamulla and Bundaberg. We also planned to reinvest \$3 million in a new Darling Downs Cropping Research and Training Centre to provide training in broadscale crop production, machinery operation and undertake major field crop research. This was all part of the substantial \$20 million restructuring plan to which the then department of employment, economic development and innovation was to contribute \$3 million and the AACC was to raise \$17 million through the sale of outdated facilities and unnecessary properties.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mulherin, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.30 pm.

CRIMINAL CODE (LOOTING IN DECLARED AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

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

Tabled paper: Criminal Code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2014 [\[4513\]](#).

Tabled paper: Criminal Code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2014, explanatory notes [\[4514\]](#).

The primary objective of the bill is to amend the Criminal Code at section 398—punishment of stealing. Specifically, under section 398, as relevant to punishment in special cases, it is proposed to amend section 398(13) to insert new provisions that underpin the Disaster Management Act 2003.

The bill contains proposed amendments to the Criminal Code that are aligned with the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's response to the Criminal Code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2013 and related recommendations. It is highlighted that the committee considered that looting in a declared disaster area would be an aggravating circumstance, given individuals have no choice but to leave their home when a declaration is made under the Disaster Management Act. Furthermore, it was agreed that those entering a declared area to commit the crime of looting do so expressly against an order prohibiting people from entering the declared disaster area. Accordingly, the committee considered there could be a benefit to link offences to a declared disaster area in these circumstances.

I refer members to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's report No. 40 in relation to the Criminal Code (Looting in Declared Areas) Amendment Bill 2013. In response to the committee's report, the Newman government accepted that there was merit in the proposed amendments. The government's response indicated support for progressing an amendment to the existing offence of stealing by looting under section 398 of the Criminal Code to include a reference to a declaration made under the Disaster Management Act 2003.

These proposed laws are also aligned with community expectations and will positively contribute to protecting Queenslanders. Looting is a serious crime, and declared disaster areas need to be underpinned by relevant laws. Many Queenslanders have suffered severe flooding and cyclone disasters in recent times. Communities like Bundaberg and Gympie are still recovering from devastating disasters, and in 2011 my electorate of Yeerongpilly suffered serious flooding, as have many other communities throughout our state like my home town of Rockhampton in Central Queensland. The township of Halifax, near Ingham in North Queensland, flooded multiple times when I served there as a police officer between late 1990 and early 2000. I still have an affection and sense of responsibility to protect the good people living there and all other Queenslanders. That is why I have introduced this bill. I encourage all members to put politics aside and support it to help protect Queenslanders. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I was elected to represent my community and more broadly serve the people of Queensland, many of whom have been impacted by flooding and other disaster situations.

During the 2013 floods which heavily impacted Bundaberg and the surrounding area as mentioned the current Queensland Police Commissioner, Mr Ian Stewart, told media that 'sadly' there had again been instances of looting not only in Bundaberg but also in Gympie. Such crimes are committed by opportunistic and callous criminals in our communities including the Police Minister's own community of Bundaberg. These offenders must face laws that enable our courts to administer punishments to fit their crimes. This Bill proposes improvements to our existing laws applying a smart-on-crime approach to protect communities throughout Queensland.

First Reading

Mr JUDGE (Yeerongpilly—UAP) (2.33 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Currumbin Estuary; Correction of Statement

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.34 pm): As the member for Currumbin for the past decade and long resident for 27 years, I am acutely aware of our community's desire to protect our natural assets which include our magnificent beaches and picturesque Currumbin estuary. I have spoken of this publicly and in the parliament on numerous occasions and am a strong advocate of thorough

community consultation and engagement. Whilst we are blessed to have this beautiful waterway in our backyards that is a hive of activity with a multitude of users enjoying it, especially in the warmer months, it presents a number of challenges that require constant assessment and careful consideration to ensure the safety of all users.

In 2012 the Newman government was elected with a promise to establish the Gold Coast Waterways Authority to provide guidance and advice on waterways safety and usage. This is being delivered under the very capable leadership and direction of CEO Hal Morris and chairman of the board, Gary Baildon. Since the formation of this authority, I have convened a number of meetings and maintained regular communication with stakeholders regarding the management of the estuary which saw the creation of an ongoing Currumbin estuary safety awareness campaign focusing on education, camera coverage, clear signage and community collaboration.

The Newman government recognises the importance of Currumbin Alley as a popular surfing break, and the Premier and Minister Emerson have made it clear they will not create a wider navigational channel past the groyne or a new sand bypass system. I welcome this decision and support the council's existing dredging program inside the creek mouth for flood mitigation purposes. That is why I was instrumental in setting up a committee including local stakeholders to have a say in the location of the dredge area and where the sand was deposited. The government's decisive response to this issue demonstrates that we recognise the importance of our beaches and will take the necessary steps to ensure they are not adversely impacted and remain open for all to enjoy.

A proposal to develop a cruise ship terminal at Kirra was met with a wave of anger by thousands who attended a protest paddle-out on Sunday, 19 January. Addressing the crowd before the paddle-out, I read out a statement from the Premier, and I quote—

While we always welcome new ideas about how to grow the state, we will simply never entertain the idea of a cruise ship terminal at Kirra Beach. Our beaches are just too important—not just as a natural wonder or as a place for families and surfers—but also for the central role they play in Gold Coast tourism.

I could not have put it better myself, but I would add: our lifestyle and community pride are something we cherish in the electorate of Currumbin.

On another note, it has been brought to my attention that in the police powers bill I inadvertently gave an incorrect statement, and I wish to place on record my apologies to the House.

Glass House Electorate, Achievements

 **Hon. AC POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection) (2.37 pm): I love the electorate and the people of Glass House, and I love delivering for them even more. In the last 12 months the Newman government has certainly done that. We have seen more than \$2.1 million go to Glass House state schools for maintenance funding, and that includes \$183,000 to Elimbah State School. I know Gary Austin, the principal, was rapt about not only the funding but also the ability to engage local service providers to use that money.

Recently we have seen the Great Results Guarantee funding of nearly a million dollars extra in funding to 15 schools around the electorate including \$115,000 to Chevallum, \$117,000 to Palmwoods, right down to our smallest schools of \$20,000 to Eudlo, \$40,000 to Delaneys Creek and \$16,000 to Mount Mee. I thank the education minister for that. We have seen flashing lights installed outside Chevallum, Beerburum and Woodford state schools. The Glass House has its first independent public school at Palmwoods. I wish Peter Wilson and his team all the best this year as they get that going.

We have Get in the Game funding to nine clubs totalling over \$190,000, including Landsborough Tennis Club. The secretary there has been a member of the club for 40 years, and she was in tears when we handed over the cheque. She thought she would never see it. It was great to be part of that. Maleny Rangers Football Club got funding, as did Wamuran Little Athletics, Palmwoods and Western Districts Junior Rugby League Club, and the Caboolture PCYC.

Under the latest funding by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, the Maleny Bowls Club and Ian Hanson got more than \$30,000 to light their green; Eudlo State School got funding and the Palmwoods kindy got funding.

Under Everyone's Environment grants, it was great to see GMAN creating koala fodder trees and feeding wildlife around the Glass House electorate. Our Maleny Wood Expo was kindly funded under the Tourism and Events Queensland's Regional Development Program. It is a great initiative. We have new peak train services on the north coast line. That is the transport minister delivering for Sunshine Coast and for the people of Glass House.

We have the new route 657 in Caboolture North, which is a much needed bus service that we have been lobbying for for more than three years. The Palmwoods-Montville Road is finally open. It has been closed since early 2010. The Maleny-Stanley River Road is completely open again after damage in 2011, as is the Maleny-Kenilworth Road. The Landsborough-Maleny Road is nearly finished. It is great to see those repaired. The Grigor bridge is a new bridge, a betterment bridge, which is nearly complete and I look forward to opening that very shortly in Conondale. We have seen \$16 million from the Commonwealth to fast-track upgrades to the D'Aguiar Highway. There has been funding for the Bruce Highway interchanges at Pumicestone Road, Bells Creek Road and Sippy Creek Road. We are watching the six-laning of the Bruce between the Sunshine Coast Motorway and Caloundra Road and a study into the six-laning between Caloundra and Caboolture. I have had a lot of pleasure in delivering all of this through the Newman government for the electorate of Glass House in 2013. I look further to delivering even more in 2014.

Palmer United Party

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (2.40 pm): I rise to express my dismay at the Palmer and Pete show—starring Clive Palmer and Peter Wellington. Talk about a circus on the Sunshine Coast. I note the federal member for Fairfax, Clive Palmer, yesterday made the unbelievable claim that now that he is a politician he no longer cares about his Coolum golf resort. This is the resort in the heart of his electorate where yet another 90 staff have just been laid off. It is an appalling statement from the man elected to represent the people of Fairfax. Caring is the very least they would expect from their federal member.

The Hyatt Regency resort was an internationally renowned tourism drawcard for the Sunshine Coast and a major economic driver in the electorate of Fairfax, employing more than 600 staff. That is until it was taken over by Mr Palmer. Since Palmer moved in, hundreds of people have lost their jobs, tourists have fled, the business community is fuming and, on top of that, the Sunshine Coast lost the PGA golf championship, which we successfully hosted for 11 years. It was reported that the PGA of Australia and Palmer had several disagreements over sponsorship and signage issues leading up to and during the 2012 tournament, but Mr Palmer could not care less. He is too busy trying to convince Queenslanders that, despite not being able to run a golf course, he deserves a shot at running Queensland and Australia. He even rolled out a TV ad spruiking that Alex Douglas will be the next Premier of Queensland. No wonder he has kicked off the sales pitch early—Mr Douglas's respect for everyday Australians is even lower than Mr Palmer's. Need I remind the House of leaked emails last year in which Mr Douglas described Australians as a bunch of 'bogans'. This is how the member for Gaven and the Palmer party see the people whose votes he is now chasing. If he expects Queenslanders to roll out the welcome mat, then clearly he was serious when he wrote that Australians 'rejoice in their ignorance'.

Let us not forget the other part of the puppetry—that is of course the member for Nicklin, Peter Wellington. Mr Wellington claims Clive Palmer speaks a lot of sense. It is a shame the same cannot be said for the member for Nicklin himself, Queensland's own parliamentary criminal gang sympathiser. Last month he was rubbing shoulders with criminal gangs in protest of laws designed to make Queensland a safer place. This week he declared a lack of faith in our Police Service. Who knows what is next from this political flip-flopper. I hope he has left room on his sleeve for his Palmer party patches.

In Mr Wellington the people of Nicklin have a community leader who publicly condones the violence, drugs and other crimes of gangs that have prospered for too long in Queensland. I note that it was reported on the *Brisbane Times* today that he was a 'professional thorn in my side'. Unfortunately for the member for Nicklin, there is nothing professional about him. This was best illustrated by his disgraceful performance where he caused a traffic accident on Nicklin Way in Kawana because he could not ride a motorbike properly. In Clive Palmer's time on the coast he has cost us a prestigious golf tournament—which was a major tourism driver—driven a bustling resort into the ground and left hundreds of people jobless. Where is the tourist mecca he promised? Tacky plastic dinosaurs and an overpriced car exhibit—that is Palmer's legacy in Fairfax. It is time to call curtains on the Palmer and Pete show.

Bureau of Meteorology, Cyclone Updates

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.43 pm): It is certainly a tough act to follow the Attorney-General. There is certainly some passion there about that PUP. I want to talk about Cyclone Dylan which crossed the coast in late January. The reason I want to talk about Cyclone Dylan is to show what can be achieved when a community gets together and learns from events like that.

Cyclone Dylan was never going to be a huge event when compared with what the north has been through over the years, but it was a great trial run for getting our house in order. It was made very clear that, whilst many of the systems in place at a local level were spot-on and ready to handle the challenge, the Bureau of Meteorology's handling of the situation was quite poor. I particularly highlight the area of the updates when a cyclone crosses the coast. The rules stand as follows. When a category 3 cyclone or above crosses the coast, the bureau goes to hourly updates, but if it is less than a category 3 they have always been kept at three-hourly updates. That does not make any sense to me. If a category 2 cyclone crosses the coast on a high tide in a populated area, that would cause so much more concern than a category 3 that crosses in an unpopulated area.

The point that we as a community made very clear was that, for the sake of the couple of times a year when a cyclone crosses the coast, surely the bureau could go to hourly updates. There was a significant push-back, and I have to say that it was not from the politicians. I am not blaming the funding on the previous federal Labor government because that would be wrong, and I am not blaming the funding on the current federal government because that would be wrong. It is not a matter of funding. It was a matter of culture—and not culture at a local level but culture out of Canberra. That culture placed the communities that I represent in grave danger, so we spoke loudly and we spoke clearly. I was absolutely delighted with the response from the minister, Mr Hunt, who immediately acted to change that policy. There were no committees, no sitting around in circles. A decision was taken and that was the right decision. I come back to the issue. This is not—

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have no idea why the member for Rockhampton is interjecting when his community is one of the ones we want to protect. I have absolutely no idea why the member for Rockhampton is carrying on like a pork chop. The member for Rockhampton is the bloke who said that nothing consequential ever comes across my desk, despite the fact that his community has been impacted by floods. This is a man who does not get it. I want to place on record my sincere thanks to the media, particularly my local paper, the *Townsville Bulletin*. This was a campaign that we ran very, very hard and we got a win. As a result of that win, the communities I represent are much better placed.

Unemployment

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (2.46 pm): In January the Premier said that Queensland is 'the engine room of the nation on job creation'. The Premier made similar comments again in the parliament this morning, as did the Treasurer to the business community yesterday. Queenslanders may rightly ask where the Premier and the Treasurer get their figures from. Today the ABS detailed that Queensland lost 11,700 jobs seasonally adjusted in January—the largest fall in employment of any state or territory in the nation. This fall in employment included the loss of 1,700 full-time jobs. Queensland's unemployment rate increased from 5.9 per cent in December to 6.1 per cent in January seasonally adjusted. There is no way the Treasurer can spin these figures. On both a trend and seasonally adjusted basis, employment in Queensland fell in January.

These are the facts. The Deputy Premier said that repeating these facts is apparently being negative. Let me enlighten the Deputy Premier on what it means to be negative. In January 2012 when unemployment was 5.4 per cent seasonally adjusted in Queensland, the now Treasurer from opposition declared that Queensland had 'become an economic basket case'. With a 5.4 per cent unemployment rate, Queensland was apparently 'an economic basket case' according to the LNP. And with the unemployment rate now at 6.1 per cent Queensland is apparently the 'engine room of the nation'. For the benefit of those opposite, I will tell them that higher unemployment is not a good thing. It is B-A-D bad. To deny the facts as this Newman government does is to live in a fantasy land disconnected from reality. It is little wonder that Queenslanders are turning off this government in droves when they consistently tell them porkies about the economy and jobs.

According to the ABS figures, there were 12,000 fewer full-time jobs in Queensland in January than there were in March 2012. That is despite the population increasing by more than 120,000. So that is 12,000 fewer full-time jobs to go around another 120,000-plus people living here in Queensland. For the Treasurer's benefit—and he likes to cherry-pick between the seasonally adjusted figures and trend result—I point out that there are also 5,000 fewer full-time jobs since the election on a trend basis. The situation is even worse when you consider the dramatic fall in the percentage of Queenslanders looking for work or the participation rate. In March 2012, the participation rate was 66.9 per cent seasonally adjusted. In January 2014, the participation rate was 65.2 per cent, a fall of 1.7 per cent since the election. This means the labour force participation rate is now at a nine-year low. People are giving up looking for work in droves.

This Newman government simply cannot handle the truth when it comes to their failure to foster economic growth and employment—just as the Treasurer cannot handle the truth on his financial incompetence in relation to 1 William Street and the sale of seven CBD office buildings. The Treasurer yesterday continued to insist that this deal saved taxpayers money and that we would be paying rent on the buildings anyway. For the Treasurer's benefit, if he had not sold the seven CBD office buildings without an election mandate, there would be no rent bill to the private sector and QIC. The Auditor-General clearly outlined that the rent cost for 1 William Street and the rent cost on the seven buildings are 'risks to operating sustainability' of the state's finances. It is not a saving to taxpayers but a risk to operating sustainability. I know who is telling the truth, and it is not the Treasurer.

Whitsunday Electorate, Australia Day Awards

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.49 pm): I rise to acknowledge those wonderful people in my electorate who were recognised at this year's Australia Day awards. As usual, Australia Day was a busy day for me, attending three official events around Mackay and the Whitsundays. It was great seeing Proserpine host a barbeque breakfast for the community this year, all thanks to the members of the Proserpine Lions Club. The highlight in town was certainly seeing the joy on the face of the man I call 'Mr Football' in the Whitsundays, with Ron Read being presented with the Citizen of the Year award.

I first came across Ronnie more than 25 years ago when I was a young reporter on the *Bowen Independent* coming down to Proserpine to report on the Burdekin-Whitsunday competition, and he was a respected name in league circles way back then. Ron has now chalked up more than 50 years of service to rugby league, and while we have not always agreed on everything, no-one in our local community can doubt his commitment to the community, and especially to the greatest game of all. I sincerely congratulate Ron on his award, and I would suggest that his late wife, Dellis, would be smiling from high above as 'Mr Football' was recognised and, some would say, not before time!

Congratulations also to our Young Citizen of the Year, Ryan Goding, who was recently selected to attend the Australian Defence Force Academy. Ryan has previously taken part in Lions Youth of the Year Quest, Lions Youth Exchange and, on the sporting front, training workshops at the Gold Coast Suns AFL club.

I would also like to recognise Helen Toy, who was awarded the Wally Hinschen Volunteer of the Year Award. Helen is a great servant to our community, being involved with the Whitsunday Lions Club, Whitsunday Crisis and Counselling Service and Whitsunday Community Enterprise. Thank you, Helen, and congratulations.

Well done also to our Cultural Award winners. The junior award went to Charlotte Spruce, a former school captain of Proserpine State High School and a lover of the performing arts who performed at last year's Local Government Women's Association conference in Proserpine. The senior award winner, Gloria Demartini, needs no introduction to locals. She is a committed advocate for youth in the Whitsundays through the PCYC at Jubilee Pocket, in addition to her terrific work for organisations like Rotary and Lions, Meals on Wheels, Red Cross and the Whitsunday Community Kindergarten.

Congratulations also go to our sports awards winners, Charlotte Mitchell, the junior award recipient and a local swimming star on the rise, and Andrew McLeish, the senior award recipient well known in local motor sport, winning the 2013 Australian Supermoto Championship.

Congratulations also to Stephen Tween, who won the sports administrator's award. Stephen is president of the Whitsunday Football Club and locals, who love their soccer, as I still call it, would certainly know of his commitment to the round ball code.

I would also like congratulate Barb Adamson, who was named our Older Person of the Year. Barb is a star at the Whitsunday Sea Eagles AFL club. However, her work extends much further to organisations like Meals on Wheels in Airlie Beach and Fauna Rescue, where she is a possum coordinator.

As for the Community Event of the Year, that award went to the Proserpine State High School for its golden jubilee celebrations last year. What a great celebration it was. Congratulations to everyone involved as well as those who put together the *Golden Arrow* book. All recipients are most deserving of their respective awards.

Cairns, Tourism

 **Mr KING** (Cairns—LNP) (2.52 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak about the breakthrough year for Cairns in 2014. It is going to be a massive year for our great city led, of course, by the resurgence in the tourism industry. It is fantastic to have our tourism minister here. The minister has done some amazing work to completely transform the tourism industry, forge new partnerships with operators and treat tourism with the respect that it lacked for so many years under Labor.

I am very pleased and excited to report that Cairns Airport yesterday posted its January airport passenger figures. There has been an incredible surge in passenger numbers throughout the month of January at Cairns Airport: a 10 per cent increase in passenger numbers over January 2013 led by an increasing surge in domestic visitors. We have had a massive, wonderful Chinese New Year celebration. We expect that, when the final figures come in from China, we would have had around 20,000 Chinese visitors flying in to Cairns to celebrate Chinese New Year. My congratulations go to the Cairns and District Chinese Association, which organised a whole suite of events throughout Chinese New Year, culminating with around 15,000 people attending the street festival on Grafton Street.

There is no doubt that there is a fantastic buzz in the air in Cairns now, and we have just so many good stories to tell in our tourism industry after too long in the doldrums. Just recently the Cairns Coconut Holiday Resort won gold at the Australian Tourism Awards.

Mrs Stuckey: For the sixth time!

Mr KING: I take that interjection from the tourism minister. That is the sixth time that this great attraction has won such a high honour. There are just so many great stories. The reef operators that I have spoken to over the last couple of weeks say that they are so busy that they are having to turn people away and asking them to book two or three days in advance. That has not happened for a very, very long time. I know that there are some very big projects on the horizon that we know about such as AQIS, and I am sure that others will be announced in a very short time that will not only help our tourism industry go to the next level but they will create jobs and reignite our construction industry which, like tourism, had suffered for so many years.

I firmly believe that all of the things that the minister has put in place through DestinationQ in particular will start to bear fruit for a great city like Cairns. It is going to be a breakthrough year for our great city.

Alcohol Consumption

 **Dr DAVIS** (Stafford—LNP) (2.55 pm): Maxillofacial surgeons such as Dr Anthony Lynham correctly continue to remind us of the burden of alcohol related violence in terms of things we can see, such as the victim's face and bone structure. What receives less attention, but in fact can have far more serious and longer-term consequences, is the subtle damage to the hidden, but all important, brains of those who are assaulted. Rapid advances in neuroscience are providing insights into just how vulnerable the brain is to even apparently quite mild head trauma and how this can affect critical areas such as memory, judgement and initiative for prolonged periods.

We are increasingly calling for a future workforce that is highly intelligent, skilled and innovative, yet at the same time we are tolerating lifestyles that expose many youngsters to avoidable long-term damage to their brains. Awareness of such lifestyle risks will hopefully assist policymakers when making decisions in terms of our tolerance of factors associated with violent behaviour occasioning bodily harm, and particularly head trauma. Even in those who do not experience head trauma there is good scientific evidence as to why we should be discouraging the culture of alcohol tolerance and abuse across adolescents and emerging adulthood.

Recent work provides critical insights regarding the underpinnings of the deficits in executive function often observed in those at risk of alcohol dependence and those who develop alcohol use disorders. These studies suggest that, even when behavioural deficits are not evident, changes in brain connectivity and microstructure may be observed, literally stunting cognitive development at a vital time of life. Longitudinal work now being reported suggests problem alcohol use during adolescence may be associated with persistent neurobehavioral aberrations. Add to this the considerable literature demonstrating an association between acute traumatic brain injury and consequential brain inflammation that lays the seeds for neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease many decades hence. Many developed countries have demonstrated that there are intelligent and sophisticated ways of partying that do not involve alcohol abuse and violence and in fact result in net economic benefit and less burden on individuals in society. We would do well to study those alternatives, particularly given our duty of care to young Queenslanders.

Albert Electorate, Initiatives

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (2.58 pm): I rise here today to update the House on the wonderful electorate of Albert, the gateway to the Gold Coast and the great south-east. Certainly, in recent times the Albert electorate has had some very positive outcomes, especially when it comes to the flashing school zone lights project. Just recently the Mount Warren Park State School and the Beenleigh Special School received flashing school zone lights. The community got behind this initiative and we had a petition going, so I thank the community for their support on this issue. The ladies who work at the crossing at the local school were absolutely and utterly ecstatic about having these new flashing school zone lights.

Since the election the electorate of Albert has managed to receive a total of six flashing school zone lights: in Mount Warren Park State School, Beenleigh Special School, Coomera Springs State School, Coomera Anglican College, Upper Coomera State College and St Stephen's College. Coomera Springs was a very vocal school in pushing to get these flashing school zone lights because they saw the safety benefits.

I would like to acknowledge again the Minister for Education, John-Paul Langbroek, with regard to the new funding deal with the federal government. This funding deal has put our schools back on the map. It will provide an additional \$99 million for our state primary schools, which works out to be, on average, \$508 per student. In the Albert electorate we have managed to maintain about \$2.1 million of that funding, which will go a long way to helping out our local schools.

Lastly, I would like to put on the record of the House that recently I visited the Coomera Police Station to see the hardworking men and women in blue. As a sign of the local community's appreciation for their hard work and endeavours, I awarded them a certificate of appreciation. Their outstanding service to our community can sometimes be a thankless job. I wanted to make sure that they realise that the Albert community is 100 per cent behind them. Senior Sergeant Andrew Godbold has done a fantastic job. The additional resources they have received in the last 18 to 20 months are certainly making a huge difference.

Golledge, Ms L; McLochlan-Clark, Ms N

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (3.01 pm): Many in this House will have known the former mayor of Logan Rod Golledge and his wife, Lillian. Sadly, Lillian passed away on 1 February. Rod and Lillian lived life to the full and we had so many delightful glimpses into their happy family life as well as their working and, in particular, public life. They were a great team serving the local government area of Logan. Lillian was a wonderful host and lady mayoress, fundraising for so many causes. She was always mindful of community need and continuing her work for the Logan Central Respite Centre where she was patron as well as many other roles right up until the opening of our new centre late in 2013.

Rod and Lillian have resided at Trinder Park in residential care where they have received the best of care. The chapel was filled with many loving extended family members and friends, former colleagues from council and others who had worked with them both over the years as well as many from our community. Lillian, sadly, succumbed to her illness but her rich and meaningful life in which she touched and helped so many was celebrated. While we mourn her passing, her deeds of love and care remain in the hearts of so many.

Nancye McLochlan-Clark had a big heart, which led her to care and work in a voluntary capacity for people with disabilities. Nancye and Geoff had a large family including one daughter with a disability. I well remember receiving a call from her perhaps just over 20 years ago when she announced that she and Geoff had decided to adopt a young boy confined to a wheelchair. So Danny came to join the family. Soon after, a little granddaughter was born with spina bifida, who graced their lives for in excess of 20 years but, sadly, passed away two years ago. This whole family have very big hearts. I can remember on one occasion the Starlight Foundation updated their back garden so that the children in wheelchairs could put their feet into some water and so on.

One of the family's great loves was country music and another, tenpin bowling. For many years Nancye was involved as an office-bearer and organiser of regular games, tournaments and interstate trips for the disabled bowlers. The family loved to attend our clubs where one of their favourite country stars was performing.

Nancye was a strong advocate for people with disabilities. She was the rock of her family and there will be a huge void now that she is gone all too early. There were many tributes at Nancye's funeral, including from many people who had been carers of those children as well who appreciated what these parents had done. Rest peacefully, Nancye.

D'Ath, Ms Y; Jell, Ms F

 **Mr GULLEY** (Murrumba—LNP) (3.04 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Murrumba. I table the Des Houghton opinion piece from the *Courier-Mail* of Saturday, 1 February. I would like to confirm that the newspaper has accurately reported the Australia Day event that I attended. I will also add that John Battams from the Queensland Council of Unions was prominently standing at the back of the crowd controlling the union activities on that day. I also spoke socially with Yvette D'Ath at the event and clearly noticed the green ETU T-shirt that she was wearing.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 31 January 2014, titled 'Opinion: Police and politicians for years turned a blind eye and let union thuggery flourish' [\[4515\]](#).

On 22 February the voters of Redcliffe have a choice between Yvette D'Ath, a member who would owe her election and allegiances to the secretive backroom union operatives of the Electrical Trades Union and Kerri-Anne Dooley. I believe the best interests of the Redcliffe community will be to choose the hardworking local nurse, Kerri-Anne Dooley, as their local member within an open and accountable, Campbell Newman-led LNP government.

Murrumba and Redcliffe are overlapping communities, with residents working, schooling, joining community groups and drawing on services provided within the neighbouring electorate. I believe that my electorate and region will benefit from a strong, positive working relationship with a fellow government member rather than a recycled opposition member with a history of nondelivery of key government services that affect my electorate.

I also table a media article with regard to Fran Jell supplied by the Parliamentary Library.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 13 February 2014, from member for Murrumba, Mr Reg Gulley MP regarding news articles relating to Fran Jell [\[4516\]](#).

Fran Jell is the self-appointed local spokesperson who regularly attacks businesses of the Narangba industrial estate located in my electorate. The *Courier-Mail* article details that Fran Jell has a long history of defrauding a series of employers, but it does not stop there. Fran Jell's first conviction for fraud was defrauding a well-known community group when treasurer of that association. I have known Fran since 2006 and have developed a firm view that Fran Jell's actions are motivated by personal gain and she has used the cloak of community for her objective. Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Murrumba, the Aboriginal word for 'good place'.

Bulimba Electorate, Leadership Forum

 **Mr DILLAWAY** (Bulimba—LNP) (3.07 pm): 'Leading with Vision' was the theme for the second annual Bulimba leadership forum held during the first week of school. I was excited to host this event again for the elected student residents of Cannon Hill Anglican College, Balmoral State High School and Lourdes Hill College following significant positive feedback about its inauguration last year. The aim of the forum is to arm current student leaders with skills to assist them not only for the year ahead but also into their future pursuits. Over 100 students attended and had the opportunity to question former AFL Premiership player and coach Leigh 'Lethal' Matthews on his tremendous experience as

a leader in the world of sport. Leigh provided some valuable advice on different aspects of leadership, effectively dealing with different personalities and how to motivate yourself as well as motivate others to work towards a common team goal. In addition to Leigh, it was fantastic to have former captains from Lourdes Hill College, Gregory Terrace and Cannon Hill Anglican College, who continue to play important roles in the community, each present a segment. Students took part in their workshops on time management, goal setting and public speaking, learning new skills in these areas and taking on board some great tips and strategies. It was doubly beneficial for the present students to see what these former leaders have gone on to achieve after leaving school.

There were some especially strong messages communicated throughout the afternoon including leading with vision and what it means to be a leader by inspiring others to come on a journey. This got students really thinking about what type of leader they wanted to be, what they wanted to achieve in their year of school leadership and what legacy they wanted to create and leave behind for future school generations. They learnt the importance of making the most of opportunities and how to effectively balance their studies, leadership responsibilities and other co-curricular commitments during year 12. The student leaders also learnt the importance of ensuring that they, too, can continue to play a bigger part in the broader community now and into the future. The afternoon was also an excellent opportunity for the students to meet and interact with the leaders from other schools whom they might not have had a chance to meet otherwise.

Due to the close-knit community feel of the Bulimba electorate, this networking is valuable as it creates positive relationships between the schools and opens up possibilities for future collaborative endeavours between the students. I thank the staff at Cannon Hill Anglican College for facilitating the event and Leigh Matthews and the other guest speakers for sharing their experiences and advice with the senior school leaders of 2014. I also congratulate the year 12 leaders who so enthusiastically interacted with the forum and I look forward to continuing to work with them throughout the year and witness their achievements and growth as leaders. I am certain that they will represent each of their schools very well and lead with vision, inspiration and ambition. If the pattern of school leaders in the Bulimba electorate continues, our future is in safe hands indeed.

David Fleay Wildlife Park

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.10 pm): Today I rise to briefly talk about consultation, and I am very glad to see that there are a few members here from the Labor Party because they might actually learn a few things about consultation in the process. I rise to speak about the David Fleay Wildlife Park in my electorate. It was established in 1951 by David Fleay and it has gone on to become an environmental education facility that encourages community awareness, appreciation and an understanding of Queensland's protected areas and native wildlife and inspires people to share in their conservation. Mr Fleay established this park in the Tallebudgera estuary and during those years he worked there himself, he opened it up to the public and he educated people in conservation, animal care and education until later in life when, between 1982 and 1985, for a nominal sum he passed the park over to the state government. The park was run successfully by the state government for a number of years—until along came the Labor Party. The Labor Party unfortunately let the park run down to such a state that visitor numbers fell from about 50,000 visitors a year in its heyday to around 17,000 visitors. It was very sad to see the park in that sort of condition.

I have taken a great interest in the park for a number of years now. In 2006 I actually fought for the boardwalk which goes around the park to be reopened after it had been closed for about five or six years. I was reasonably successful in putting forward that argument and it forced the then sitting Labor member to push forward with repairing that boardwalk and getting it open again. Typical of the Labor Party though, unfortunately it spent \$1.4 million gold plating a boardwalk around Fleays—a boardwalk that actually goes nowhere except just around Fleays. When I was elected in 2012 we moved quickly to reopen the boardwalk all the way through to Burleigh for the sum of \$35,000. I thank the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing for opening up to consultation a master plan for Fleays. It has been open for consultation for the last eight weeks. We have had quite a bit of feedback and actually ran a consultation forum on 1 February at the Tallebudgera recreation centre which 70 or 80 people attended to give their ideas as to what we can do with the park. I intend to be a major advocate for the master plan for Burleigh for the Fleay Wildlife Park and I look forward to giving my feedback to the government.

(Time expired)

Great Barrier Reef, Port Development

 **Mrs MENKENS** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.13 pm): Important projects such as the expansion of Abbot Point and opening up the Galilee Basin to coalmining are crucial for Queensland's economy. Strict environmental guidelines are in place for the development of the next three terminals at Abbot Point under the Newman and Abbott governments. Also, North Queensland Bulk Ports has a long history of very successful development and sediment management at various ports along the Queensland coast. The Queensland government has listened to concerns expressed by UNESCO about port development and the Great Barrier Reef and this government has declared five priority port development areas, of which Abbot Point is one, and to that extent will focus on those areas only, with all development under the strictest guidelines. This is a very measured and mature approach to future port development. The residents in my community of Bowen are virtually on their knees in economic hard times waiting for Abbot Point to go ahead, and at last the green lights are starting to appear. There are still a couple more to go, but the project is on track.

But what are we now hearing? What is filling the media waves but an appalling lobby from the extreme greens peddling absolute untruths about this project, and the media has picked it up and is running with it. This project has passed the most stringent scientific approvals and, I repeat, rigorous science. We are hearing totally uninformed claims that the reef will be ruined by this dredging. According to AIMS, the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the main causes of coral loss on the Great Barrier Reef are cyclones and storm damage at 48 per cent, crown-of-thorns starfish at 42 per cent and coral bleaching at 10 per cent. The dredge material will be treated and disposed of well away from any coral reefs or any other sensitive area. The dredge material is basically clean sand that is being moved from one location on the marine floor to another—a location that is 20 to 30 kilometres from the reef. Extensive mapping has been done on how far the plume will extend, and there is no evidence that this will impact on the reef, fishers or tourism.

There are far too many incorrect claims being made—claims that have no scientific basis: claims that the port expansion will cause the demise of the Great Barrier Reef, wrong; claims that the dredge material is toxic, wrong; claims that plume will extend beyond an anticipated area, wrong; claims that fishing will be devastated, wrong; claims that the *Catalina* will be impacted, wrong; claims that world coal demand is decreasing and further mining and exports cannot be justified, wrong! We are hearing totally erroneous claims from extreme green groups from across the world. Many of these people do not even live in Australia and would not even know where Abbot Point is. This is a dangerous group of people who are intent on wrecking the coal industry and all economic development in Queensland. I really do warn people: do not listen to this. Listen to the facts and listen to the science.

Gold Coast Cruise Ship Terminal

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.16 pm): This morning the Deputy Premier announced that a proposal from ASF Consortium for a cruise ship terminal and a casino on the Gold Coast Broadwater will proceed to the Gold Coast council for further consideration and consultation. This follows the expenditure of \$1 million of taxpayers' money investigating a cruise ship terminal to only uncover the same environmental and navigational issues uncovered by the previous government in an earlier study. The previous government engaged in a comprehensive study eight years ago on a cruise ship terminal for the Gold Coast. Unlike this government, Labor listened to the analysis of the experts that a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast was not viable. The analysis found serious concerns about the capability of cruise ships to traverse the seaway on a regular basis all year round and of significant impacts on the seabed. The previous study also revealed that for a terminal to be viable \$30 million in funding would be needed for dredging, roadworks and a rock wall on Wave Break Island.

Last month the Deputy Premier was flagging that 'issues' had been uncovered with the proposal for a cruise ship terminal—issues the state government and the people of the Gold Coast have been aware of for the last eight years. Today, the Deputy Premier punted the ASF Consortium's proposal to the Gold Coast City Council. The Deputy Premier clearly does not want his fingers on this proposal. World-famous surfers Mick Fanning and Joel Parkinson last month declared their opposition to a Gold Coast cruise ship terminal not just at Bilinga but also at the Broadwater. Last month surfer Joel Parkinson said—

We want the Premier to guarantee there'll never be a cruise ship terminal on the Gold Coast full stop.

He must say no developments like this from Stradbroke to the border.

The Deputy Premier clearly is not listening to this community concern. That is what the people of the Gold Coast are telling us. Gold Coast beaches pump \$3.2 billion into the local economy each year. A cost-benefit analysis would clearly establish that surf breaks and beaches for the Gold Coast are worth far more than any potential cruise ship terminal on the Broadwater. As Tourism Australia has set out, our natural assets, including our beaches, are the main reasons foreign visitors come to our shores, and on this ranking casinos ranked last. It is time that this Newman government ceased its obsession with the casino-led recovery. In the end, the only party that will benefit financially from this obsession will be the LNP, not the people of Queensland.

Remembrance Day

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (3.19 pm): Remembrance Day 2013, in all towns and cities in Australia, has reason to chronicle its story of Armistice Day, as it was remembered before 1947. We all know 11 November 1918 and the event of the eleventh hour. We know of the sacrifice made by all Australians. We know that of the two million people of Australia it lost 60,000 of its citizens, and that is not counting the thousands of men returning to Australia with physical and mental wounds. Remembrance Day becomes more popular each year, as does Anzac Day.

We wonder why younger Australians are now embracing the memories of the war and the conflicts in which our country fought. To my mind, the effect of war affects almost every generational Australian. Our memories and our respect for those who do not grow old, who lost their lives for us, are ably assisted by those who have returned. They are the trustees of those memories.

I speak of the Ipswich RSL president, Phil Gilbert; the Reverend Bob Walker, who conducted the prayer; and Phil Bailey, who gave us a perspective of Remembrance Day and the history of its origin. The *Remembrance Day chronicle* was ably penned by President Gilbert. Master of ceremonies, Mr Matt Rennie OAM, made his contribution as did flag officer, Mr Bill Halliday. Mr Bryce Fuery of the RSL Youth Band has played his bugle now for both Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services, and our spines tingled with a feeling pride and mateship when he played *Reveille* flawlessly, as did Pipe Major Donald McSween.

Attired in their black-and-gold uniforms, the tiger cubs of the Ipswich West Special School deserve special mention. They created an artwork about those men and women who defended our freedom and, in doing so, lost their lives. It is a truly remarkable artwork and has been given to the Ipswich RSL for display. Now framed, it takes its pride of place in the RSL museum in Nicholas Street, Ipswich. Acknowledgement is made of the contributions of the teachers, under the responsibility of principal Mr Andrew Thompson, for allowing them to be at the service and for making that special contribution to Remembrance Day 2013.

Samford Rotary, Signatures Art Exhibition

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak briefly about an event that occurred in my electorate on 31 January. It was a Rotary event staged at Topiaries at Beaumont House titled Signatures Art Exhibition and it was also attended by my close friend and colleague Mr Seath Holswich, the member for Pine Rivers. This important event is in its second year. It is a gallery exhibition of the work of 40 local artists along with artworks by Pro Hart and David Boyd.

This exhibition is a significant event in the Rotary calendar. The funds raised by this exhibition go towards the eradication of polio worldwide. This important undertaking has been making significant ground. Twenty-five years ago 125 countries were combatting polio. Today, polio remains endemic in three countries: Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria. Previously, there were 350,000 reported cases annually. Today, that figure has dropped to just 1,000 per year.

Samford Rotary has been supporting this campaign for a number of years and prior to this event had donated in excess of \$40,000. Hopefully, after this event there will be quite a few thousand dollars in addition to be donated. As I said, the art exhibition is a significant event and it is in its second year. It showcases a range of works—sculptures, paintings, jewellery and bronze sculptures by a range of local artists. Nine artists from my own electorate of Ferny Grove exhibited their works at the show: Graham Radcliff, Pat Boddington, Pat and Carol Williams, Wendy Tait, Deirdre Taylor, Gary Rogers and Ann and Gerry O'Connor. The official opening of the exhibition was held on Friday night and it continued over the weekend. It was attended by about 150 people. It is a magnificent event. I would like to thank Peter and Helen Hemsall for again opening up their property for this important cause.

In closing, I would also like to wish Councillor Bob Millar, who was in attendance at the exhibition, a speedy recovery as he broke his leg last week. He tripped over while crossing a road. I wish him all the best for a speedy recovery and I wish his wife all the best for no doubt what will be a painful convalescence at home.

Burnett Electorate, Queensland Workforce Skilling Strategy

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.25 pm): I rise to share with the House the work of Queensland's Workforce Skilling Strategy for the electorate of Burnett. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am glad you are in the House because I want to say that it is very important that my electorate has a strong collaboration with your electorate.

It was a great pleasure to attend the graduation of the participants of the Bundaberg Workforce Skilling Strategy. These people who graduated are the ones who traditionally fall through the cracks and can remain on welfare while looking for meaningful employment. A primary function of Energy Skills Queensland is to assist industry to meet skills needs and mitigate workforce risk by consulting with key stakeholders to develop and retain real skills. This local program is achieving results and providing opportunities for job seekers to gain long-term sustainable employment. The people in the Bundaberg district who undergo this program are provided with real skills and opportunities to better prepare for jobs locally in the resources sector.

As construction on Curtis Island at Gladstone shifts its focus from construction to maintenance, the Surat Basin will also increase drilling activity and will require the provision of camp services. With an estimated workforce for this industry predicted to be up to 18,000 workers over the next five years, this is an opportune time to continue to link potential workers from high-unemployment areas such as Bundaberg to these jobs. Queensland's Workforce Skilling Strategy will support more than 400 participants to gain employment over the next 12 months. The successful formula involves engaging with industry upfront to source employment opportunities and identify the real skills required. Examples of success include the Bundaberg welding participants who were given a unique insight into Gladstone's Cement Australia operations. The tour of that plant with those participants was a great success.

Currently, the team at Energy Skills Queensland locally has an Indigenous employment focus, with 90 participants actively engaged in training and development opportunities. It is important to acknowledge and highlight one area of concern and that is the lack of resources to allow mentoring and retention strategies, especially after a person has obtained a qualification. We must ensure sustainable success rates with people staying in work.

This project is a success because of the industry partnerships and dedication of the staff involved. It is important to acknowledge all of those businesses and key people in Gladstone, the Bundaberg TAFE and its staff, Bundaberg Regional Council, which is a key stakeholder, and also the wonderful supervisors and the project coordinator, Tracey Smith. It is very important that we use the success rate of this program going forward. I look forward to attending more graduation ceremonies with these key participants. If we continue to adopt strategic skilling strategies, unemployment particularly in areas such as Bundaberg can be addressed.

Springwood Electorate, Building Industry

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (3.28 pm): I would like to bring to the attention of the House reforms that are occurring as we speak in the building industry and to bring news about different aspects of problems that people in my electorate are having. Rebecca and Ivan Kenny-Sumiga came to see me and I ended up going out to their home to inspect it to see the traumas that they are facing with cracks inside and outside their house. Under the old regime, it was found that nobody could be held responsible. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars had been invested and nobody was held responsible for a brand-new home that was falling apart.

I would like to say that this is a nightmare for them and for many other people but, under the current government, the new commissioner and chairman have a very significant reform agenda in front of them: reforming legislation, reforming regulation to allow them to intervene early to issue orders to builders to rectify faults before it is too late. The old QBSA did not intervene early because its hands were tied. The appalling fact is that, under the previous regime, its hands were kept tied for 20 years. Under the old regime builders could disregard plans and not legally breach the contract. They had been doing this by virtue of the fact that contracts have a higher emphasis or weight placed upon the words that the builder put in than the plans that the owners put into the contract. In that way,

they can disregard the plans, go on their merry way, cover shoddy work and get away with it. They got away with it because of the cosy relationship that existed between certifiers and builders. A certifier was wrapped around a builder's little finger. This type of thing must cease. Private certifiers who approve illegal works will be named and penalised.

I speak on this topic today because I have received complaints from various people in my electorate who are suffering and others who have lost money hand over fist. I serve on a committee that made recommendations for these reforms. I take this opportunity to thank our cabinet and the Minister for Housing and Public Works for embracing those recommendations and setting in place the new QBCC to bring in these improvements within the building and construction industry.

Lunar New Year

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (3.31 pm): I rise to wish all my friends of Chinese origin a very happy year of the horse. Gong Xie Fa Chai! This two-week celebration started on the eve of 30 January when I joined some of my colleagues and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs and many of my Taiwanese friends at the Chung Tien temple in Priestdale to see in the new year. I thank Dr Bui and the Vietnamese community, Michael Ma and the Chinese community and Director-General Sung and Koda Chen from the Taiwanese community for their exceptional festivals, and Tina Liu from VAC and Michael Wang from *Mirror News* for their amazing, visually stunning celebrations at City Hall and the Koala Film Festival at Sunnybank and here in the city where I was privileged to meet the most popular actors in China.

Lunar New Year is time for gift giving and tonight Melody Chen from World Arts & Multi-Culture Inc will be gifting Parliament House with a beautiful watercolour painting of Parliament House painted lovingly by the famous world renowned artist master Chen Yan-Chun. In my electorate of Stretton 60 per cent of residents were born overseas and it would be safe to say that we have the largest population of people of Asian origin in all of Queensland, followed by those of Indian origin and then those from the Islamic nation. I cherish the strong friendship I have with my ethnic communities who have shown me great love and patience while I learn about their cultures and religions as they learn about mine.

I would like to publically commend Calamvale Community College and their outreach to the large Chinese community in my electorate of Stretton. They have implemented a number of programs, such as a playgroup, for their ethnic neighbours and have agreed to become a sister school to Kaoshung Girls School in Taiwan to encourage an exchange of students and teachers. I am also very proud to announce that Calamvale Community College will be the first school in Australia to teach traditional Chinese alongside simplified Chinese. This was only possible because of the visionary leadership of the Newman government and Minister John Paul Langbroek's Independent Public Schools program which has given schools the autonomy to run the schools the way their principals and their parents want it run. I congratulate Principal Leanne Nixon, Acting Principals Kath Kayrooz and Glenn Beaumont, Laurence Quinlivan from the Friends of Taiwan, the Australian Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce President Paul Shih and Federation of Taiwan Associations President David Lin for developing the strong relationships within the Calamvale Community College over the last two years. None of these programs would have been possible without the team effort approach between our government, the school principals and the Taiwanese community. Well done.

Gladstone Electorate, School Leaders

 **Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (3.33 pm): It has been a privilege to attend a number of school parades where school leaders have been announced and celebrated—schools like Clinton, Kin Kora and Calliope state schools, with Mount Larcom coming up. All of the primary schools in my electorate have appointed their new leaders. It is astonishing to see these young people take on these leadership roles and carry their responsibilities out so well.

Each of these schools has grown significantly. Quite a number of them have management plans in place because of the additional people that have been enrolled. In particular I would like to speak about Calliope State School, whose day 8 figures were 529 students. They have 92 prep students this year and 100 students in years 6 and 7. This is one of the oldest schools in my electorate. While they have had new buildings brought onto the campus—they have had to have two new classes this year to accommodate the additional students—they are in dire need of a new administration building. They are using the original building for their administration and while it is a beautiful nod to the old school style it is not a practical building in terms of accessibility and the use that has to be made of it. There is no disability access and there is quite a significant set of steps at

the front. It is quite an ordeal to get mums with babies in prams upstairs. It is not possible for anyone with a disability to get up to the school. Those individuals have to be met in another area of the school. Even school teachers who might be on crutches cannot get up. They use the school administrative building for their guidance officer work and some students are unable to get up there for that. There are no staff toilets there either.

With the growth in the Calliope area, I could not speak about the school and the increased attendance without saying, again on the record, how significant the need is for a high school at Calliope. The site has not been sold and I believe if the minister were to come up himself and have a look he would see the dynamism that is in the Calliope area, particularly the Calliope township. The centrality of that site and the fact that on a climate basis it is out of any of the wet areas makes it ideal. I believe, as do all in the community, that a high school will be needed there sooner rather than later. As I said, there are 100 students in years 6 and 7, plus there are students from the hinterland around Calliope. I congratulate all the schools and all the new student leaders.

Reinhold, Mr T

 **Mr STEWART** (Sunnybank—LNP) (3.36 pm): I rise today to inform the House of the recent passing of Mr Theodore Reinhold, a constituent, a prominent businessman and an inventor in my Sunnybank electorate. It was my privilege to have met with Theo on a number of occasions. I extend my condolences to his family and friends at this time. As the inventor of the famous heel-toe drive belt and the founder of Greenfield Mowers, Theo was certainly a great pioneer and a visionary who made Greenfield Mowers a household name. Theo Reinhold and Greenfield Mowers are great examples of the opportunities that exist in Queensland for small businesses. Greenfield Mowers has manufactured mowers since 1966 using Australian made components. The mowers are renowned for their innovative design and reliable performance and are built for tough Australian conditions.

Theo and Greenfield Mowers are a local success story but I believe the outlook is even brighter for some up-and-coming local businesses. It is great to hear the Premier and the ministers speak about Queensland's strong economic position and how their departments are supporting our bright future. In particular, it is incredible that 75 per cent of all jobs created in Australia over the year to December 2013 were, in fact, created in Queensland. The property and construction industry is also experiencing a surge in confidence. This is exciting news for Queensland's 410,000 small businesses that make up such an enormous contribution to local economies. I know that in my electorate of Sunnybank many Queensland businesses are also ably assisted by their chambers of commerce. In Sunnybank, the Chinese Precinct Chamber of Commerce, the Sunnybank Chamber of Commerce, the Archerfield Airport Chamber of Commerce and the Australian-Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce are all doing their part to foster business growth and business confidence. It is wonderful that our government is getting the Queensland economy back on track to make their work easier.

Theo Reinhold will be remembered as a great local businessman who over nearly 50 years worked hard to ensure that Greenfield Mowers was a high-performance product with a reliable name. I hope that Greenfield Mowers will continue to be a proudly Australian owned manufacturing company. It is great that Queensland's strong economic position is enabling other local businesses to flourish and to become household names. The future is bright for the Queensland economy and local businesses will be the beneficiaries of this.

Alcohol, Drug and Violence Forum

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.39 pm): I rise to inform the House about a forum that I conducted last night in the Fortitude Valley part of my electorate. Dealing with alcohol, drugs and violence within our community is an enormously complex issue that requires a multifaceted solution. Since coming into government we have made significant inroads into dealing with this issue. We are delivering better front-line services within our entertainment precincts. I believe that in Fortitude Valley we now have the most sophisticated and collaborative approach to dealing with the management of our entertainment precincts in the country. However, we recognise that more needs to be done and, as a government, we will act decisively.

Last night's forum was attended by close to 150 people, comprised of stakeholders from the valley and constituents of Brisbane Central, with a significant component of those aged between 18 and 25. It was great to have so many young people attend. They were very appreciative of the fact that I had written directly to every person aged between 18 and 25 to invite them to the forum or, alternatively, to ask them to email me their thoughts and I received hundreds of responses.

Alongside myself, two guest speakers provided balance to the forum and informed those who attended. The speakers were Mitchell Giles, the CEO of Lives Lived Well, which is a great organisation that provides front-line drug and alcohol and associated counselling services, and Nick Braban, of the Valley Liquor Accord. It was a productive forum that delivered genuine and sophisticated discussion and suggestions from all stakeholders. The panel and I took questions for well over an hour after our addresses. It was great to hear from the young people who were interested in and directly affected by those issues and any decisions government might take. This is what genuine and real community consultation looks like.

This sits in stark contrast to the farcical actions of the farcical opposition, which conducted absolutely no consultation prior to releasing its equally farcical \$12 million four-page policy and it has undertaken zero consultation since. That is completely understandable, however, considering it will now do everything to hide its farcical policy from the community—a policy that does nothing to address the underlying issues of alcohol related harm within our communities. Maybe the opposition shadow minister for police could do more than just read the 30-page executive summary of the research paper that the opposition is brandishing around, which forms the basis of its policy position. I say to opposition members that maybe they should have read the entire 300 pages of the document before going public.

Whilst we are still tabulating the results, the forum expressed overwhelming support for tougher sentences, harsher penalties, more police on the beat, ID scanners and banning orders at local venues. There was almost unanimous support for the government to deal with the five individuals who do not do the right thing rather than punish the 55,000 people who do the right thing. There was an almost unanimous feeling in the room of the need to deal separately with the components of the term 'alcohol fuelled violence'. Whilst interrelated, the consumption of alcohol and alcohol culture causes countless other issues within our communities, and the measures needed to address those can be distinctly different to those that deal with people who commit acts of violence. I thank all who participated in last night's forum. I look forward to continuing to work with them and other members of my community.

Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.42 pm): Last year the state government smashed through get-tough-on-bikie laws that were so rushed that it did not even have the bill printed for members to peruse and scrutinise, but instead asked members of parliament to trust it. It said, 'Put faith in us'. That bill was so complex that a southern lawyer said it had taken him two days to try to get his head around it.

The attack on motorbike riders was a politically palatable response to a brawl on the Gold Coast. I have seen bigger brawls at a rival football match. We already had the appropriate police power laws in place to deal with criminal elements of outlaw bikie gangs. The reality is that at the time these laws were rushed through, people were more concerned about politicians' travel rorts. The Newman government was hoping the rushed-through laws would give it a boost in the polls, but inadvertently negative effects are showing. That is what we know happens when you make politically based policy on the run.

I am greatly concerned that this knee-jerk reaction which has impacted on law-abiding motorcycle riders has also resulted in small businesses suffering to the point of bankruptcy. The publican at the iconic Mingela bush pub, Ivan, is one of those who now suffers. Every weekend he would put a pig on the spit and over 100 motorbike riders would turn up to have a yarn, a feed and a beer. Now, he is flat out getting 10 riders to come. These draconic laws have destroyed the viability of that iconic bush pub. I call on the Premier and the Attorney-General to call in to the Mingela pub, which is only 50 kilometres east of Charters Towers, to look around and ask themselves how a pub can make a living in bush surroundings.

An example of police harassment involved a member of the Liberal National Party. Noel Evans was stopped by police while riding in a motorbike guard of honour at his wife's funeral in Townsville. The riders were customers and business partners of a local Townsville motorcycle shop and were not associated with any bikie clubs. The riders' phone numbers were recorded and they were filmed, despite alerting police days earlier about their plans to escort the hearse. That card-carrying member of the LNP is completely gutted about what has happened in relation to the guard of honour at his wife's funeral and he has now left the LNP.

No-one has a problem with tough laws on crime, but this government has demonised law-abiding motorbike riders who ride for recreational purposes or who buy a Harley or Triumph as they meet a midlife crisis. Even the Assistant Deputy Commissioner in the Central Queensland region relayed that if there were three or more bike riders on their travels, the police must presume they could be outlaw bikies, placing pressure on the police and other motorbike riders. These are just a few issues that are affecting many coffee shops, small businesses and charities and they are suffering. That is why these bike laws must be reviewed to ensure law-abiding people do not continue to suffer.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MF McARDLE** (Caloundra—LNP) (Minister for Energy and Water Supply) (3.45 pm): I report to the House that the ETU is at it again. It has released a paper in regard to electricity prices. I give it this accolade: that is more than the ALP has done in regard to policy on electricity or water; the ALP has done nothing. On my last check of the ALP website, it was completely bare of any policy document in relation to electricity and the mess it left the state in.

I turn to the paper by the ETU. It is simplistic and it is a stunt. It is as simple as that. What the ETU is saying is that we should ring fence the dividends from Ergon and Energex to assist in the payment of power bills. I make this point: in the 2012-13 financial year, the dividend from transport and energy GOCs was about \$1.35 billion. In that year, we paid out concessions of \$2 billion. That is a shortfall of \$700-odd million. Who misses out? Is the public transport subsidy throughout the state dumped because of this process? Do other people get hurt because of this process? Are water subsidies and concessions not paid? It is simplistic and it causes more problems and more harm than it solves.

What we need is a long-term and effective solution to these prices, not simply grabbing headlines and hoping it will run somewhere. It will not run anywhere. You cannot ring fence dividends because dividends help everybody across the state who needs assistance with their bills, whether it be for water, transport and so on. Yesterday the transport minister stood in the House and said that the savings we put in place for a person travelling from Redcliffe to Brisbane amount to over \$850 per year. That is because we can use such things as dividends to subsidise that travel. The ETU plan would mean that those people would not get the benefit of those dividends by way of subsidies. It would mean that pensioners would not get the benefit of those dividends by way of subsidies. Simplicity will not solve a complicated problem.

These problems are deep seated, they are far reaching and they go back many years. We are putting in place a long-term process to resolve these issues. That is how you deal with it. You cannot put a quick fix in, as we have done in the past. Quick fixes create more problems and hurdles. In this state we need a government that is thinking long-term to make solutions to help everybody, rather than trying to make quick fixes and then getting into simplistic stunt scenarios. At the end of the day, the government is looking for one thing: making Queensland a better state by helping every Queenslanders get a better shake and a fairer deal for themselves and their families.

Criminal Motorcycle Gangs

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (3.48 pm): In the House today I put on record my appreciation of the fantastic work that the Premier, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police have done in successfully eradicating from our fabulous Gold Coast the scum of the underworld of criminal bikie organisations. It is an honour to be part of a government that acts on its word and delivers positive outcomes for the communities we live in. It may not have resonated well in the leafy suburbs of Brisbane where leftie judges and lawyers hang out and bikers are not as visible, but it has addressed a blatant criminal bikie gang problem on the Gold Coast. For the Goldie and my Mermaid Beach electorate, it is a great thing. Well done, Campbell Newman! You have changed the face of the Gold Coast. With these tough new laws you have created a much safer community.

I know for a fact, from the enormous feedback from our communities on the Gold Coast, that they are right behind us. Representatives from the business community have come up to me and said how the environment has improved, particularly in the tourism sector. Customers are coming back to businesses without fear of violent vengeful retaliation by members of criminal bikie organisations lurking around, threatening and intimidating people. Even the general public is pleased with the new

laws. People come up to me on a regard basis to say how good things are now. The negative media that has stirred around these changes in the legislation does not reflect the general community's positive support for the government's stronger laws on the issue.

Yes they are tough laws, but they had to be introduced to try curb this behaviour and remove these criminals off our streets. These criminal bikies are murderers, arsonists, stand over men and drug dealers. To me there are no laws too tough to deal with these one per cent rejects of society.

In my electorate of Mermaid Beach the streets are now safer. With the stronger police presence businesses are feeling less threatened and our residential communities are going about their business feeling secure from these thugs who believe it is their right to engage in illegal activity to build their criminal organisations and networks, with innocent people getting caught in the crossfire and becoming victims of their gang related violence. These criminal gangs are moving out of our neighbourhoods and businesses and moving to New South Wales. Good luck to Barry O'Farrell.

As a Gold Coast devotee and long-term public advocate for the city, I would like to thank the Premier for taking a stand and standing up to these undesirable criminals who engage in criminal activity behind so-called legitimate businesses. A special thanks to Task Force Takeback and all the dedicated police on the Gold Coast who put their lives on the line every day to fight and catch these members of criminal bokie organisations and utilise the stronger government legislation to put these criminals behind bars where they so rightly belong. Well done Campbell Newman!

Hayes, Ms M

 **Mr SYMES** (Lytton—LNP) (3.51 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak about remarkable lady and local Wynnum resident Marjory Hayes, who is 89 years young. Marjory was honoured in the list of recipients for the Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day. Marjory has had an intensive volunteering career for her local community, Queensland and even internationally.

She has volunteered with the Quota Club of Wynnum Manly, Mission Possible Volunteers, the Mount Gravatt Agricultural Horticultural and Industrial Society, the mobility equipment hire service and Wynnum Red Cross. But Marjory is probably most known in the Lytton electorate for her service to the Salvation Army in Wynnum where she still does street stalls. She doorknocked for the Red Shield Appeal right up to the age of 88. Last year I had to include her doorknocking area in my normal route.

Ms Hayes was recognised by the former Lord Mayor of Brisbane and current Premier Campbell Newman a few years ago in the Lord Mayor's Australia Day awards. It is only fitting that she is recognised for her contribution to our local community on a national level.

Around Christmas Marjory called for a regular catch up on the phone and to tell me that I would be proud of her on Australia Day, but it was a secret. She kept this secret from me and hundreds of local associates. I think this is a trait. Marjory is known for being somewhat cheeky. But she gets on with the job of servicing the community without wanting the fanfare that comes with it.

Marjory helped out with the floods out west in 2013. She got toiletries and other supplies to a truck which I assisted her in getting out to the flood victims. In conclusion, Marjory is onto another project. That is helping to establish a hospital in a remote part of Papua New Guinea. I thank Marjory for her service to the Lytton and Queensland communities. I know she will continue her volunteering. I look forward to assisting her in my capacity as the member for Lytton.

North Stradbroke Island, Bushfires

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (3.54 pm): I rise to provide an update to the parliament on North Stradbroke Island, as the local member representing the island residents, in the aftermath of the devastating Christmas fires, with an eye to the challenges that this natural disaster now poses to the island's recovery and transition to a non-sandmining economy. In late December fires broke out on North Stradbroke Island as a result of one or more lightning strikes. Fanned by strong winds, the fire broke out into many fires with much damage being done over the next few weeks of January.

In excess of 16,000 hectares of land was burnt by the fire or two-thirds of the island's footprint. The impact and scale of the fires is only now being fully felt by the local communities on the island. The local businesses and tourism sector are doing it tough since the fires forced the evacuation of many holiday-makers at peak time. Many of these businesses rely upon that peak season as the main source of revenue for their operation. The island's tourism industry and local businesses have taken a hit with a loss of trade during that season. The fires placed an enormous emotional and financial strain upon the communities of North Stradbroke Island.

It should be noted, however, that due to the planning and hard work of the various emergency service agencies, I am happy to report that no property was damaged nor lives lost during the fires. The well-coordinated approach of the various emergency services at the emergency management centre in Dunwich and at the fires was something to behold firsthand. My time at the centre gave me a firsthand appreciate of their work under pressure.

I want to thank all of the staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly during and in the aftermath of the fire. The several hundred individuals are too many to name, but they came from the police, fire, SES, ambulance, parks and wildlife, Energex, the Redland City Council and elsewhere. I want to particularly thank Minister Mark McArdle for his visit representing the Premier and cabinet and for ensuring the power was fully restored. It was also uplifting that the community came together to not only fight the fire but to support each other at the front line, with the evacuation or by helping in the evacuation centre.

Participating in the community information meetings at Dunwich, Amity Point and Point Lookout was also important to obtain the briefings and to get feedback from the residents. We escaped the fires relatively unscathed, but the fires have had a great impact on wildlife and vegetation. Our government will do all we can to assist in the rejuvenation of these areas. A workable economic transition plan is now needed. I look forward to working with residents to achieve that.

In closing, I want Queensland to know that Straddie is still open for business and there has never been a better time to jump on the water taxi or barge and experience the golden beaches of North Stradbroke Island.

Hervey Bay Hospital, Intensive Care Unit

 **Mr SORENSEN** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (3.57 pm): I am very angry about the disgraceful way the people of Hervey Bay have been treated recently. Hervey Bay Hospital's first-rate intensive care unit is not closing down. I will say it again for those clowns over there. The intensive care unit is not closing down as dangerously announced by the region's daily newspaper last Saturday.

The people of Hervey Bay do not deserve to be frightened by this baseless report that their much needed intensive care unit is about to shut down. It is absolutely here to stay. I have already received emails and calls from people from out of town who regularly holiday in Hervey Bay and they have said that they will never return because we do not have an ICU.

Once again Labor's propaganda is focussed on destroying the Australian economy. This time they have targeted Hervey Bay, with the dangerously unethical help of the *Fraser Coast Chronicle*. This inaccurate story has the grubby fingers of Labor all over it. Indeed, the shadow minister for health, Gordon Nuttall's apprentice, just happened to pop into Hervey Bay last week to do what she could to muddy the waters of our efficient health and hospital services run by dedicated professionals. Then surprise, surprise, three days later this unsubstantiated story finds its way onto the chronicle's front page via unnamed sources. What a coincidence!

The headline read 'Intensive care unit scrapped'. Anybody with half a brain would know that the Hervey Bay Hospital intensive care unit is not going to close down. This stupid Labor Party stunt, backed up by the dumb union hacks out there, is the most disgraceful act I have seen. It scared people who had loved ones in the hospital at the time. They said it is going to close down. They are the biggest bunch of clowns I have seen in my life. I am sick and tired of that type of crap; I really am.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SORENSEN: They can laugh. It is important to make sure we have an intensive care unit. To say that it is going to close down is the worst thing I have seen. On Tuesday the chronicle had to say that the report was wrong. It said that the board has no intention of closing the unit down. What is the Labor way? We only had to listen to Lawrence Springborg's ministerial statement this morning to see the rubbish and deception going on in Tasmania. It is absolutely ridiculous. I will say it again: the Hervey Bay intensive care unit is not closing down.

(Time expired)

Madam SPEAKER: The time for private members' statements has expired.

PRIVILEGE

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

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, by letter dated 28 October 2013, the member for Mudgeeraba alleges that the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Palaszczuk, deliberately misled the House in a statement—a matter of public interest—on 15 October 2013. Before I give a determination, I wish to make a few comments.

The privilege of freedom of speech in parliament is a vital aspect of our democracy. With this privilege, however, comes great responsibility. It should not be used recklessly or to bring unwarranted criticism to the Assembly or cause unwarranted harm to individuals. Members should also be wary of accepting everything they receive as truth, and they are not totally immune from the implications of what they say in the Assembly. The Assembly imposes some rules to limit the privilege and also to ensure that members do not deliberately mislead it. With this in mind, I move on to the matter of privilege raised with me.

The allegations which the Leader of the Opposition raised are of a serious nature and they are strenuously denied by the member for Mudgeeraba. For the Leader of the Opposition to be referred to the Ethics Committee, it must be prima facie established that the member must have intended to mislead the House by knowingly making a misleading statement.

The information which formed the basis of the allegations made by the Leader of the Opposition was from another source, and a cogent explanation as to the foundation of her statement was provided. This does not mean that the allegations made against the member for Mudgeeraba are true. I understand that the member for Mudgeeraba feels aggrieved by the allegations contained in the statement and that she vehemently refutes those allegations. However, unless the Leader of the Opposition knows a matter to be incorrect, the right for her to raise matters is a right of being a member of parliament. As guardian of those rights and privileges, I would defend any member's right in this regard. In the same way I defend the right of the member for Mudgeeraba to respond to those allegations.

It is a matter of judgement for the Leader of the Opposition whether to air in the Assembly any allegations she is provided and also for her to take appropriate action should allegations she used in good faith turn out to be false. On the evidence presented there is no evidence that the Leader of the Opposition intended to mislead the Assembly. Accordingly, I will not be referring the matters. In this instance I will not be tabling the correspondence as it would largely repeat the matters which are the subject of the dispute.

REPORT

Office of the Speaker

Madam SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the *Statement for public disclosure: expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2013*.

Tabled paper. Statement for Public Disclosure: Expenditure of the Office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2013 [\[4517\]](#).

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 250, on motion of Dr McVeigh—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Hon. TS MULHERIN** (Mackay—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.02 pm), continuing: I was speaking on this bill just before lunch. The reforms were designed to allow the provisions of training in more places across Queensland rather than just at the residential colleges and to broaden the colleges' focus to all areas of agricultural, not just pastoral and broadacre farming. These reforms were carried out with the assistance of many talented and hardworking individuals including several skilled and passionate board members.

This should demonstrate that the previous government took this issue seriously. When I left office there was still more work to do, but I am confident that I left the AACC in a better condition than I found it. This goes back to my earlier observation that ministers rarely get to leave at a time of their own choosing and always leave unfinished business. Whilst I would like to have completed the work on the AACC and left my predecessor an efficient and sustainable organisation, this was not to be. Instead, the minister has had to build on the work I started.

In the early days of this government I was concerned with the direction the minister appeared to be taking with the AACC. I was particularly worried that the remaining residential colleges would be closed. Thankfully the government ruled out that possibility and the minister has been working hard to place the agricultural colleges on a steady footing. I have no doubt that the member for Gregory has played a role in these decisions and the results have been all the better for his contribution.

The legislation we are considering today deals purely with the governing structure of the AACC, which is to be renamed the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges. It transitions the AACC away from being a corporation sole and into a statutory body and allows for the appointment of an executive director, a board and separate boards for each of the residential colleges. I understand the rationale behind this is to facilitate stronger management and corporate governance frameworks. I hold out hope that the restructure will result in these improvements.

I would like to add one final thought on this bill. While it is undoubtedly true that the AACC failed to keep pace with the changing needs of Queensland's agricultural sector, industry itself needs to support the ongoing restructure of the new Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges. Modern training organisations need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances and market demands. The changes I made to the AACC and the changes the current minister is making to the new QATC will help the organisation meet industry demands. The new QATC will have the opportunity to deliver flexible learning modules, online courses, residential and on-farm training. It may need to partner with private training organisations to deliver what industry needs.

The industry needs a comprehensive training framework and the agricultural colleges have the capacity to provide this. But the industry needs to recognise that it needs to engage with the new QATC to ensure its long-term viability. It is very much a case of 'use it or lose it'. If the industry does not provide the colleges with an ongoing show of support, the colleges will fail, leaving a dearth of agricultural training providers in Queensland.

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (4.06 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. I think there is broad agreement in the whole chamber that this really needed to be done, particularly after reading the Ernst & Young report on the AACC that was commissioned by the minister. Unfortunately it was in dire straits and could not continue sustainably the way it was. The minister has advised that the department will accept the committee's recommendation. I would like to thank the committee staff. They do a wonderful job assisting us with these reports, and some of my colleagues on the committee are in the chamber at the moment. It was an issue we looked at and we held some hearings. As has been previously said, the changing nature of education and obtaining certificates and the changing nature of TAFEs and all those sorts of educational institutions mean that this model has to change.

The minister and I have been invited to visit the Gatton University of Queensland campus over the next week or so to have a look at some of the diploma courses that are going to be reintroduced there. This is a great concept, because the agricultural colleges should be able to play into that. This will be a way that it can feed into the Gatton campus, which is one of the premier campuses for rural training in Australia actually. As the member for Mackay, Tim Mulherin, just said, it is about the whole industry using it. It is about the students using it. It is about delivering purposeful training that the industry wants and that the students want. That is what it is about.

The member for Mackay mentioned—and I raised it at some of the hearings—the changing nature of education and the fact that certificates I and II are often completed now in grades 11 and 12. Those certificates are a good way of leading students into this. It is quite surprising when you talk to students at the Gatton campus or even at high schools to hear how many are actually interested in agriculture. As the minister himself would know, you do not have to be a farmer to be involved in agriculture. I knew the minister in a previous life where he was involved in agriculture for a number of years but he did not drive too many tractors. He had a big involvement in agriculture in different ways, whether it was in planning or consulting or whatever. That is what people have to be aware of. There are many avenues in agriculture nowadays. Whether you want to work as a rep for Landmark or whether you want to work for mum and dad on the farm, there are many avenues. It is about continual learning and continual change.

People are still under the impression that it is dad and Dave on the farm. It is a long way from the dad and Dave era on the farm, with sat navs and cutting-edge technology being used. When we were debating the Biosecurity Bill we were talking about management of Rusca deer and deer herds—

Mr Walker: Farm robotics.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. I was talking to a dairy farmer last night who has implemented farm robotics to reduce labour costs in his business. Some leading-edge technologies are being used at the farm gate. I know that students who pass through the Gatton campus and others are quite regularly hunted by banks and consulting firms because it is that leading-edge technology that the young students have that they require.

To return to the bill, as I said previously, it is important that the department has accepted the recommendations of the committee, the first being that the bill be passed. The second recommendation was that the KPIs be met. The Ernst & Young report on the previous ACCC was rather damning. Unfortunately, the ACCC was bleeding money at a great rate and it is important that these reforms keep going. Operational losses since 2005 are not sustainable. That was the sort of thing that was going on. Unfortunately, no training body can sustain operational losses for that number of years and expect to survive.

I hope that everyone goes into this new body with the right intent and the right drive to ensure it produces what we want: good students who come out with a learning culture and who understand where they need to go for the sake of the industry. I support the bill.

 **Mr TROUT** (Barron River—LNP) (4.11 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. From our early days as a fledgling colony to the resurgent and energetic economic powerhouse of the Newman government, the fortunes of our state have been heavily influenced by the successes and hardships felt by our famers. From the time when a man's worth was measured by the sweat on his brow and the calluses on his hands, the agricultural heartland of Queensland laid the foundations for the vibrant state we enjoy today. Now in a diverse economy of foreign trade and investment, it is imperative that our agricultural sector keeps up to pace with the dynamic forces controlling the 21st century global agricultural market.

This reality is wholeheartedly embraced by the LNP government as we strive to rebuild Queensland, focusing on a four-pillar economy plan comprising tourism, resources, construction and agriculture. The Agricultural College Amendment Bill will address several key factors that are crucial to the continued success of our agricultural industry. With greater involvement from our famers and industry experts, the agricultural industry is assured continuance of its rightful status as a key player in regional and international markets. Grassroots engagement with farmers on the land will bring to the table a wealth of experience and ensure the needs of the industry are met as we strive to develop a new generation of famers.

The new arrangements under the amendment bill provide the support and direction from the state government to ensure that our individual farmers, corporate organisations and peak bodies have input into the training delivered by the college. This will also see the introduction of college boards with broad skills and a passion for the future of agriculture as well as knowledge of what the industry needs to deliver effective and efficient production systems which will ensure relevant and appropriate training.

It is no secret that for reasons out of their control our famers are suffering. The drought currently strangling our state is inflicting unprecedented hardships on our farmers who, despite adversity, strive to succeed. That is the nature of the man on the land: never say die. It is this true Aussie spirit that made our state what it is today. I know there are many honourable members in the House who, like me, come from a farming background. I retain strong memories of the drought of 1969, but as we have heard over the last few days from the member for Gregory in talks around his electorate this is the worst drought in living memory. This current drought is far more severe than what I experienced in 1969. My father, along with many other cattle stations, suffered extensive losses which were followed by unseasonal drought.

I commend this government on the drought assistance package introduced last month. This adds to initiatives put in place last May. News of \$31 million in assistance to be provided this year will be welcome news to those drought affected farmers whose livelihoods and, indeed, lives have been shattered and their stock decimated by this dreadful drought.

In the Barron River electorate my office is supporting the wonderful initiative of a young lady called Toni Fuller and her Cairns care packages. She is looking to commence the collection and transport of groceries and stock feed to the drought-stricken areas of North Queensland. With recent experience in managing a large collection of items for the Filipino typhoon victims, I have offered my support and assistance in spreading the word and provision of a collection depot through my office.

Farmers share a deep respect for the land and their stock and the whims of our climate that can make or break a seasonal crop or kill a herd of stock. Farming is generally passed from one generation to another—the skills of the trade, respect for the land and strong resilience in the face of hardship being passed down as a sacred trust as rich as the soil beneath a farmer's feet. Experience, skill and, most particularly, the ongoing necessity for diversification have caused the agricultural industry to develop new strategies and practices to adapt to changing needs. The existence of a state operated training provider, as outlined in this amendment bill, addresses the fact that diversity is essential for the future prosperity of Queensland's agriculture sector.

The Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013 is an important step in the reinvigoration of agricultural colleges in Queensland. The current structure of the Australian Agricultural College Corporation has been financially unviable for a number of years under the former Labor government, and it is essential that steps are taken to turn this around. The Emerald Agricultural College and Longreach Pastoral College deliver invaluable education to young people from Queensland and across Australia. It is these young people that we must encourage to pursue employment and careers in our agricultural and pastoral industries. We must continue to rebuild our agricultural industry not just for today's Queenslanders but for those who will follow. To remain competitive in the regional market, we must encourage the next generation to take up work on the land.

We all know that attracting workers to agricultural industries is not an easy task. It is essential that Queensland has agricultural training available from Far North Queensland to Stanthorpe in the south and west to Longreach. Without such diversity and availability of training, students will find it too difficult to start agricultural careers and will pursue opportunities elsewhere, which ultimately places our state's industry in great peril.

This bill delivers a new corporate structure to the colleges that gives real decision-making power on the future of agricultural training to those who need it most. This trait of empowering those on the ground to make decisions in the best interests of their industry and practices is evident through our government's objective to reduce red tape. The proposed restructure of the corporation will facilitate good governance, and sound strategic direction is essential if these colleges are going to exist into the future.

The Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013 seeks to make changes to our agricultural colleges to strengthen their viability and longevity. Most importantly, though, the vibrancy of the local colleges is strongly linked to the vibrancy of their communities. The colleges at Longreach and Emerald are not only significant employers in the regions but also provide community resources that benefit more than just agricultural employers. The college facilities are used by universities, contractors working for local councils, and for tourism and industry events. As such, they are a valuable asset for their local communities. If changes are not made to these colleges, the communities of Emerald and Longreach will lose this valuable resource, which would inevitably have serious and detrimental impacts on their respective communities.

With excitement, I look forward to the future of Queensland's agricultural industry. It is one with unlimited potential. As a member of a government that is sincerely committed to ensuring that this sector succeeds, the work ahead will ensure that Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee for their role in consolidating the input of key stakeholders. I look forward to working on the committee through another productive year in 2014, as we work in the best interests of our constituents and Queenslanders across the state. I also commend the efforts of the honourable Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry along with his ministerial and departmental staff for their expeditious efforts in strengthening the industry. I know the honourable minister has worked tirelessly in his portfolio and he has achieved real results that will benefit farmers across our great state for generations to come. I support the passage of this bill through the House.

 **Mr HOPPER** (Condamine—KAP) (4.19 pm): Ever since I was elected to this institution, we have seen reform of our agricultural colleges from the previous government and that has continued with this new government in the last two years. It was a terrible shame to see land sold at the Dalby campus. I remember attending many graduation ceremonies in Dalby where more than 100 students

graduated. We recently toured the agricultural college, and it is actually a credit to the ministers involved to see what is happening there with the high school in Dalby working with the college. I know the principal at the Dalby high school is extremely happy with the set-up that is going on. However, there is a touch of sadness at seeing the once-great agricultural college diminished to the extent that it has been.

The Australian Agricultural College Corporation has been delivering rural training to Queensland farming families since 1967. The AACC employs 200 Queenslanders who provide training for off-site venues and residential colleges in Emerald, Longreach, Ayr, Bundaberg, Dalby, Gatton, Mackay and Mareeba. Unfortunately, due to the downturn in student enrolments, we have seen changes at Burdekin and Dalby and they have been forced to shut their doors.

It appears that the development of this bill was based on the business review report conducted by Ernst & Young in 2012 which addressed the deficiencies exposed in the corporate governance and management of the AACC. When reading the explanatory notes and speech, one would assume the blame for the downturn in student enrolments in the AACC squarely sits on the governance and management side of the ledger. However, I ask the members of the House to consider the underlying causes. We just heard a very good speech from our colleague the member for Barron River on the economic state of Queensland and what is facing our rural people with the drought that is in front of them and the economic situation that our producers are facing. It is very hard for them to afford to send a child to an agricultural college at this stage.

So I ask the members of the House to consider the underlying causes—and they were clearly explained by the member for Barron River. Could it be due to the failure of corporate governance and management as stated in the report by Ernst & Young, or could it be due to the introduction of legislation such as the national competition policy in 1992? It is relevant to the bill to look at the contributing factors which have impacted on the downturn in student enrolments and the economic losses incurred by the AACC, because if the government can identify the root causes of the AACC's financial failures and the decline in student enrolments they will be able to implement solutions which have real merit to ensure the financial viability of the AACC. I believe the AACC is a good rural education system. We have a duty of care to look after not only the students who go to schools but those who undertake agricultural education. I believe it is a duty that this government cannot turn its back on, and I do not believe the minister is turning his back on it.

We should not just rebrand the AACC as a new statutory body called the Queensland Agricultural Training College. In reality, rebranding and restructuring the corporate governance and management of the AACC is only window-dressing from the government, and it therefore places a facade over the real issue of why the AACC is failing financially. The minister may not want to hear the truth about the content within this bill, but I believe the truth behind the failure of the AACC is based on the decline in Australian farms.

I ask the minister this question. The majority of students that the AACC educates and trains come from farming families across Queensland, but if there is a continued decline in the number of farming families where will the students come from? This is very hard with the economic decline that is happening at the moment. The minister tabled a summary of Ernst & Young's findings in the Queensland parliament on 22 August 2012 which highlighted that the AACC had not operated profitably since 2005. Moreover, it highlighted inadequacies in standard reporting, record keeping and audit compliance with workplace health and safety requirements.

I ask the minister to consider the following probable underlying causes and time lines as to why the AACC is not operating at a profit. I think they can be aligned with the content in a report from Julia Limb on the ABC's *The World Today* back on 30 August 2005. I know that was a long time ago but there is some truth in what she said. Eleanor Hall introduced the report by stating—

The number of farms operating in Australia has dropped by ten per cent in the last five years ... Since 1994 20,000 farms have shut down. The biggest changes have occurred in the dairy industry which has lost 4,000 properties, with deregulation and drought major factors.

Julia Limb stated in her report—

Just ten years ago 150,000 farms operated in Australia across 770 million hectares of land. Today the area of land under production remains the same but there are 20,000 fewer farms.

It's the traditional areas of farming that have been the hardest hit ... The dairy industry has also changed dramatically—

and I mean dramatically—

since the deregulation of the sector in 2000 with more than 3,500 properties shutting up shop. I know the minister would acknowledge that the reduction and shutdown of farms across Australia and especially Queensland would have a significant impact on the AACC's profitability, due to the significant reduction of potential students who have been forced off the farm with their families.

In her report, Julia Limb asked Allan Tunstall this question—

There's been a significant drop in the number of dairy farms. Is that a result of the deregulation of the industry in 2000 or has this been an ongoing change to that industry?

Allan Tunstall, who was an agricultural economist at Charles Sturt University, replied—

Well, there's been ongoing adjustment in dairy farming probably over the last 30 years, ever since, you know, Britain joined the common market as it was then.

But the recent changes to dairy farm numbers is probably due to the domestic deregulation, particularly in Queensland and New South Wales small farms have gone out of business.

What I am trying to do by making that former point is enlighten the House on the fact that rebranding and restructuring the corporate governance and management of the AACC into the QATC will not make a world of difference to its profitability if there are no farming families left in Queensland to fill the enrolment numbers. I know the minister has a firm understanding about how many farming families have left the land or who are under immense financial strain; therefore, I ask the minister to also acknowledge and understand why the AACC is failing to secure adequate enrolment numbers to be financially viable. I acknowledge that there may be some issues with governance and management within the AACC, but we cannot use this as an excuse to justify the failure of the AACC to be economically viable. I know the minister is serious about securing the financial viability of our farming families through this time of drought and free market madness. If we can secure the financial viability of the family farm, we will secure the financial viability of the AACC.

The member for Dalrymple spoke on a bill last night on fair milk pricing. That bill would cost the government nothing yet it could secure some of the interests in dairy farming in Queensland. There is also the Flinders and Gilbert catchment scheme and the Australian Reconstruction and Development Board. There are contributing factors to the continued economic losses suffered by the AACC, because the number of farming families will keep diminishing due to economic hardship and the government's apprehension to interfere in the market. I ask members of the House to remember that the AACC cannot operate as a viable business—no matter what you name it—if there are no farming families left in Queensland.

I will close on this note and ask members to contemplate the comment made by the Hon. Ian Rickuss, chair of the committee, on 5 December at the public briefing on this bill. He said—

But they have to work, otherwise I am sure the minister will end up looking over them and saying, 'This isn't being financially sound. We have to rejig it again.' Let us hope we don't have to.

They were the words by the chair of the agricultural committee. Minister, I simply believe that we have a duty of care to provide rural education to students to give them a good start, and I am sure you are aware of that and believe in it yourself.

 **Mr COSTIGAN** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.30 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013, not only as an MP who sits on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, but also as a proud regional MP whose constituency and regional economy still relies on agriculture. In a nutshell, this bill paves the way for a much needed and long awaited rejuvenation of our agricultural colleges in Queensland, specifically the Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College, two tremendous learning institutions that went to rack and ruin under the former Labor government.

On a day like today speaking on legislation like this, I think back to my first few months as an MP when I attended a careers expo in Proserpine, that wonderful sugar milling town in the tropics—

Mr Walker: Here, here! North Queensland!

Mr COSTIGAN: I will take that interjection from the member for Mansfield and the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. We have seen in the past that he is a very keen follower of rugby league, and on that note I wish the Brahmans all the best in 2014.

I mentioned that wonderful sugar milling town in the tropics that is Proserpine, where cane and cattle form the backbone of the local economy. At this expo I had a young high school student by the name of Lathan Dunn come up to me and, like all of the other students who stopped off to say hello, I candidly asked him, 'What do you want to do once you finish school here in Proserpine?' Lathan's reply warmed the heart, especially when I think about the age of our cane farmers in Whitsunday and where the next generation is coming from. He said, 'I want a career in agriculture.'

I thought it was a terrific answer in these challenging times when many local people—and I acknowledge that my community and my electorate are not alone—are going after the big coin that comes from the 'black gold' instead of something perhaps more in keeping with what has kept

Proserpine and surrounds—little places such as Strathdickie, Gunyarra, Lethebrook, Bloomsbury and Kelsey Creek—ticking since the late 1800s. There is no doubt that times have also changed in relation to educating our farmers and pastoralists of tomorrow and, quite frankly, like others in this House, I lament the loss of our ag college a couple of hours up the road in the Burdekin, where many of my constituents honed their skills and then graduated, something of which they are fiercely proud.

Under Labor, with the member for Mackay and his old comrades dumbing down primary industries—we cannot sugar-coat it—the Burdekin ag college was trashed, and Emerald and Longreach withered on the vine, with fewer and fewer students coming through those places. That is something that struck home when I stopped off at the Emerald college during the January school holidays while visiting family in the Central Highlands.

As I alluded to earlier, the bill is an important step in the reinvigoration of our agricultural colleges. It is no secret that the Australian Agricultural College Corporation has been financially unviable for some years now, and the Newman government makes no apologies for saying 'enough is enough.' Just ask the member for Gregory, the member for Warrego, the member for Mirani, the member for Thuringowa, the member for Keppel and the member for Barron River who we have just heard from—my colleague on the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee—all of them and others in this place are passionate about agriculture and regional and rural Queensland.

Put simply, the Newman government is committed to stopping the rot with our ag colleges, particularly given our strong commitment to doubling Queensland's agricultural food production by 2040. The Emerald Agricultural College and Longreach Pastoral College deliver invaluable education to young people from around Queensland and, indeed, across Australia—in Emerald's case, a tradition that goes back to the early 1970s after its official opening by the then Minister for Education, AR Fletcher MLA, later Sir Alan Fletcher. Sir Alan was obviously a bit before my time, but I am sure he would be turning in his grave to see what has happened to our ag colleges, and I am sure the greatest member for Whitsunday of all time, the late Ron Camm, would have a similar view, as would many others.

It is these young people like Lathan Dunn that we must encourage to pursue employment and careers in our agricultural and pastoral industries, especially when one considers the aging population of our primary producers and the current drought situation—something I saw for myself while traveling through central western Queensland late last year. The proposed restructure of the corporation to engender good governance and much needed strategic direction is absolutely paramount if our colleges at Emerald and Longreach are going to exist into the future.

I do support these amendments in the bill because the current arrangements in relation to our ag colleges are clearly no longer viable. One only has to read through the Ernst & Young report, as mentioned previously by the member for Lockyer. Mr Deputy Speaker, it is time for a new start.

 **Mr COX** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.35 pm): Firstly I would like to thank my fellow committee members, especially the chairman, the member for Lockyer, for their work on this important legislation.

There is no doubt that agriculture in this country and in this state is at a crossroads. All sectors of the industry are facing considerable challenges: climate variability, environmental concerns, rising production costs, an ageing labour force and the problems that come with working in a global economy. At the same time, agriculture is one of the four pillars of the Newman government and we are committed to doubling agricultural production, including food production, in this state by 2040—just 26 short years away or one generation into the future. We need to do so if we are going to continue to feed and clothe ourselves and the growing populations of South-East Asia and, indeed, the world. I am very proud to be part of a government which has not only the vision and foresight, but also the very practical ability to develop the right policies and to put in place the necessary infrastructure and systems that will make this vision a reality. This bill is a small but seminal step in bringing this future to fruition.

Here in Queensland we are blessed with abundant resources, but our most important resource is our people. This bill represents an investment in our hardworking, resilient and innovative next generation. The bill provides for the ongoing operations of our agricultural colleges at Emerald and Longreach, and many of its provisions relate to governance and accountability, which is as it should be. However, what I would like to firstly focus on is what the provisions of this bill will actually mean for the young Queenslanders who study agriculture and for this important industry.

Two hundred years ago European settlers faced the problem of providing food and shelter in a new and challenging environment and coping with new and challenging climatic conditions. It is no wonder that some of our earliest innovations were in the area of food production. We are all familiar with the stump jump plough, the Sunshine harvester and Farrer's work with developing disease-resistant wheat strains. Perhaps less well known is that Australians also developed a steam-driven flour mill, the mechanical dehydration of food products and the world's first mechanical refrigeration plant. A recent AgForce study, quoting the University of Queensland's *Agricultural Science Study Guide*, points out that 60 per cent of the Australian land mass is devoted to agriculture. More than 134,000 registered farm businesses contribute 12 per cent to Australia's GDP, with a total value of \$155 billion. Each Australian farmer feeds more than 600 of us annually; 61 per cent of Australia's land mass is cared for by farmers; 51 per cent of agricultural jobs are in the city. The average Australian eats 11 kilograms of mutton or our famous lamb per year. The gross value of Australia's sugar cane crop for crushing is \$1.38 billion, which I know is very important to Jason Costigan, the member for Whitsunday. There are about 4,000 Landcare groups in Australia, most in rural areas; 40 per cent of Australian farmers belong to local Landcare groups.

Today, we still face the problem of 'food security'. However, it is not just within our local area but around the world as the global population increases. By 2040 the planet will be supporting more than eight billion people. Our own region, the Asia-Pacific, includes the world's two most populous countries, China and India, other nations with large populations such as Indonesia and Japan and also countries like Malaysia and Singapore which support significant populations in very small geographic areas with limited agricultural land. These nations also have growing middle classes with increasingly global appetites and the disposable incomes to support them. So Australia and Queensland will play an important role in food production into the future. Safe, affordable and reliable food production should contribute to greater geopolitical security in our region but will also offer important opportunities and benefits to our state's economy.

My electorate of Thuringowa rubs shoulders with pastoral properties around towns in North Queensland, producing some of the best beef in the world. North Queensland is also renowned for its sugar industry and tropical fruits. The north also boasts high quality vegetable and orchard operations. Innovative producers are also looking at opportunities to further develop the aquaculture industry in my area. We need a suitably skilled and motivated workforce so that we can continue to produce safe, clean, high quality food and textiles. There will be no decrease in the demand for food in the future, especially the high quality food that Queensland currently produces. The challenge will be to meet the demand from both local and international consumers.

Furthermore, we still face challenges presented by our variable climate and unique environment. After significant floods in the state for the past couple of years, parts of Queensland are currently in the grip of a severe drought. Other areas in Australia have experienced a terrible bushfire season. Indeed, Victoria has continued to suffer from widespread fires this week. Our sympathies go to all who have endured loss and hardship due to the various natural disasters we are continuing to deal with.

Of course, ensuring that our agricultural colleges are efficiently and effectively managed will not in itself solve these problems. However, it will help the longevity of these institutions and go a long way to equipping future generations of farmers and other agricultural professionals to plan for and manage the challenges that come with this industry. Education is the key to securing our future. Our world is more complex than it has ever been and the future for agriculture depends increasingly on a knowledgeable, skilled, innovative and resilient workforce; a workforce which understands, uses and further develops the wealth of technology available; a workforce which embraces diversification and multidisciplinary skills; and, importantly, a workforce which understands that the business end of agribusiness is crucial. In other words, it needs to be an educated workforce.

The development of agriculture in this state, properly managed, will offer Queensland more opportunities than ever before. According to the National Farmers Federation, agriculture directly employs more than 300,000 Australians, while the wider agricultural supply chain employs 1.6 million people. More importantly, agriculture offers significant potential for employment for our young people. The National Farmers Federation estimates that there are 2.5 jobs available for every graduate in this industry. Indeed, AgForce estimates that there will be additional labour requirements over this year and next year of 5,845 full-time employees and around 17,000 part-time or casual employees. Moreover, the current average age of farmers is 52. So as older producers retire and leave the industry, there will be even more opportunities available for young people. However, attracting workers to agricultural industries is not an easy task, so it is essential that we establish a network of

training options across the state. Agriculture can be a challenging industry, but it also offers enormous lifestyle benefits that appeal to many and, increasingly, a range of career opportunities. Young people who choose to study in agricultural colleges and go on to further training can certainly look at farm management roles, but they can also become plant breeders, soil scientists, resource managers or commodity marketers, just to name a few.

Crucially, we need our young people to be thinking entrepreneurially. They will be the ones who are making decisions about product diversification, value adding and vertical integration. They will be the ones carrying out research and development. They will be the ones developing the technologies that will enable us to lift production, decrease costs, protect the environment and carry this industry into the future. Again, education is the key to that future.

As I said earlier, this bill provides a strong and appropriate foundation for the governance and management of the Emerald and Longreach agricultural colleges. This is essential to meet training requirements across the industry in order to stay relevant to meet not only domestic needs, but also the demands of Asia and the world.

Finally, having lived and worked in North Queensland, I know how important it is for our local communities and agricultural industries to support each other. Industry support for these communities will dwindle away if we do not keep up with the innovative, can-do mindset that has characterised our rural industries in the past. So support for these important institutions is an essential foundation for the future of our agricultural industries and the future of communities in our rural heartland. The agricultural colleges have been given a new lease of life under this government in this minister's bill. Now it is up to them to play their part in the future of agriculture in Queensland. Their future is in their hands and part of our future will be in those of the students. I commend the minister for introducing this bill.

 **Mrs MADDERN** (Maryborough—LNP) (4.44 pm): I rise today to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. The fact that agriculture is one of the four pillars of the economy has been clearly articulated many times over the past two years by this LNP government. It is my own belief that agriculture and mining, those two industry sectors which produce something from out of the ground or the ocean, are the solid base on which the rest of the economy rests. Therefore, anything which contributes towards the growth, productivity and profitability of the agriculture pillar must be taken seriously and given the strongest government support.

Education is critically important to the agricultural industry, both in terms of skilling up people to work in the industry and in terms of research and development to support the growth, productivity and profitability which is being sought to grow our economy. Our agricultural colleges and the state-wide educational programs attached to those colleges are, therefore, a key component within this industry with capacity to contribute significantly to the LNP government's goals of doubling the productivity of the agricultural industry. Sadly, under the management of the former Labor government, the Australian Agricultural College Corporation had been allowed to become financially unviable for a number of years. The business review conducted by Ernst & Young at the direction of the LNP government reveals significant deficiencies including not operating profitably and deficiencies in the areas of financial reporting, record keeping, workplace health and safety requirements, and performance management.

For the agricultural industry to grow, it is critical that these colleges and the broader Queensland educational program be delivered from a business structure which is accountable, flexible and delivers measurable results. This bill is designed to provide a new corporate structure for the colleges that will give real decision-making power on the future of agricultural training to those who need it most: the agricultural industry. It will be the responsibility of the new entity, to be known as Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges, under this new governance model to work closely with all sectors of the industry, including the research and development areas, to develop courses which are both practical and work ready in nature but also lead on to other areas of increased training and expertise.

While the focus currently is on young students, educational opportunities should also be aimed at mature age students, a trend now seen quite widely in universities. It is fascinating to watch television programs such as the ABC's *Landline* which show the diversity, changing skills, innovation, value adding and leading edge research in agriculture. By changing the corporate structure, changing the name and giving flexibility to the organisation, there is an opportunity for the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges to become an integral part of the overall industry, catering to the whole of Queensland and beyond.

I come from a community which has a great agriculture base. It is therefore very pleasing for me, on behalf of my community, to support the amendments of this bill.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak to the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. These amendments will restructure the AACC as a statutory body with a decision-making board with provisions for college boards. The restructure is aimed at addressing governance and management deficiencies identified in a business review report conducted by Ernst & Young in 2012. The deficiencies identified in the report found that the AACC was not operating profitably and its performance was deficient in areas such as financial reporting, record keeping, workplace health and safety requirements, and performance management. The proposed restructure is aimed at ensuring that management and decision-making accountability is reinstated through a governing board that takes into account industry and student needs. The bill will restructure the AACC from a corporation sole to a statutory body of governing board responsible for its performance. The new body still retains the assets and liabilities of the AACC but will be renamed the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges.

That is not an issue. In fact, it is probably a good thing. It is all about restructuring to address inefficiencies. However, in the past governments have not promoted facilities like these colleges—and this also relates to aged-care facilities or cluster units—and the benefits they can bring in training people in technologies, skills and future developments. This is a good thing and is understandable given that agriculture is struggling, so this is the time when we really need to get behind agriculture. Potato farmers are ploughing their potatoes back into their fields. Dairy farmers and farmers in general are living with the drought. Time and time again parents are saying that their children do not want to take on farming because they think, 'Why on earth do we want to get into this?' This is a problem we face. Over the years we have seen a rural decline—the closure of our railways and small hospitals which affect those regional communities. People such as ringers, roo shooters and contract fencers go to ag colleges and train to develop those skills. However, we have to realise that some children who want to take on farming might think that they have been handed a poison chalice. This is a great opportunity to ensure that we promote these colleges, promote the benefits of these colleges and promote those skills with this money that we are injecting into these colleges with the new board and corporate structure. No doubt the best way to operate a college like this is to ensure that the board is well skilled and has an understanding of business and how these agricultural colleges operate.

This is good legislation; it is just sad that we have to review and restructure. Down the track I hope that we can advance the agricultural industry so that we do not have to import food products from overseas, so that our farmers are strengthened, so that our dairy farmers are strengthened, so that we buy local products, so that our canned food comes from local farmers in our own regions so that they can develop those skills and technology. Of course they should look to overseas markets, but it is important that we not only protect our rural industries and protect our markets but also protect our children who are looking to go into agriculture. We also need to protect rural areas to ensure that there is not rural decline, to ensure that there is advancement in technology in areas such as health services. An example of that is videoconferencing where operations are able to be performed. Rural areas need those kinds of services so that people who live in rural areas can enjoy a quality of life like people in the cities. Rural areas need those services so that they can thrive and areas can grow and so that there is the population in those areas for people to attend those training colleges to gain those skills.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.53 pm): I take pleasure in rising to support the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. I thank the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Dr John McVeigh, for bringing this common-sense bill before the House. I also acknowledge the contribution from the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, which is chaired by Mr Ian Rickuss, the member for Lockyer, and note that the committee has recommended that this bill be passed. This common-sense piece of legislation is again delivering for Queenslanders. As a government, we are delivering on our election promises—that is, to build a four-pillar economy. Agriculture is one of the most important pillars of our great state. I would even hazard a guess that, from my regional perspective, it is the most important pillar, and I am quite sure that the Hon. Dr John McVeigh would agree with me on that point.

This bill is an important step to the reinvigoration of the agricultural colleges in Queensland. The ag colleges are simply the backbone of the education system of our next generation of farmers, graziers, landholders and workers on all of these great places. My brother Tim attended the Emerald ag college. My older brother went to Gatton ag, even though I appreciate that that is not affected in

any manner by this bill. Interestingly, my older brother mentioned to me that it would probably be a good spot for me not to go to an ag college. Ross thought I might be safer not at one of the ag colleges, which is a bit of a concern. I would advocate that all good country girls and city girls should attend these great ag colleges. The AACC has delivered this training since 1967. It is owned by the Queensland government and has some 200 employees. It provides training at residential colleges, as noted, in Emerald and Longreach and six other training centres in Ayr, Bundaberg, Dalby, Gatton, Mackay and Mareeba. I would also like to extend that to add Kingaroy in there one day, so I will have to have those conversations with the minister.

As a regional member of this parliament, I fully understand the importance of access to decent, good agricultural training. In 2012 the AACC commissioned an independent review of ag colleges by Ernst & Young, and I have to say that this was one fantastic decision made by the Minister for Agriculture. We had colleges that were clearly being misrun. There were falling enrolment numbers and major financial difficulties, and that is what was discovered by Ernst & Young. When that review was taking place my office received a great deal of feedback from families explaining to me the absolute importance of these ag colleges. They said that they were just desperate to ensure that this training option was not lost for not only their children but also themselves. I have heard a few members in this House talk about children going to ag colleges. These colleges also provide further education for the older generation as well.

Many good country kids do grow up wanting to attend either the Emerald or Longreach college, and it was actually devastating when the Dalby ag college closed some time ago. These ag colleges provide a social framework to this generation and a network that they can build on as they move into their chosen field of agriculture. It was obvious that under the former Labor government the ag colleges under the AACC were becoming financially unviable. They had not operated profitably since 2005 and reports highlighted many inadequacies with the standards of simple reporting, record keeping and audit of compliance with workplace health and safety requirements. Whilst I could stand here and say that that was just typical of the previous government, what I am pleased to stand here and say is that this is typical of our government—that is, it is typical for our hardworking minister and our hardworking cabinet to take the decision that we need to look after our agricultural colleges.

Our government understands that letting these colleges go down the path that they were on previously is simply not an option. The Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College deliver invaluable education for people all over Australia. It is not only for people from Queensland. We must encourage these young people to pursue employment and careers in our agricultural and pastoral industries to ensure that we reach our goal of doubling food production. There is also the element of what these colleges add to those great towns of Longreach and Emerald. That cannot be underestimated.

Quite clearly, the amendments contained in this bill before the House will restructure the AACC as a statutory body with a decision-making board with provisions for college boards. What a common-sense, practical way forward. Like the successful local hospital and health boards, these college boards understand how these regions work.

In my opinion, this legislation is an important step in ensuring that agriculture remains solid as one of Queensland's four pillars. Reaching this target requires increased productivity and an adaption of knowledge. That can be achieved through a highly skilled workforce. The restructure of the colleges and vocational training will ensure that the skill needs of our rural and regional employers are met.

I believe that the reinvigoration of our colleges has already begun. In December last year our can-do government awarded 10 agricultural industry scholarships to young people who are keen to access agricultural training. The minister made these scholarships available to help encourage the best minds and the best trained agricultural workforce possible and to demonstrate our commitment to supporting this important sector. One of the lucky scholarship recipients was Darren Close, who hails from Hampton in my electorate of Nanango. Darren's scholarship provides \$10,000 towards his tuition and board at the Longreach Pastoral College. I would like to congratulate Darren. Just last weekend I was speaking to his father, who told me he is very excited at receiving this scholarship and how far this \$10,000 will go towards his tuition. It is really exciting that someone from my electorate is benefiting in this way. I know that Darren will be a wonderful contributor to the future of agriculture in Queensland. I wish him well in his studies at Longreach. I hope he enjoys his time at agricultural college, as all good agricultural college attendees—

Mr Cox: Has he got a ute?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: He has a ute. I am sure that he will have a great time. These agricultural colleges are not just about education. Whilst that is 99.9 per cent of the priority of these colleges; it is about the social network that students at these colleges can build and the mateship that they can build over time not only in Queensland, but across our great land of Australia.

In closing, this bill seeks to make changes to our agricultural colleges to underpin their viability and longevity. I thank the minister for this bill. I also fully support the bill.

 **Hon. AP CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines) (5.02 pm): It is a great pleasure for me to rise this afternoon to make a contribution to this debate on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, my friend the member for Toowoomba South, on bringing forward this bill. I also want to take a moment to recognise those members of the government, in particular the member for Gregory, who I know, given the structure of this bill, have had a keen interest and a very important input into developing a positive pathway for the future of the Emerald and Longreach agricultural colleges. It is the advocacy of the member for Gregory and, quite frankly, the support that he received from the government and the minister that has seen this bill come to fruition. As a result of the disgraceful mismanagement of the former Labor government, our agricultural colleges in this state came to the verge of oblivion. We have pulled back from that and we now have a positive and constructive framework to go forward into the future to deliver rural and agricultural training for young people—all Queenslanders—across the state.

When you consider that the economic policy of the Queensland LNP government is based on four pillars, including agriculture, the importance of this bill cannot be understated. In that regard, a key point to make is that it is no wonder there has been a decline in the demand for rural and agricultural training in this state when people who are involved in the agricultural sector and who need to be involved in investing in agriculture in this state could see no future for it as a result of the restrictive policies of the previous Labor government in this state.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr CRIPPS: I will get to that. Do not worry about that. I take the interjection of the member for Lockyer and the chairman the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee. I thank him for his report informing this debate.

It is no wonder there was a decline in demand for rural training and agricultural training in this state when people who were responsible for investing in this sector increasingly saw a bleak outlook. There is little that can be done in relation to the vagaries of the weather. There is little that can be done in relation to the uncertainty that faces rural producers with regard to markets. There are some things that can be done, but sometimes it is just bad luck in relation to biosecurity issues that may come up and have a significant impact on agricultural industries in this state and in other jurisdictions. But there is certainly something that can be said for making sure that there is investment certainty for people involved in the agricultural sector. You do not have a demand for training, you do not have career paths that are attractive to people coming out of their secondary education if they do not see a bright future in the sector.

Since the LNP has come to government my own Department of Natural Resources and Mines has tried to support the environment to increase certainty for the rural sector. We have already delivered positive changes in the vegetation management framework in Queensland that will give rural property owners an opportunity to sustainably expand their farm businesses. That is a signal to them that agriculture has a future in this state. Under the old Labor arrangements, there was no opportunity to sustainably expand farm businesses. But now there is. People take heart from that.

This year, we will deliver reforms to the Land Act, resulting from the recommendations that came from the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee into the future relevance of state owned land in Queensland. We are going to be delivering land reform that will further send correct signals, positive signals to the rural sector about their opportunities to invest in agricultural industries in Queensland. We have already talked about certainty for leasehold landowners, reducing the red-tape burden, providing more positive opportunities for people to move to freehold their properties.

This year we will also be reforming the Water Act. Only this morning I announced that I would be bringing forward a review of the Gulf Resource Operations Plan to give an opportunity for additional water to be allocated in those catchments in North Queensland so that we can diversify the economy in north and north-west Queensland in irrigated agriculture. When you have those fundamentals of additional opportunities under the Vegetation Management Act, security of land

tenure and better opportunities to secure water resources, you have the fundamentals to improve investment certainty. Then you will get a demand for training in agriculture. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is going to fill that void nicely following the debacle and the incompetence of the management of the AACC under the previous Labor government in this state.

No wonder demand for rural training was declining when people had such negative perceptions and negative indicators coming from the previous Labor government in this state. Now, we are building a positive future. Now, we are sending positive indicators, saying that there will be opportunities for the future and young people will see that they will be able to build a future in agriculture with these policies coming through. There is absolutely no doubt that the introduction of the agricultural college arrangements in this legislation will provide a sound basis for the management of those entities in the future.

There is absolutely no doubt that the need for technical and vocational education, the types of skills associated with rural and agricultural industries, is desperately needed. There is a deficit of those skills in industry right across the state. Whether it is broadacre cropping, whether it is the pastoral industry or horticulture, there are skills that are required to be filled in the rural sector. There are pathways and opportunities for careers for young people in agriculture. I applaud the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on seeing this through. It could have been quite easy, given the perilous state of the administration of that entity before he became the minister, to go in another direction entirely. But he has not. Supported by people like the member for Gregory and the rest of the members of the LNP government we have a bright future.

I will touch on another adjacent issue on top of technical and vocational education opportunities provided by the AACC. I draw the attention of the House to a similar issue that exists at the tertiary level in relation to young people taking up career pathways in things like animal science, plant and soil science, biological science, chemistry and veterinary science. They are also essential skills in the value-adding chain and in support of our agricultural industries on-farm. They are equally as important as the vocational and technical education courses that are delivered by our agricultural colleges. I have observed in my own time that my brother, who is a trained agricultural scientist in plant and soil science, was one of a very small cohort of students to move through that particular university at the time. I undertook my major in agricultural economics, an adjacent profession in the agricultural sector, and unfortunately increasingly the number of students undertaking natural resource economics and agricultural economics is declining as well. It is the same issue: they were not attracting people into those careers because the signals that the previous Labor government here in Queensland were offering to the rural sector were negative. They were not supported. Labor would rather get into bed with the extreme greens and do deals with them to placate their particular political outlook on life. It was absolutely disgraceful.

Now we have a different government, we have a different minister, we have different policies and we are setting the foundations. That will be the secret to the success of the new framework that the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is delivering here today. It will be the difference between the failed attempt of the previous minister for primary industries, the member for Mackay, who tried to rewrite history during his second reading contribution to this debate, and the success that the new framework will have under the leadership of the current Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the honourable member for Toowoomba South. I commend this bill to all members because it will mean a difference to the delivery of the skills and expertise in technical and further education that the rural and agricultural industries need in Queensland.

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (5.12 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. The Australian Agricultural College Corporation has been delivering rural training to Queensland families since 1967. In that time it has played a vital role providing training and a pathway for those people growing up on the land who could see themselves investing in skills and technology to apply back on their own farms in an industry that they love and live and breathe.

The AACC employs approximately 200 Queenslanders providing training for off-site venues and residential colleges in Emerald and Longreach, whilst also operating six training centres. Unfortunately we saw the closure of the Burdekin and Dalby colleges. I know many people who went through those colleges and benefitted from their time there.

The genesis of this bill was the report conducted by Ernst & Young in 2012 addressing deficiencies in the corporate governance and management of the AACC. One would assume that the downturn in student enrolments sits squarely on the governance and management side of the ledger, but as we have heard from many of the contributions here, the issue is more the viability of farming

and the hope and outlook of so many people who have been hit hard for so long. It is difficult to make that investment in your life, both time wise and financially, when it is hard to see a positive outlook in that industry. We have seen so many hits in the rural industries over the last 10 or 20 years. I think that outlook has changed completely. Until that is addressed, the issue of the viability of these places will never be resolved.

It is the same situation in relation to our rural towns, particularly in my electorate. Many rural towns are facing much adversity, much of which is based on the agricultural industries. If the numbers are down at the school the first thing that is done is the teacher is ripped out because the business case is not there. That precipitates more people leaving town, there are less numbers going through the hospital and it is a slippery slope downwards and there is only one inevitable outcome. If we invest in these things, maintain them and build them up and resolve the issue that sits behind it that is causing these symptoms, that is a better long-term solution and is the key to keeping our inland populated.

I listened with interest to the previous speaker in relation to many of the issues that are confronting our rural industries. One issue in particular in my area is that we have been sitting on vast volumes of water flowing out to the sea along hundreds of thousands of acres of blacksoil open plains naturally cleared. People are going broke and watching cattle die when there is the ability for them to create off-stream storage and small mosaic farms but they have not been able to access that water for so long. They are the sorts of things that can create prosperity and hope and deliver some sort of future to these people. I speak from the point of view of the Mount Isa electorate, but they are the sorts of things that will create hope and positivity and force people to invest in education and their future and support colleges such as these. That is where the answer lies. I think we have heard that a lot already in this discussion. That is where the effort needs to be made. It is good to treat the symptoms of these problems, but it is a bit pointless without going to the root cause of the issues affecting agriculture, which are very structural and deep seated and have been growing for a long time and will need significant changes in policy, both at a state and federal level, to resolve. We aim to support this bill and support the change to the corporate governance, bearing in mind that this is treating a symptom of a much larger problem in agriculture that needs to be addressed.

 **Mr HOLSWICH** (Pine Rivers—LNP) (5.17 pm): I would like to make a very brief contribution to the debate on the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2012 and to offer my support to the minister and to this bill. Our government has made no secret of our intention to revitalise Queensland's agricultural sector and of its importance to the Queensland economy as one the four key pillars of the Queensland economy. Critical to developing any industry is ensuring that there is high-quality training available to train the next generation of experts, professionals and workers. This bill will positively contribute towards this next generation and give our agricultural colleges an opportunity to refocus and ensure they are highly effective educational institutions.

The new structure of the college governance boards will allow local communities and industries the opportunity to have input into the operations of the college. It will allow those with passion and knowledge of agriculture to have a more intimate involvement in the development of training for the future of agriculture in Queensland. As has already been mentioned by previous speakers to this bill, this bill is particularly important to towns such as Emerald and Longreach where the Emerald Agricultural College and the Emerald Pastoral College are significant employers in their towns and where they also have a proud history of delivering training to young Queenslanders from their own region and beyond. As has been made clear in the deliberation of this bill to date, if changes are not made to the way these colleges run, the communities of Emerald and Longreach could possibly lose these valuable resources which would have a detrimental impact on these wonderful regional Queensland communities.

The member for Gregory knows well that I have a soft spot for Emerald, having spent a few months of my life working there for the Salvation Army, and anything that will help the wonderful township of Emerald is a positive thing in my books. However, the influence of this bill goes far beyond just the electorate of Gregory. Whilst agriculture is no longer the driving force of the Pine Rivers economy as it once was in the era of the Brays, the Petries, the Cashes and other pioneering families, we still have an agriculture footprint. 2011-12 figures show that 2.8 per cent of businesses in my electorate of Pine Rivers, or an actual number of 119 businesses, fall into the statistical category of agriculture, forestry and fishing. For those 119 businesses, this is an important bill. Particularly for the western half of my electorate—regions around Dayboro, Ocean View, Lacey's Creek, Rocksbury and Armstrong Creek—bills such as this will support our agriculture enterprises and give them a greater chance of remaining viable and increasingly successful in years to come.

Our government has set the ambitious target of doubling agricultural production in Queensland by the year 2040. If we are to achieve that goal, we need to see increased productivity, the ability to adapt to new technologies and a highly skilled workforce. A sustainable agricultural college system, working closely with industry, will be a huge boost in our attempts to reach this 2040 target. I can see the future benefits this bill will provide to agriculture businesses in my patch of Pine Rivers and across the entire state. I am pleased to support the common-sense measures contained within the bill to help secure the future of the Queensland and Pine Rivers agricultural sectors.

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (5.21 pm): Today I rise to speak in support of the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013. The implementation of this legislative reform will be an important step in the right direction in ensuring that Queensland reaches its target of doubling agricultural production by 2040, so I fully support the minister for the introduction of this bill to the House. It would be remiss of me not to speak to such a bill given my love of food—real food, that is. That is what this bill will help us with: growing and producing real food, not food-like products. It is real food that will keep us in or, more so, bring us back to good health and take the weight off the health system. It reminds me of the second point I made in a speech last year outlining my 10 tips for fellow members of parliament to lose weight and stay or get healthy, that is, if you can pick it or kill it, eat it. That is real food and it is real food that can solve so many of our problems, so I support bills such as this that look to our future and to securing our real food future.

We are all conscious of the great opportunities that the regions to our north and west present in terms of increased trade investment. According to a 2010 OECD report, by 2020 more than half of the world's middle class will be based in Asia and those middle-class consumers will account for over 40 per cent of global middle-class consumption. As a result, the Newman government has been diligently working to improve productivity and the ease with which Queensland can take advantage of the immense opportunities we are presented with as a result of the economic modernisation of our Asian neighbours. As a large proportion of the consumers in the Asian markets rise to middle-class levels, there will be an increased demand for high-quality food stuffs. It is in Queensland's interests to make sure that the agricultural sector can cater to that need. This presents an opportunity for Queensland farmers to move into the area of high-quality organic produce in order to cater to the growing Asian middle-class demographic that will inevitably demand high-end organic food. Again, I cannot help but think about a country full of just organic farming. Now there is a dream! Have members ever tried an organic apple? Since swapping to an organic diet a few years ago, all I can say is that once you have had an organic apple there is no going back.

With those opportunities in mind, it is important for the government to take a role in creating an environment from which the Queensland agricultural industry can diversify into different areas. When we also consider that a recent federal government report stated that the Flinders and Gilbert river catchments could irrigate up to 50,000 hectares of land producing various crops worth hundreds of millions of dollars, it would be short-sighted for the government not to invest in getting the most out of our regions and agricultural industry.

In order to reach the required target of agricultural production by 2040, increased productivity and the adoption of technologies is required to streamline output and improve the quality of training for those who work in the agricultural sector. To achieve this income, a highly skilled workforce is required to drive increased productivity and efficiency in Queensland's various agricultural industries over the coming years. Students need a vibrant and well organised tertiary education system. That is the case for students in my electorate of Nudgee and it is no different for their rural counterparts. That is why the Queensland government has decided to amend this legislation and address both governance and management deficiencies in the system. Those improvements will come in the form of a sustainable residential agriculture college system that will work in conjunction with industry based training. The restructuring of the college and vocational training system will guarantee that the demand for skills needs required by our rural and regional employers is met. It will also ensure that there are readily available pathways for first-class training that rurally based employees can receive.

I may be a city slicker, but my love of real food that will heal the health problems we have means I cannot support enough the rural regions in the way that this and other bills will do to help our rural regions to put clean, preferably organic food on our tables. For now I can only pray for rain for the 70 per cent of Queensland that is drought declared and support measures to help our farmers during these tough times. I congratulate the minister and his department for this bill. I support the amendments in the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013.

 **Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—LNP) (5.25 pm): It is with much pleasure that I speak to the Agricultural College Amendment Bill as it relates to the agricultural colleges at Emerald and Longreach. The agriculture colleges that this government inherited were like an old T-model Ford with four busted tyres and broken springs. It is thanks to John McVeigh and Campbell Newman that we have saved those colleges from absolute shutdown. I do not say that lightly. It is government policy to double agricultural production by 2040, but we would not have any agricultural production if we do not have the people to complement that production. Therefore, we have to identify ways and means of achieving that.

Many people may not be aware that Longreach is the only arid zoned pastoral college in the world; not just Australia, but the world. There is no other college like it. It does not boast any type of irrigation, even though they draw a bit of irrigation from the river for a few horses and cattle, but that is a very minimal operation. I hope that in the near future we will see that cease because of the dry times and the need for more water in Longreach. I believe the agricultural college in Emerald is sufficient to meet needs through the irrigated operation there.

When this government took power in this state in March 2012, the agricultural colleges were facing oblivion, and I do not like saying that. It is this government and our cabinet ministers who have made it possible for us to try to resurrect those colleges and once again create an environment where young men and women can be trained in agriculture, which is so vitally important. As has been said by numerous speakers in this place, we have a four-pillar economy that we talk about all the time, based on construction, mining, tourism and agriculture. There is nothing more important in the world than agriculture. In Queensland and Australia, we are the best farmers and we grow the best quality product in the world. A lot of people are not aware of that, but it is true. This afternoon I have heard others talk about family properties that have been passed down through generation after generation, whether they are pastoral operations, grazing properties, farms, orchards or whatever. Those properties are passed on to sons and daughters through three and four generations. That is something we in this country should be fiercely proud of. For example, the family of our colleague Howard Hobbs, the member for Warrego, has been on the same property at Tambo for 100 years this week. That is the sort of stability that we need to see reinstated in our agricultural industries in this state. That will only happen by having the proper training, the proper understanding and the proper advice available so that young people can forge a career in agriculture.

There was a magnificent contribution made this afternoon by the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. He talked about many aspects of his portfolio as they relate to agriculture. I say to every member in this House, whether they are a city member, an outer rural member, a far western member or a far northern regional member, please tell the kids in your schools about these colleges and the opportunities available in agriculture.

I give a bursary every year to the Longreach and Emerald colleges. It might only be a \$500 bursary, but one year I had a lady from Rockhampton whose daughter won the bursary write to me saying, 'Mr Johnson, thanks for the bursary. My daughter always wanted to be on the land and always wanted to have a pony but we could not afford to do it. Your \$500 has enabled our daughter to stay an extra year at the Emerald Agricultural College.' This is not just about country kids; it is about city kids too like Katrina Kapstaff. Today she has a very important role with the thoroughbred industry in New South Wales.

It goes to show the opportunities out there for our city kids—not boys only, but girls too. Young women today are playing an integral role and are an integral part of the leadership of rural industries and agriculture of all types. We talk about finance and technology. The Minister for Natural Resources and Mines touched on that this afternoon. We are living in different times now. We have to move with the times. We are living in a technological time. Technology can tell us the market trends in Europe, South America, North America or Asia which is relevant when we send our goods offshore.

Why do we have to be smart at what we do? Because in the agricultural industry if we are not the best we are going to fail. Due to the fact that we are so far away from our markets in North America and South America a lot of the time we find ourselves being price takers not price makers. We have to have market access. We have to know when to access those markets, what the trends are and when to sell.

Many people are not aware that the largest manufacturing industry in this state is the meat industry. Two-thirds of Queensland's cattle are processed in the south-east corner of the state. Whether the cattle are processed at Dinmore, Beenleigh, Gatton or wherever, it creates jobs for city based people. It goes to show the importance of a successful, viable agricultural industry.

I pay tribute to people like Ian Burnett, Mike McCosker, Donald Brown, John Seccombe, Duncan Ferguson, Katrina Paine and a host of others in Emerald and Longreach who fought so hard and so long to help the minister and the government put together a game plan to revive and resuscitate these two colleges. We have some wonderful instructors at these colleges. Due to the change in policy and change in direction we are getting better people all the time.

We have John Arnold at Longreach who is probably one of the best horse instructors in the country. Kids are going there because of John Arnold's expertise and horsemanship skills. That is what these kids can learn. A lot of the kids that come from the city never go back to the city. I know a lot of young people in the bush today who were born and bred in cities and country towns and had nothing to do with the agricultural industries who are now leaders in agricultural industries. This is because they had the opportunity to learn through one of these colleges.

That is exactly what this government is doing. It is giving kids from all walks of life and different backgrounds the opportunity to gain an education in those colleges and at the same time maybe develop a career path. There is also an opportunity for us to train overseas students in these colleges. I know at present that the board is pursuing that market. It is wonderful to know that our skills in this country are up there with the best.

When it comes to these colleges there are a lot of issues that I know have to be addressed. There is talk about whether we sell off some of the property and access other property or use land that farmers and graziers have nearby to train the kids. All this is part of the process.

We are on the brink. If we do not make an effort together, we will not have these institutions. The Premier has made that perfectly clear. The minister has made it clear to the boards of the colleges at Emerald and Longreach and to the people of Queensland. I am doing everything in my power to market and sell the great assets that we have for the young people of this state and this nation. It is not just for Queensland kids. Some 98 or 99 per cent of the young people who go through those two institutions are placed in Queensland or the Northern Territory. We retain those young people. What an asset it is to be able to retain that young intellectual property in our pastoral and farming industries here in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

I salute the minister, John McVeigh. I thank the Premier and the cabinet for having the guts and drive to keep this operation functioning.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.35 pm), in reply: First of all, I would like to thank all members who have made a contribution to the debate on this bill. I take on board or, in some cases at least, note all comments that have been made. I would like to reflect on some of those comments to start with.

I note that the chair of the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, the member for Lockyer, made some very significant comments in relation to, if you like, the full gamut of agricultural education opportunities that there are in Queensland and that we need to ensure there are in future for our great state. I refer there to agricultural education that I and my colleague the Minister for Education focus on in relation to high schools around the state. I refer obviously to the agricultural colleges that we are addressing through this bill and, of course, as the member for Lockyer said, what we can find in terms of opportunities for university level agricultural education in the future.

I do need to correct the chair of that committee on one point. He suggested that I have not driven many tractors. Can I confirm for the member for Lockyer's information that as a son of a Darling Downs grain farmer I believe I have driven bigger tractors than he has, but we can talk about that at a later time.

I would like to refer to the comments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Of course, I note that all speakers here discussing this bill have certainly expressed their support for the bill. In his contribution the Deputy Leader of the Opposition did acknowledge upfront that problems existed at the colleges. He claimed that it was for him, as the previous minister, unfinished business on his part and that those problems that he acknowledged were not addressed.

I make the point in reflecting on those comments that AACC, the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, that we are addressing and amending through this bill, was in fact established in 2005. When we look at the fact that Ernst & Young confirmed in 2012 that the colleges had operated at a loss for that entire period, some seven years, I just wonder how long the former minister was going to take to address what he calls unfinished business.

He suggested that he engaged industry in places such as Dalby, Mareeba, Burdekin, amongst others. I note that those are locations of what were once proud Queensland agricultural colleges that he and his regime proceeded to close. I am not so sure that that consultation he conducted with industry in those locations was therefore that comprehensive.

He suggested as well that I was looking at closing the Emerald and Longreach colleges and he said that I have been working closely with the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. Well he is right on one point: I have worked shoulder to shoulder with the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. But I take it as an insult that there is even a hint of a suggestion—given the effort we have gone to with the engagement of Ernst & Young to look at what we learnt was an absolute mess that we inherited—that there was any consideration of closures of those colleges that Vaughan Johnson champions as the local member, champions as a significant agriculturalist in this state, and I continue to champion them alongside him. That is an insult when we look at the history, under the former minister, of Dalby, Mareeba, Burdekin, as I have just said—colleges that he closed—and of course reflects personally on the fact that, amongst many members in this House as we have heard in their contributions here this afternoon, I am very proud of the fact that members of my own family are graduates of the now closed Dalby Agricultural College, a closure which, along with other members in the House, I consider to be an absolute tragedy.

In terms of other contributions in this particular debate, as I have just said, I certainly agree with the member for Condamine that it was disappointing to see the closure of the Dalby Agricultural College, one that is near and dear to my heart. I acknowledge that it continues in some form under the auspices of the Dalby State High School, but the land has been sold off, the resources have been sold off and it is just a shadow of its former glory. The member for Condamine went on to suggest that this restructure, this rebranding outlined in this amendment bill, is simply window-dressing. I find that assessment on his part to be most puzzling if we think about rebranding for a start. Rebranding the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, recognised unfortunately and confirmed by Ernst & Young as a failure, to the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges he sees as simply window-dressing. Well what is wrong with calling the Queensland agricultural colleges Queensland agricultural colleges? What is wrong with recognising the Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College for what they are—leading Queensland agricultural education establishments?

I remind the House in relation to the member for Condamine's comments or suggestion that this restructure is simply window-dressing about the key conclusions of the Ernst & Young review that I commissioned in 2012. I commissioned that as an incoming minister just at the end of the 2011-12 financial year when, having been in the job for a couple of months, I received the first financial report for the Australian Agricultural College Corporation—and it was very, very sad and sobering reading.

The Ernst & Young report that I immediately commissioned confirmed three key things: the Agricultural College Corporation, set up and managed by Labor, had financial shortcomings; workplace health and safety shortcomings, particularly in relation to potential risks for students; and environmental shortcomings, particularly in relation to the management of waste facilities at the colleges. If one thinks about it in relation to corporations law, those three failings for just about anyone operating an entity, a business or any form of operation would cause serious concerns. For the member for Condamine to suggest that this restructure is simply window-dressing misses those realities. It ignores the fact that we need to operate on a financially sustainable basis, ignores safety concerns for students and staff, and ignores the environmental concerns for the broader communities, particularly in Longreach and Emerald.

In suggesting it is window-dressing, it may well be, I suspect, that the member for Condamine simply wants to give up on the agricultural colleges and agricultural education in general. Perhaps he needs to consider though that window-dressing is more typified, I would suggest, by suggested fake, cheap, voluntary yet regulated, strange processes to provide assistance to agriculture in Queensland. I can mention a number of examples such as ideas I have heard spread around the place in relation to the dairy industry.

He suggests that I would assume pretend solutions and he adopts window-dressing himself rather than simply roll up your sleeves, address a problem that is at hand and develop real solutions, real improvements and real transition plans. To suggest that it is window-dressing—can I conclude on the comments from the member for Condamine—ignores and shows a significant lack of respect for the efforts of Donald Brown, the chair of the Longreach Pastoral College board that the member for Gregory and I have put in place, and Ben Banks, Ian Duncan, Ian Walker, Katrina Payne, Richard Pietsch and Rosemary Champion—members of that Longreach Pastoral College board. It shows a

lack of recognition and lack of respect for Mike McCosker, the chair of the Emerald Agricultural College board, and Adele O'Connor, Christine Rolfe, George Bourne, Rebecca Murray and Michelle Hanrahan—members, alongside Mike, of that board. We are putting direction, we are putting control, we are putting planning and most of all we are putting planning towards industry relevance back into those local communities where local pastoralists, local farmers—and in many cases they are graduates of those colleges themselves—understand what industry needs and understand what practical agricultural education means, unlike the former Labor government which had a George Street overview of the agricultural colleges.

I move on quickly to other comments that I think are worthy of mention, amongst many of course. The member for Nanango has made comments very positively about agricultural education and college performance in Queensland in the past. Whilst I note what her older brothers have told her in terms of advice for her potential education, I would suggest that if I were her older brother—and I am old enough to be—I would have certainly encouraged her to attend one of the agricultural colleges. In saying that, I recognise the significant agricultural experience, practical experience, that she and her husband, Jason, have and have practised themselves.

When we talk about past performance, I add commentary about future opportunities for the agricultural colleges, future opportunities such as those that are being pursued by Donald Brown, the chair of the Longreach Pastoral College board, when he looks at concepts such as attracting young Indonesians as students to the Longreach Pastoral College—young Indonesians who work in the beef supply chain in their country—bringing them to Queensland to the Longreach Pastoral College—as the member for Gregory said, the only arid zone agricultural college in the world—to educate them on our pastoral industry and of course to take up the opportunity perhaps to exchange students with them. I think that is typical of the magnificent sort of initiative that our agricultural college boards, who have now been allowed to exert some influence, are showing. That means a lot not only for agricultural education but of course for future trade relations between the two great countries of Australia and Indonesia. Of course we have done a fair bit of comparing and contrasting including visits that I have made to other establishments such as Marcus Oldham in Victoria to make sure that our agricultural colleges are recognising world's best practice in agricultural education.

Can I refer quickly as well to other comments including those from the member for Pine Rivers. I say it is most impressive to have not only members from regional areas commenting on this bill but members here in South-East Queensland who even understand quite obviously the importance of agriculture to our economy. The member for Pine Rivers' understanding of the full gamut of agriculture in our state I know previously has been well and truly evidenced when I have accompanied him to join in the celebrations of the refurbishment of the UQ veterinary training facilities in his very own electorate in South-East Queensland. He quite rightly referred to Emerald and Longreach and what those colleges mean to those communities. But I take the opportunity at the same time to remind the House of the other important activities such as industry training activities under our review in areas like Mareeba, Ayr, Bundaberg and other locations throughout the state.

I will make one further comment on some of the points that have been raised before wrapping up with my own contribution. I refer to the previous speaker on this bill, the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. I referred earlier in my contribution to what good governments do when faced with a challenge and faced with the need to make a decision, and the Deputy Premier reflected on this in the House earlier today. Good competent governments are expected to make decisions, face up to a problem, deal with the issue at hand and roll up their sleeves—not come up with false ideas or distractions, such as we have heard from the Katter party in recent debates, or simply ignore the problem and kick it off into the long grass, as was evidenced in the former Labor government's management of agricultural challenges in our state. A good government needs to come up with real, practical solutions that look at the long term.

It is on this basis that I think it is very good to know that Queensland has a good mate in the form of the member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson. Agriculture has a good mate in Vaughan Johnson. The seat of Gregory has a good mate in Vaughan Johnson. I am humbled to confirm that I too count myself as among the many who are good mates of Vaughan Johnson. I pay a special tribute to him for the efforts he has shown over a long period of time to champion the agricultural colleges, even before our government came to power. It has been wonderful to work with him shoulder to shoulder to save our agricultural colleges, particularly those at Emerald and Longreach, and now focus on their long-term sustainability.

As I outlined earlier, the Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013 signals a significant change in the way in which the Australian Agricultural College Corporation will deliver training and education services. The new statutory body structure has been designed to ensure a greater level of governance and strategic oversight. A lot of effort has gone into that and it is far from window-dressing. It is about rolling your sleeves up and getting stuck into the problem. There has also been a focus on an alignment with the needs of students and industry. The agricultural industry in Queensland will no longer be consumed with discussion about the fact that the agricultural colleges are veering off their required path of producing graduates who are attractive employees for industry. We are now aligning the education with industry requirements; we are focusing on producing good graduates.

The new governing board will be responsible for ensuring that performance management, financial reporting and strategic business planning arrangements are implemented. Such changes are essential to improve the college's financial sustainability. I make this very simple point: why would you want to educate a young man or a young woman in an agricultural college that you know full well is not financially sustainable in its own right? We want young agricultural college graduates who know how to operate a successful operation that is financially sustainable, and that is what we must focus on. The members of this governing board, whom I will appoint to work with the two local boards, will require skills and expertise in business management, strategic planning, corporate governance and agricultural knowledge to ensure the corporation is heading in the right direction as required by industry.

I refer now to the Emerald Agricultural College and the Longreach Pastoral College. Along with the member for Gregory, I too am very proud to ensure that we refer to them as just that—as not just campuses of the old failed AACC but as the proud colleges they have always been. These colleges will also be restructured so that these great institutions of rural education become viable once again. These residential colleges must be able to realign their services, as I have said a number of times, to the needs of students from across Australia and overseas and the needs of our agricultural and pastoral sectors.

The legislative amendments will also formalise the local college board arrangements that I implemented last year. Those local boards have a critical role in connecting the training needs of industry with the strategic direction of the whole corporation. They will be tasked with improving operational decision making and performance at each college. The local college directors appointed this year will have formalised roles under the act so that they can continue in the long term to manage the day-to-day activities of their colleges. This will have to be in accordance with the strategic direction set by their local college board and the overarching governing board. That local input and local direction is very important.

Overall, the restructure has been designed to ensure that accountability is reinstated in the corporation and, in turn, that there will be effective delivery of agricultural education and training services. The passage of this bill is therefore essential to the corporation's future in education and training in Queensland's valuable agricultural sector. I thank the Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee, and I certainly thank the members who have spoken in favour of this bill during this debate. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 30, as read, agreed to.

Clause 31—

Dr McVEIGH (5.56 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 31 (Insertion of new pt 6, div 5)

Page 27, line 6, '17'—

omit, insert—

23

I table the explanatory notes to my amendment.

Tabled paper: Agricultural College Amendment Bill 2013, explanatory notes for Hon. John McVeigh's amendment [\[4518\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 31, as amended, agreed to.
Clauses 32 to 44, as read, agreed to.
Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.57 pm): I move—

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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Hon. JJ McVEIGH (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (5.58 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (5.58 pm): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 4 March 2014.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr STEVENS (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (6.00 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn

Kitzelmann, Mr M

 **Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.00 pm): Have no doubt at all that the LNP look after their own, and they especially look after former LNP candidates. Members may recall that Michael Kitzelmann ran for the LNP in Bundamba at the 2012 state election, and he lost. He spent many months campaigning after he accepted a VER from the Department of Premier and Cabinet prior to the election. The agreement on the separation from a department by VER means that a public servant cannot be considered for a public sector job for three years following the date of separation. Members may also recall that Michael Kitzelmann lobbied up just weeks after the election unlawfully employed by the LNP member for Logan, Mr Michael Pucci, and that this was referred to the CMC—

Mr PUCCI: I rise to a point of order.

Madam SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Yes, member for Logan.

Mr PUCCI: I find those comments offensive because they are not true, and I ask them to be withdrawn.

Madam SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, please withdraw those comments.

Mrs MILLER: I withdraw. This was referred to the CMC, and an investigation was also undertaken by the Clerk of this parliament. Mr Kitzelmann embarrassed the LNP in this House and left the employment of the parliament almost immediately. In short, Mr Kitzelmann was caught out. Well, guess what? I have caught him out again sucking on the public teat in potential violation of the VER agreement, and again he will be an embarrassment to the LNP and this government. I am advised that Mr Michael Kitzelmann is employed by the Health Metro North office. He apparently is in

the finance section as an auditor, but he appears to be the mystery man of the Health bureaucracy. I am advised that he has no landline number, but apparently he has a government mobile. He has an email address, michael.kitzelmann@health.queensland.gov.au, but when asked, officers cannot find his desk; they do not know his whereabouts. 'Yes,' they say, 'he works for Metro North,' but they do not know about the terms of his employment or whether it was advertised and he went through the recruitment process.

Michael Kitzelmann lurks in the shadows of this LNP government, and this government has gone to great lengths to hide him but still pay him handsomely. So the mystery Mr Kitzelmann is tucked away priming asset sales to his developer mates and to his companies or to his own personal benefit. He has been caught out double dipping into the public purse again, so he is just like Scott Driscoll. The Minister for Health should undertake an immediate investigation on the employment of one Mr Michael Kitzelmann, whether the job was advertised and the recruitment process, as around 20,000 public servants, including auditors who have been sacked or been given their VERs, are watching closely. Or did the minister or his staff know all about this in the first place and are hiding him accordingly—

(Time expired)

Greenbank, Rural Fire Service

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (6.03 pm): On Saturday, 8 February, I had the privilege to join members of the Greenbank Rural Fire Service as they conducted hazard reduction burning operations in the Park Ridge area. The Greenbank RFS notably distinguished themselves during the 2012 Spring Mountain bushfire that threatened properties, businesses and lives in the Springfield-Greenbank region. Their heroic actions and community spirit was demonstrated once more in the wake of the 2013 Australia Day floods.

The commitment and discipline exhibited by the crews in the face of adverse situations is a shining beacon of the community spirit embodied by many across the great electorate of Logan. Joining First Officer Fabian Stangherlin and his crew, I was able to participate in a unique experience that furthered my appreciation of the role that the volunteers play within our fire service. Coming from different walks of life, each firefighter is spurred on by their love and commitment to our community. Rural fire brigades, in conjunction with Rural Fire Service Queensland staff, undertake a range of planning and preparation activities throughout the year to ensure communities are well prepared for the fire season.

One of these activities is hazard reduction burns like the one I participated in. Hazard reduction burns use fire to reduce excess vegetation and minimise the potential for bushfires to get out of control. There is an increasing awareness that timely and effective fire prevention and education saves lives and property. Rural fire brigade members deliver a range of community education programs within their communities. The local knowledge held by members of the brigade is unmatched and immeasurable.

Since 2009 the Greenbank Rural Fire Service has responded to 449 calls that were directed through the 000 emergency call centre. This would amount to approximately 5,388 man hours. This staggering figure does not include the Greenbank crews' deployment in responding to the Spring Mountain fire, the South-East Queensland floods and ongoing operations to reduce fire hazards, along with community engagement and education initiatives. A conservative estimate of the man hours would be in excess of 10,000 hours.

I want to acknowledge the team at Greenbank, consisting of First Officer Fabian Stangherlin, Second Officer Mathew Hilder, Third Officer Kyle Chamberlin, Fourth Officer Bob Howard, Fire Warden Adam Holmes, Christine Gee, Mark Hessling, Andre Lovette, Grahame Randall, Ben Charteris and Dan Roberts. I put on record my support for them, and I will continue to work with them to ensure they can continue to display their steadfast commitment to our community.

On behalf of all residents throughout Logan, I express my deepest gratitude to all those who volunteer. We are a community that works together. From our volunteer emergency services to community organisations, we are truly united in our desire to benefit our community and ensure Logan remains a great place to live, work and raise a family. To the brave men and women who volunteer, I, along with our community, am grateful for your service. I look forward to continuing my close relationship with all rural fire brigades as we all work together to keep Logan charging.

Mount Gravatt State School

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (6.06 pm): I recently visited the newly completed pickup and drop-off entry at one of my local schools, and I have to admit that it was one of the most proud moments in my two years as the member for Greenslopes. Being a local lad, I attended Mount Gravatt State School for the first seven years of my education. When the school first opened in 1874, the narrow, steep path leading up to the single-room schoolhouse was not much more than a goat track. By the time I started school there in the early 1970s, a narrow asphalt driveway allowed cars to have access to the school. Having said that, though, in those days many parents walked their children to school. As the school grew in the years following, the driveway was repaired and widened somewhat, but it has always been a bottleneck with no adequate separation of cars and pedestrian traffic.

During the 2012 state election I campaigned for a new pickup and drop-off area, a proper walking path and fencing for the school. Safety within school zones has always been a passion of mine, and I was determined to ensure that improvements were made for the sake of the children and parents of Mount Gravatt State School. Also, with Logan Road being so busy, a line of cars waiting to enter the school was dangerous and frustrating for other motorists. I have fulfilled my election promise when, over the recent Christmas school holidays, it became a reality. A brand new driveway and pickup and drop-off zone accommodating vehicles entering and leaving the school grounds safely has been built. A proper footpath was also constructed, with additional fencing separating the road from the adjacent oval. The new path is wheelchair friendly and separates pedestrians from traffic all the way into the school.

Last week, when I stood at the top of the driveway with the school principal Jenny Watson, I was so pleased with the result. The front of this great local school has been transformed by the work. This is what being a local member is all about; transforming the communities in which we live, improving people's day-to-day lives and making a genuine difference. As a child walking up that old driveway so many years ago, I could have had no idea that one day I would return to that school and work to deliver improvements such as this.

Madam Speaker, I think that once we get into politics it is easy to forget why we are here. We get caught up in the meetings and the events, the appointments and committees and all those phone calls, and often the real reason we are here can be lost in the sheer busyness of the job. Standing at the top of the hill in Mount Gravatt looking over my old primary school, I was reminded of the real reason I went into politics in the first place. This is my old school and the Greenslopes electorate is my community. It is where I grew up, where I live and where I work, and I will continue to love this community.

It is an honour to serve the people of Greenslopes, and I am glad that something I have achieved for this school has made a genuine difference in the lives of those who need it most: our kids. I would also like to very much thank the workers who constructed the pickup and drop-off zone for doing an outstanding job.

Newman Government, Crime and Misconduct Commission

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.09 pm): Almost two years ago our Queensland government told Queenslanders that the Newman government would encourage the Public Service to return to a culture of frank and fearless advice and restore accountability to government. In the Premier's first speech to parliament, he said his government would respect our system of government. I say that that has not happened in the two years since the last election! This government shows no respect for the independence of our judiciary, which is the cornerstone of our system of government.

This is the view of many eminent Australians, and I understand that today in our federal Senate in Canberra there was a censure motion moved against the Newman government over its badly drafted laws and ridiculous comments that the Premier has made about the judiciary and members of the legal profession. There is no longer any real accountability of this Newman government, with the Crime and Misconduct Commission being turned from a corruption and misconduct watchdog into a lap-dog. These are not only my words, but also the words of retired judge and Queensland corruption buster Tony Fitzgerald and Gary Crooke QC, who assisted with the Fitzgerald inquiry. It concerns me that our Premier and our Attorney-General just ignore those comments!

To claim that we now have a Public Service that is able to give frank and fearless advice is simply not true on the evidence. Everyone who is in a position of influence in our Public Service is now on a contract. Anyone who speaks out is either shown the door or put under real pressure so they resign. People are not employed because of their ability. Today people's employment prospects are decided by their connections with people leading this government and not on their ability.

A government member: Rubbish!

Mr WELLINGTON: Check the record. When the Premier was questioned about this, he used words to the effect, 'Well, that's the way it is.' I say that that is not the way it should be in Queensland in 2014. People should not be sacked because they speak out. Committees should not be sacked because the government does not like what they do. A chairman of the Ethics Committee should not be removed because they are not doing the government's bidding. No longer are you independent in Queensland. I say that the Newman government can no longer be trusted. We are all no longer equal before the law and we see how the government has two sets of laws.

I ask voters in the Redcliffe by-election to send a message to this arrogant government that we want a change, and the best way to do that is for voters to number every box on the ballot paper and put the LNP last. Send a message to this arrogant government that we want a change.

Christmas in Kallangur

 **Mr RUTHENBERG** (Kallangur—LNP) (6.12 pm): During the second-last sitting week of last year I warned everyone here and no-one listened. They all missed out—the whole darn lot. I have to tell honourable members that Christmas in Kallangur was one heck of an event. It was absolutely fantastic. We had 60 stalls, dagwood dogs, hot dogs and all sorts of stuff going on. It was one heck of an event. We had a stage set up. We had bands going and Christmas carols playing. There were kids running around all over the place. There were slippery slides and face painting. Kids were getting around with paint all over them. There was a lot of merry enjoyment. It was a fantastic event. It was wonderful.

Mr Krause: Were you Santa?

Mr RUTHENBERG: No, I was not Santa Claus, but they asked me. By crikey, we were giving out some gifts. The community turned up in droves and it was a lot of fun.

Honourable members may recall that I talked about a shopfront window contest that we ran during the three weeks beforehand. Fifty shops decorated their shopfronts and people would walk in and vote for them if they liked the shopfront. I would like to talk about some of the shops that won the various divisions. The first one in Petrie was Pure Aqua Day Spa. My wife tells me that that place is fantastic; she loves it. I think she has a permanent booking there on Saturday mornings. At Lawnton the winner was Bob Jane T-Mart. By crikey, if you ever want a good tyre, go down and see them; they will fix you up. At Murrumba Downs it was the Pet Supersavers. They are looking after all the people and their pets. It is just wonderful. At Kallangur it was the Discount Drug Stores. Madam speaker, you should have seen this store; holy smokes, it was done up like a Christmas tree. It was absolutely fantastic. The overall winner, the one that received the most votes, was the great Phelan's Bakery at Narangba. If ever you want to taste a good pie, go out to Phelan's Bakery. Holy smokes! That stuff just dribbles down the side of your face. It is just wonderful. What a fantastic place.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr RUTHENBERG: I can tell the member for Gregory that they have sausage rolls as well. It is an absolutely wonderful place.

Kallangur is derived from an Aboriginal word. It means a most satisfactory place. By crikey, last year when we did the Christmas in Kallangur event, it was not only a most satisfactory place, it was one heck of an exciting place to be. Irrespective of the humbug caused by the member for Bundamba today, Kallangur is a fantastic place and the folks are pulling together. We live in one heck of a community and people are most satisfied to be living there.

Education

 **Mr SHORTEN** (Algester—LNP) (6.15 pm): After that exciting rendition by the member for Kallangur, I will try to get into it as well. I rise tonight to speak about the significant investment in education which is being made by the Newman government, a government which values education and those who are on its front line: the teachers. We all know the importance of education, particularly in the early years of prep to year 3. It was an absolute pleasure for me to be able to contact the

principals within my electorate to give them the great news around the significant investment in each of their schools through the Great Results Guarantee. Well over \$1 million will be invested in state schools in my electorate in 2014. The individual amounts for each school are worked out on a number of factors but just to give the House an indication of how much this government is investing in education above the normal allocation, I can say that Algester State School stands to receive \$308,000; Boronia Heights State School, \$147,000; Grand Avenue State School, \$378,000; and Forest Lake State High School, \$224,000.

With this significant investment in education we are asking schools to agree that they will guarantee every student will either prepare to achieve the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy for their year level or have an evidence based plan developed by the school in place to address their specific learning difficulties. To give the House an indication of how the school may allocate their extra funding, they may choose to hire a specialist to provide additional support, use targeted professional development or use the funds to buy additional learning tools. I look forward to hearing how the schools in my electorate choose to allocate their funding.

Members need to be reminded that the Great Results Guarantee funding is the latest investment by this government—an education government—in our schools. Schools in my electorate have already benefited from, again, well over \$1.2 million through the Advancing Our Schools maintenance initiative. Members will remember that in the first round every school could get up to \$160,000 in funding for their maintenance backlog. In the second round of funding, schools again received significant funding to return our schools to clean, safe and secure learning areas for our schoolkids. Again, this was a significant investment in our schools. Notwithstanding the amounts that were provided to the schools, the fact that the schools had the choice to go to the market to get the best value for money was welcomed. The ties that had bound school administrators to using only QBuild were removed. I know from talking to principals, P&C presidents and school administrators that this allowed them to get more work done around the school.

Registration of Heritage Vehicles

 **Dr DOUGLAS** (Gaven—UAP) (6.18 pm): Heritage vehicle owners in Queensland are being differentially penalised. Why are we in Queensland not using the same system as in other states and the comparable charging system? I ask this question because within our state some are misrepresenting themselves and others are being unfairly penalised by default. Queensland is just charging these vehicles as a free hit. At the departmental level the guidelines are so vague that their interpretation by some people is leaving terrible gaps. I table the sequential changes of what has occurred.

Tabled paper: Bundle of documents relating to Queensland's Heritage Vehicle Registration Scheme [\[4519\]](#).

At worst there are drivers and vehicles on our roads at all manner of times driving without third-party cover. If the drivers are ever stopped, in too many cases they claim they are doing a test run. Many are just doing test runs all the time. Some are always doing test runs on heritage plated vehicles. Logbooks are not being logged. The police are unable to monitor what is going on. The logbooks throughout Australia are provided by the council. Queensland Historic Motoring Council should be involved in the process; similar bodies are in most of the other states. The clubs should be the ones ruling off the books annually and members should be compelled to do so by virtue of the need to rule off these logbooks annually in order to renew their membership of the club. That would save red tape and the Queensland Historic Motoring Council would have safer outcomes. I table that process.

Rules must apply to everyone and be able to be applied. There are over 10,000 vehicles registered on special interest vehicle registration plates.

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Dr DOUGLAS: The member for Lockyer will have his chance later on. If members do not like the rules, then they should apply for full registration. The rest should be granted a considerably reduced registration fee with third-party cover. In the haste of the Department of Transport and Main Roads to maintain its own income for no output, it is not confronting real, everyday issues nor is it addressing the real issue of maintaining our heritage at an affordable cost. Our heritage is at stake and the owners of these vehicles on special interest vehicle registration services are being discriminated against.

The Victorian system is one that we in Queensland should copy and implement. They pay only \$65 a year for 45 days on the road annually. Their logbooks are monitored and they have reduced the number of test runs. They actually have third-party cover when they are driving on the roads, and that is the critical part of this. If we adopted this system, we would improve safety on our roads for all drivers and the fractional cost would reduce. By requiring the use of logbooks, we would know what is going on. By requiring the club registrar to confirm, recognise, renew or test, the illegal use would stop. If the cost of red tape is protecting people—third party—on the roads, then so be it. The member opposite should support it. I thank Terry Lloyd—

(Time expired)

Nudgee Electorate, Events

 **Mr WOODFORTH** (Nudgee—LNP) (6.21 pm): I start by updating all on the record speed of construction of the Geebung rail overpass. Not even old dinosaur bones could slow down the delivery of this \$200 million piece of overdue infrastructure. This overpass is thanks to the Newman government and the Brisbane City Council and was an election promise we took to the polls in 2012—a promise that the previous government at best could only say it would look at around year 2020. By then who knows how many more lives may have been lost or the number of near misses or boom gates ripped from their hinges. Whilst final construction is due to be finished late this year, we will be driving over it by midyear, and I have a sneaking suspicion that we will be driving over it a little bit before then. I applaud the construction teams and the GO Alliance team for their great efforts and ongoing informative updates to local residents and businesses over the construction period.

I also congratulate the newly appointed Earnshaw State College captains for 2014. As one of the many investitures that I and we all attend over the early part of the year, it was great to hand over badges to the leaders but special mention of course to college captains Tiana Lines and Jesse Turnbull and college vice-captains Holly-Rose Milne-Mansfield and Josh Postle. I look forward to hosting them here at Parliament House towards the end of term 1 and showing them where a previous Earnshaw captain currently sits in the House—that is, of course, the member for Pine Rivers, who gives me constant reminders of how great the school is—no debate there of course. Congratulations to the school leaders and I look forward to working with you in 2014.

I was going to do my best to leave health out of just one of my speeches for the year, but then that would not be a JW speech now, would it? I just want to reflect on a few lines from my maiden speech and perhaps why I keep lobbying on health issues that I know can make a real difference to the lives of people within my electorate of Nudgee and of course all of Queensland. I stated—

It is estimated that 90 per cent—90 per cent—of health problems ... are due to preventable chronic disease.

These days I like to call it 'dis-ease'. I also stated from the *Australian* newspaper dated 24 February 2012 that—

Within the next 10 to 15 years it is predicted that the Australian federal and state budgets will be totally consumed by the ... cost of healthcare.

Under this scenario, if we were simply to maintain services ... at present levels there would be no money left for roads, rail, education and many other essential services.

These are services that my electorate of Nudgee absolutely needs. As I commence working with all of my kindies and day-care centres I look forward to delivering better health outcomes for the very young and have already booked in eight nights with Louise from Additive Alert. I look forward to working again with Sam Bachman, the accused sex guru, as she helps me to deliver education to the families from the many primary and high schools that are looking for answers. So remember: if you can pick it or kill it, eat it. But if you are in 'Big Trev's' territory, have a pie and a sausage roll!

Western Queensland, Rural Industry Crisis

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (6.24 pm): I rise in the House to raise awareness of the critical situation in Western Queensland associated with rural industries, and I make a distinction between the drought and the rural crisis. It is a rural crisis that is reflective of fundamental structural issues in these industries that have been growing for a long time and would take some very significant changes in policy and attitude to change. I appreciate that the agriculture minister is well aware of the pain and suffering that people are experiencing and am appreciative of the briefing he gave to members this morning in terms of what the government is doing, but unfortunately there is a lot more pain to be had. I am not just talking about cattle producers in my area. Cattle producers were already struggling

before the drought hit with the Aussie dollar, BJD, the live export ban and many other factors such as rising costs and stagnant prices. The situation hitting them now has put them in a diabolical state and has been indiscriminate in that it is affecting established families and people who have been very frugal all of their lives and good managers and good producers. We need those people to stay on the land, but they are in big trouble. These people will not be able to pay their rates for the next couple of years. They will struggle to pay their rates and land rents. That is a big problem for the towns. In most of these towns the local council is the biggest employer. Grocery stores, motorbike shops and tyre places in these towns are all crying out for help. There will be big problems in these towns and it is going to be very fragile for the next two or three years. People need to be aware of that because support will need to be forthcoming.

In terms of solutions, a rural debt round table has been promoting the ARDB. It was much publicised at St George the other weekend. The Australian Reconstruction and Development Board is the first ray of hope for these producers to help them address the critical debt situation. Average farm debts rose from \$700,000 in 2010 to \$1.4 million and rising in 2013. As a percentage of gross farm production, debt was 32 per cent in 1980; it is now at 135.4 per cent in 2012. I will repeat that: debt as a percentage of gross farm production is 135 per cent now. That should be a scary issue for everyone to contemplate and realise that rural debt is a big problem that needs to be addressed. I implore federal politicians to look at the ARDB submission and support Barnaby Joyce and the bill before the Senate to make it happen, because this is the only safety net that is going to save rural industries and keep these people on the land and stop that land from falling into foreign ownership and large corporate ownership and save family farming operations.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Before I call the member for Pumicestone, I acknowledge in the public gallery World Arts & Multi-Culture Inc.

Pumicestone Electorate, Achievements

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (6.27 pm): Tonight I rise to talk about the fantastic electorate of Pumicestone and the wonderful achievements we have had over the last two years in securing funding for my community's needs.

A government member interjected.

Mrs FRANCE: And my constituents, who are very, very pleased. We have certainly seen education be the big winner in Pumicestone. We have received over \$14 million worth of funding over the last two years and are extremely thankful to Minister John-Paul Langbroek for his commitment to ensure that our students get the best education possible. I also bring to everyone's attention the \$44.7 million that Caboolture Hospital and health services have received. I have had the pleasure of opening the paediatric outpatient area, the mental health unit, the skills and education training centre and—

Mr Rickuss: Our nurses are getting paid; is that right?

Mrs FRANCE: Our nurses are being paid. It is great to see that our hardworking doctors and nurses and allied health staff are finally being paid.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs FRANCE: Yes. We have also had a terrific breakthrough in our dental waiting lists. With the Minister for Housing sitting beside me, I must acknowledge the fantastic work that he has done with our housing waitlist. It is great to see that more families now are actually living in properties after the work that he has done over the last two years in cleaning up our waitlists.

An honourable member: Are you going to 'get in the game'?

Mrs FRANCE: That leads on to Get in the Game; thank you for that segue. Sport has been fantastic in our area. The clubs have done tremendously well. Out of the Get in the Game grants that people were able to apply for, three clubs received up to \$100,000. Our surf life-saving club can finally put in a lift and make adjustments to its clubhouse. The Beachmere Sports Club received \$100,000 and then was lucky enough to receive another grant about four weeks later. That has enabled it to expand its clubhouse and its lighting which means that we can now have night games in Beachmere. The Bribie Island junior rugby league club received \$81,000 and has been able to install night lighting. The other night I had the pleasure of representing the minister there and turning those lights on. I also acknowledge Minister Davis, who is in the chamber, for her contribution to domestic

violence in our area. The Pumicestone electorate has been lucky enough to receive nearly \$20 million in funding to address our social needs, domestic violence and money going towards people with disabilities in our community. I thank the minister for her contribution. In total we have received nearly \$80 million. I thank all of the ministers in the cabinet for their hard work on delivering for Pumicestone.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.30 pm.

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, McArdle, McVeigh, Menkens, Millard, Miller, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mulherin, Newman, Nicholls, Ostapovitch, Palaszczuk, Pitt, Powell, Pucci, Rickuss, Robinson, Ruthenberg, Scott, Seeney, Shorten, Shuttleworth, Simpson, Smith, Sorensen, Springborg, Stevens, Stewart, Stuckey, Symes, Trad, Trout, Walker, Watts, Wellington, Woodforth, Young